

recreation. A strong controlling Board has been appointed, comprising representatives *ex officio* of the Waitemata County Council and the Auckland Automobile Association, together with permanent residents and owners of seaside houses at Orewa.

Orders in Council were issued appointing thirty Boards to control domains for further terms, while sixty-two vacancies on over forty Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the particular districts concerned. Additional members were appointed to the South Malvern, Prebbleton, and Okaihau Domain Boards.

Miscellaneous documents issued included Warrants authorizing the erection of public halls on the Governor's Bay, Pongakawa, Mainene, Glentunnel, Fergusson, and Korakonui Domains; an Order in Council uniting the Friend and Okarito Domains as one domain; Orders in Council directing the application of moneys received in respect of the Buller and Allanton Domains for the purpose of improving other domains; a Warrant setting apart an area of 3 roods 8 perches of the Te Naumai Domain as a site for a public hall under section 42 of the Act; and a Warrant increasing the number of days on which charges may be made for admission to the Taihape Oval Domain.

An Order in Council was also issued revoking the appointment of the Turanga-o-Moana Domain Board. The domain is situated near Waharoa, but unfortunately very little interest has been taken in the reserve, and it has not been possible to keep up the membership of the Board. As, however, the land may be required for some public purpose in the future, it has been decided to retain the reservation, and the control has been taken over by the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Several sets of new by-laws, together with amendments to existing ones, were approved during the year, and permission was granted for the setting-aside of a camping-ground within a domain.

Permission was granted to twelve Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains on special occasions during the year.

The Pirongia and Wainui Domain Boards purchased additional areas under the provisions of section 39 of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, and titles in favour of the Crown were issued over the lands so acquired.

An endeavour was made during the year to place the leasing of domain lands for grazing, &c., on a uniform basis. A standard form of lease is provided by the Department, and every assistance given to Domain Boards to arrange satisfactory leases. Considerable progress was made with this work, but much still remains to be accomplished.

The Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931, dealt with two matters affecting public domains and requiring special legislation. The reservation for domain purposes over two small portions of the Wanganui River Trust Domain was cancelled, and the areas concerned were declared to be reserved for scenic purposes. They are situated overlooking Taumarunui, and control is being vested in the local Borough Council under the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1908. A payment made by the Waikaka Domain Board for certain material supplied by the Chairman thereof was validated after full inquiry had been made into the circumstances of the case.

## PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

The national parks of the Dominion are becoming more widely known year by year, the reports received from the various Boards indicating that public interest in and use of these areas is increasing to a gratifying extent. The Boards have displayed good judgment in the management and administration of the areas under their control, and the country is fortunate in possessing men of experience and enthusiasm who are willing to give freely of their time and knowledge in the public interest. Various mountain clubs and other associations throughout the Dominion are displaying a keen and sympathetic interest in national-park administration, and are performing a valuable work in helping to create a healthy public opinion directed towards the safeguarding of our national-park heritage. The general principle underlying the administration is the preservation of the park areas in their natural state. This should ensure that the parks, besides fulfilling more and more the important purpose of providing extensive tracts of virgin country for the use and enjoyment of the general public, will become increasingly valuable as reserves for the preservation of our native flora and fauna, and as fields of scientific study and research.

It is the opinion of the Department that the Dominion is entering upon a period during which the development and use of our national parks, together with the creation of new ones, will receive much greater attention than has as yet been given to the subject. Progress may be delayed and ideals temporarily obscured by the mists of financial depressions; but the national importance of the work cannot be overlooked, and it is hoped the time is not far distant when an annual appropriation sufficient under prudent administration to ensure adequate maintenance and development will be regarded as a matter of course.

Brief mention may be made of several park matters dealt with during the year and requiring special legislation. By section 19 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931, certain small portions of the Tongariro National Park were declared subject to the Tourist and Health Resorts Control Act, 1908, the purpose of the legislation being to place the control and management of the Chateau and other buildings in the hands of the Tourist Department. Section 20 of the Act empowered the Tongariro National Park Board to appoint standing or special committees of two or more members to deal with any matters relating to the park which may from time to time be referred to such committees by the Board. By section 15 of the Act the Peel Forest Board was empowered, with the consent of the Governor-General, to set apart leasing areas within the park, and to grant leases on terms to be approved by the Minister in Charge of Scenery Preservation. Certain portions of the park comprise open country suitable for grazing and agriculture, and the Board desires to lease these areas in order to obtain some additional revenue for general park improvements.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Tongariro, Egmont, and Arthur Pass National Park Boards are appended hereto.