

REPORT

PART I PUBLIC DOMAINS

As at 31st March, 1950, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 850, covering a total area of 81,583 acres. Fifty-two of these domains are controlled by various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 304 are administered by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, and the remaining 494 are under the control of local Boards.

During the year 10 new domains, comprising a total area of 122 acres, were reserved and brought under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928. Additions totalling 1,148 acres were also made to 42 existing domains.

I am pleased to report continued public interest in domain lands and also acknowledge further generous gifts of suitable areas for domains by various citizens and organizations. Voluntary efforts of several communities for extensive development of domains in their districts are noteworthy features.

Domain Boards throughout the Dominion continue to do excellent work for the conservation and improvement of lands under their control. The efforts of members of these Boards in instituting and fostering development schemes and encouraging others to help bring such schemes to finality is commendable and has resulted in the provision of further first-class sports areas and open spaces which fulfil a long-felt want.

The recreational requirements of some districts have not as yet been met, though the local Domain Boards have drawn up improvement programmes and in quite a few cases have partially completed them. The delay in finishing these jobs is due to continued shortage of essential materials and labour. With what resources are available good work has been done.

Assistance from the money appropriated for the purchase and improvement of domain lands has been applied for on a Dominion-wide basis, and, whenever warranted, grants or subsidies have been made available to applicant Boards. That full value for funds provided has been gained I have no doubt. It has been a feature of most of these applications that the public of the particular locality has either subscribed generously to the projects or else has given free labour.

I have commented in previous years on the increased use of domains for camping purposes, particularly in seaside localities, and I feel I must further remark on this feature, which bears directly on changing conditions under which the public enjoys its leisure. The development of motoring, together with the improvement of our highway system, has meant that at week-ends and holiday times the car-owner is able to travel appreciable distances from his home, and a demand has arisen for provision of short-term accommodation facilities at beaches, fishing-pools, and like attractions. The motor camp, which provides a good tent site or a cabin, fresh water, ablution blocks, and like conveniences, has been developed to meet this demand. It is fortunate that public recreation areas were provided over past years at the majority of the places I mention, and the development of camping areas has naturally followed. Not all our attractive beaches have