

and to constitute the land a public domain, for which purpose, providing as it does a safe bathing-place, it is eminently suitable. Authority was provided for the cancellation of the reservation over an area not exceeding 1 acre of the Murchison Domain. It is proposed to dispose of this area as a site for the erection of a Young Men's Institute. The reservation was removed over 5 acres 36 perches of the Scotsburn Domain, and the land vested in the Canterbury Education Board as a site for a public school, the Domain Board receiving compensation for the improvements they had made.

The work of administering Part II of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, and the general supervision exercised by the Department over public domains and recreation reserves, grows heavier year by year. It could not be carried out at all without the hearty co-operation of Domain Boards throughout the Dominion, and the good work accomplished by the Board members, often under disheartening conditions, is gratefully acknowledged. These gentlemen give their services freely and generously, their only reward being the knowledge of work accomplished for the welfare and enjoyment of all. While the great majority of Boards are keen and efficient, it is the more regrettable to have to state that some are somewhat lax in the discharge of the duties of their position, and do not seem to realize the responsibilities they have undertaken. Particularly is this noticeable in connection with the annual reports required under section 45 of the Act. It is difficult to obtain these from a good many Boards; but it is hoped they will gradually realize that, both in fairness to themselves, as trustees for the public, and to the Department as the controlling authority, annual reports should be furnished as fully and as promptly as possible.

A question that has caused some concern is that of camping upon public domains. In some localities there seems to be an impression that anybody may camp upon a domain or recreation reserve and build a whare or week-end cottage. The Department is not opposed to camping, under proper restrictions, of course, where the conditions are suitable; but such camping must be in tents or similar non-permanent structures. It is definitely and strongly opposed to the erection of permanent whares, &c., not only because of the fact that such buildings are generally eyesores, but because once permanent buildings are allowed on a domain it becomes only a matter of time before the occupants regard the reserve as their own property, and the general public (to whom the domain in fact belongs) as trespassers on private ground. In some cases, particularly those of large seaside domains, it has been found advisable in the past to obtain special legislation authorizing the setting-apart of portion of the reserves for building purposes; but as a general rule camping should be confined to tents, &c., and should not be encouraged on the average small domain.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

I have, &c.,
J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

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