

1932.  
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.

PUBLIC DOMAINS AND NATIONAL PARKS OF NEW ZEALAND

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

SIR,— Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st August, 1932.  
I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the public domains and national parks of the Dominion for the year ended 31st March, 1932.

I have, &c.,  
W. ROBERTSON,  
Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. E. A. Ransom, Minister of Lands.

REPORT.

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS.

It has always been the policy of the Department to make ample provision for recreation reserves, and during the year under review a considerable amount of useful work was accomplished both in the reservation of new areas for public use and enjoyment, and in the giving of advice and general assistance to the Domain Boards having the control and management of our public domains. Twelve new domains, covering a total area of some 350 acres, were brought under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, and appointments of controlling Boards were made in eight of these cases. Additions totalling 45 acres were also made to six existing domains. The total number of domains administered under Part II of the Act is now 749, comprising an aggregate area of approximately 73,670 acres. Forty-five of these domains are administered by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 264 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, while the remainder have been placed under the control of local Boards appointed from time to time.

Lack of space prevents a detailed description of the new areas set apart during the year, but brief mention may be made of two or three of them. An area of 12 acres 2 roods 37 perches at Te Mata was donated by Mr. W. G. Vernon for the purpose of forming a sports-ground for the district. The survey was carried out by the Department, and when the Crown's title had issued a Board of local residents was appointed to control the new domain. The land comprises the only area in the immediate locality that is suitable for recreation purposes, and when fully improved will form a valuable domain. The residents have displayed commendable activity in raising funds and in carrying out improvements, and the district is fortunate in having the area made available through the public-spirited action of the donor. At Scorehing Bay, Wellington Harbour, an area of 15 acres 2 roods 15·3 perches formerly held by the Crown as a military reserve was constituted as a public domain and placed under the control of the Wellington City Council. The beach fronting this area is a favourite bathing-place, and the reservation of the domain will make available a splendid picnic-ground for the use and enjoyment of the general public for all time. A number of week-end cottages were erected on the land in past years, and the owners are being allowed to remain in occupation for the present on temporary tenancies. The rentals received will be used for the purpose of improving the amenities of the domain. Representations were made to the Department that a general reserve for recreation and motor-camping purposes should be set aside out of the Crown lands remaining unsold in the Orewa locality, and arrangements were made for the constitution of a domain of over 50 acres in a good situation. The locality, which is now within easy reach of Auckland City, is becoming a popular resort, and the Crown has disposed of a good number of seaside sections in its subdivision there. The new domain, which when suitably improved, will make an excellent recreation-ground, should add considerably to the amenities of the place. There is ample room for the laying-off of a camping-ground within the boundaries of the domain without interfering with general

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.

## APPENDIX.

### REPORTS OF NATIONAL PARK BOARDS.

#### TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. ROBERTSON, Under-Secretary for Lands, Chairman.)

##### THE CHATEAU.

In the report for the previous year it was stated that the leases to the Tongariro Park Tourist Co., Ltd., and chattels, which were covered by the Board's securities, were bought in at auction, and that the Board was in full possession of the Chateau and other buildings subject to the loan charges with respect to the money borrowed from the Public Trustee. The Board carried on the administration of the Chateau and other buildings until the 11th November, 1931, when the control thereof was vested in the Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist, and Publicity by the passing of section 19 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931. This Act brought under the provisions of the Tourist and Health Resorts Control Act, 1908, the following areas of land which were formerly held under the leases issued to the Tongariro Park Tourist Co., Ltd. :—

- (1) 145 acres 1 rood 6 perches, comprising the sites occupied by the Chateau and other buildings at Whakapapa and the golf-links.
- (2) 2 roods, being the Mangatepopo Huts site.
- (3) 2 acres and 36 perches, being the Ohakune Hut site.
- (4) 2 roods, being the Waihohonu Hut site.

In addition an area of 5 acres at the back of the Whakapapa Huts and on the road to Scoria Flat, Mount Ruapehu, is being brought under the operation of the Tourist and Health Resorts Control Act, 1908, by Order in Council, the Board having declared by resolution dated the 18th March last and passed pursuant to section 19, subsection (6), of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931, that the said area is required for the purpose of providing a camping-ground.

The area under the control and jurisdiction of the Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist, and Publicity thus comprises 153 acres 2 roods 2 perches of the total area of 150,000 acres comprised in the park.

The chattels belonging to the Board and used in connection with the Chateau and other buildings have been assigned to and vested in the Crown pursuant to subsection (4) of the said section 19, with the exception of certain gear and tools previously in the possession of the ranger. The ranger's hut at Whakapapa remains the property of the Board.

In reporting on the details of administration of the Chateau during the Board's period of control—viz., 20th February to 11th November, 1931—the Manager, Mr. R. Cobbe, expressed the view that the Chateau was becoming increasingly popular with the travelling public, and a noticeable feature has been the constantly recurring visits of many guests. With a return to better economic conditions, it is anticipated that there will be a considerable increase in business, as the park has a wide appeal as a holiday resort to those who live in cities by the sea.

##### CAMPING-GROUND AT WHAKAPAPA.

As before stated, an area of 5 acres at Whakapapa situated at the back of the huts and adjoining the road leading to Scoria Flat is being set apart for the purposes of providing a public camping-ground, and the development and control of this area will be in the hands of the Tourist Department as an adjunct to the Chateau. The establishment of a camping-ground in this locality should prove a great convenience to motorists and others who prefer camp-life when on holiday from the cities.

##### MOUNTAIN HUT ON RUAPEHU.

A hut on Upper Scoria Flat, Mount Ruapehu, was erected during the year, and serves as a base for the winter sports. The site overlooks the ski-ing grounds, and the main runway for the ski-ing races is in front of the hut.

The altitude of the site is 5,800 ft. above sea-level, and fine views of Mount Egmont may be obtained at times.

The hut is built of heart of rimu timber, and rocks laced to the foundations hold the structure in position. The hut has a coal stove for heating purposes, and is stocked with reserve equipment, stores, and a medical outfit.

In erecting the hut the transportation of materials to the site involved great difficulties, but sledges, pack-horses, and man-power were pressed into service, and this, coupled with the zeal and energy of the Manager at the Chateau and his staff, enabled the transport work to be completed in three weeks. Weather conditions for the actual building operations were very bad, ice frequently coating everything, and the autumn blizzards often drove the builders to shelter. The erection of the building under such conditions is a feat that is deserving of high praise.

A track has been constructed from the Chateau to the hut.

The bequest under the will of the late Mr. W. Salt (a former member of the Board) amounting to £100 was applied towards the cost of erecting this hut.

## WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The annual winter sports competitions were held towards the end of August, 1931, and were well organized by the officials in charge. About three hundred visitors arrived to find snow conditions excellent, and some fine exhibitions of ski-ing were given by various members of the mountaineering clubs. The following clubs have very kindly submitted short accounts of visits by their members to the park during the year under review:—

*Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.)*, (W. S. Rennie, Honorary Secretary).—The nineteenth annual winter sports excursion of the Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.) to the Tongariro National Park was held from the 21st August to the 1st September, 1931.

The visit to the park on this occasion will ever be remembered by the members of the party. Excellent weather and snow conditions at the commencement, together with enthusiastic ski-ing activities, augured well for the success of the 1931 winter gathering. The comprehensive ski sports programme, copies of which had previously been circulated to members, and to kindred clubs, provided for a tournament of two days' duration. However, on arrival at the park the programme was extended to three days in order to allow the competitors longer intervals between the principal events. The entries for the Third Amateur Ski-ing Championship of New Zealand and for the open and club events gave an indication that very keen contests would be witnessed. But there is an old saying—"the best laid plans"—and, unfortunately, it was not possible to carry out our plans successfully. The first day's programme included the New Zealand Langlauf (or Cross-country) Championship, which was won by R. Syme, Hawera (100 points); with R. C. Murie, Wellington (99.45 points), second; and R. Allan, New Plymouth (98.36 points), third.

Owing to the very sad passing-away of a most popular and promising lady member, as the result of pneumonic influenza contracted prior to joining the party, the events for the following day were postponed.

On resuming, considerable interest was created by the inclusion for the first time of an inter-club teams' down-hill race, and five clubs competed, the event being won by the Ruapehu Ski Club team. The New Zealand Slalom Championship resulted as follows: R. C. Murie (100 points), first; T. R. Marks, Taumarunui (71.69 points), second; and R. Syme (70.40 points), third. On Saturday, owing to blizzard conditions arising after the men's slalom events, the tournament had to be postponed and finally abandoned. For this reason it was not possible to run the remainder of the men's events, and it became necessary to award the New Zealand championship title, and also the club championship to the competitor with the highest total points in the combined langlauf and slalom races. The final results were: Mr. Murie, first; Mr. Syme, second; and Mr. Marks, third.

The members of the party took an active part throughout the organizing and the search for the party of Auckland University College Field and Alpine Club members who were reported missing after a climb of Mount Ruapehu, mainly as the result of the blizzard conditions which necessitated the postponement of the ski sports tournament.

Trips to the ski-grounds were the main feature of the visit, and for the third year in succession the club was unable to undertake the usual winter climb of Mount Ruapehu.

During the year members of the club visited the Waihohonu, Mangatepopo, Whakapapa, and Ohakune huts for climbing and exploration purposes.

*Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.)*, (A. N. Smith, Honorary Secretary).—Our annual winter trip to the park took place again last August, members of the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa Clubs combining with us on this occasion. The trip started off auspiciously, ski-ing and tramping being indulged in every day of the first week. Members of the party also competed with some success in the sports arranged by the Ruapehu Ski Club. Owing, however, to the misfortune which befell the party from the Auckland University Field Club, the latter part of the holiday was spent by all who were able in assisting both in the search parties and at the Chateau. As a consequence, our Club Ski-ing Championship race was of necessity postponed until this year. Another party of our members visited the park at Christmas, completing an enjoyable trip at the Chateau after tramping from Ongarue to Tokaanu and thence via the Pononga Saddle to Ketetahi and Waihohonu, and climbing the three mountains *en route*.

*The Alpine Sports Club (Inc.)*, (W. Laird Thomson, Secretary).—Easter, 1931: During the period under review, 1st April, 1931, to 31st March, 1932, the Alpine Sports Club of Auckland was responsible for three tours to the Tongariro National Park. At Easter, 1931, a party visited the Ohakune side of Ruapehu, making their base the Ohakune Hut. Some inclement weather was experienced during the trip. Ascents were made of Ruapehu and Girdlestone Peak; and tramping tours to various points of scenic interest in the locality of the hut were also accomplished.

Winter sports trip: A highly successful winter sports trip was arranged for a week from the 16th August. Glorious weather was a feature, and a large party was accommodated in the lodge building of the Chateau. Much instruction in ski-ing was given to members during the stay, and advantage was also taken for climbing parties to make ascents to the summits of each of the mountains—Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro—the ascent of the last named being the first during the winter season.

The Salt Hut, which was the base for many of the ski-ing expeditions, was found to be a very convenient rendezvous, and was favourably commented upon by all present. Visits also were made to the Tama Lakes and other points of interest. The party was particularly pleased with the arrangements and general facilities organized at the Chateau.

Christmas—New Year, 1931–32: Another very successful mountaineering tour was made to the Ohakune Hut in the summer vacation season. Much good climbing was accomplished, including several ascents by difficult routes and visits to the more usual localities. A high camp near the

summit of Ruapehu was arranged, and some members took advantage of this. Generally speaking, good climbing conditions were experienced throughout, and this attributed considerably towards the success of the trip.

Private tours: In addition to the organized club trips, individual members in small parties have visited the park at various times during the year. Traverses have been made on Pinnacle Ridge, south-eastern *arête* of Girdlestone, and other interesting rock climbs.

#### RUAPEHU MOUNTAIN DISASTER.

The details in connection with the grave dangers and difficulties met with by some of the members of the Auckland University College Field and Alpine Club who left the Chateau on Saturday, the 29th August, 1931, for the purpose of ascending Mount Ruapehu have been so fully set forth and discussed through the medium of the public press that there is no occasion to refer to the incident at great length in this report. Of the eight men and six ladies included in the party, thirteen returned to the Chateau or were rescued by the search parties, but the remaining member, Mr. Joseph Warwick Stanton, of Auckland, died as a result of exposure and exhaustion after a gallant struggle to find a way out of the dense bush covering the lower slopes of Ruapehu to bring assistance to other members of the party lost in the bush.

Mr. Harold John Addis, of Nelson, who was also a member of the lost party and likewise attempted to find a way out of the bush to bring assistance was rescued in an exhausted condition on the 1st September by one of the search parties. Although no effort was spared by the members of the various search parties to find the late Mr. Stanton, it was not until Sunday, the 20th September, that his body was found by a party under the leadership of Mr. F. H. Waters, Chief Surveyor, and Mr. W. G. Nelson, Surveyor, Wellington.

The work undertaken by the Chateau staff, the officials of the various mountaineering clubs, and the Mayors of Auckland, Taumarunui, Ohakune, and Raetihi in organizing search parties and raising funds, and the self-sacrificing efforts of the members of the search parties are worthy of the highest praise. The willing co-operation and assistance of the various Government Departments involved—viz., Police, Defence, State Forest Service, Lands and Survey, Prisons, and Railways—should also be recorded.

It is appropriate on this occasion to call the pointed attention of the public to the dangers of the mountain blizzard. Looking back over the events of last year, it is abundantly clear that there were all the elements of a mountaineering disaster unparalleled in the history of New Zealand.

#### SAFETY MEASURES IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLIMBING OF MOUNTAINS IN THE PARK.

Following on the mountain fatality of last year, a large number of suggestions in regard to safety measures were received from mountaineering clubs and private individuals, and the Board decided to set up a special Committee comprising Messrs. T. A. Blyth, J. Cullen (Warden), and E. A. Marchant to deal with these suggestions. A sum of £50 out of the Mayor of Auckland's Fund (Ruapehu Mountain Calamity) was allocated for the special purpose of erecting poles along the bush-line between the Ohakune Mountain Hut and the Chateau Mountain Track at Lower Scoria Flat, distance two miles and a half above the Chateau. The distance is eleven miles, two miles of which at the Ohakune end had been marked with silver-pine poles in 1930.

The expenditure of this sum on the work specified was left to the Committee appointed by the Board, and in January of this year Mr. Blyth determined the location of the route and marked the same with 200 beech poles. A camp was also established on the northern branch of the Makatote Stream. In March 200 totara poles (each 2½ in. by 2½ in. and 7 ft. 3 in. long) were purchased from Messrs. Goldfinch and Co., of Ohakune, and seasoned in order to reduce the weight. The poles were then painted with black and white bands at the top before being placed in position. Pack-horses were used to a limited extent, but much manual labour was necessary. Eighty of the poles were taken up the Ohakune Track and 120 were taken via the Chateau. The work is now completed, and special mention should be made of the excellent work of Mr. Blyth in this connection. The route referred to traverses the scoria and tussock slopes of Ruapehu and is marked by 440 poles, the average space between poles being 2 chains. The new route will provide a popular tramp when the weather is too stormy to permit of a trip across the top, and, what is of greater importance, it will provide a most valuable safeguard against lost parties wandering into the bush. The knowledge that such a line exists should prevent a repetition of the disaster of last year.

The further suggestions in regard to safety measures will be considered by the Board at its next meeting.

#### SWIMMING IN THE CRATER LAKE ON RUAPEHU.

The Warden has drawn attention to the dangerous practice of swimming in the Crater Lake on Mount Ruapehu. In one instance it was reported that two swimmers encountered considerable difficulties owing to the excessively cold and warm patches of water met with.

Swimmers under such conditions are liable to cramp in the cold areas of the lake or may possibly find themselves suddenly surrounded with scalding water. There is also the danger of meeting gas of an overpowering nature arising from patches of the lake. The Manager at the Chateau has been instructed to warn visitors of the dangers referred to, but the Board desires to give as wide a publicity as possible to the matter, with a view to preventing adventurous spirits from embarking on such a foolhardy exploit.

#### REMOVAL OF BOTANICAL SPECIMENS.

Applications are received from time to time for permits to remove botanical specimens from the Park, and it is opportune that the position of the Board in this respect should be clearly stated.

Section 15 of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, provides, *inter alia*, that every person is liable to a fine of fifty pounds (£50) who, without being authorized by the Board, "wilfully breaks, cuts, injures, or removes any, or any part of any, wood, tree, shrub, fern, plant, stone, mineral, furniture, utensil, tool, or thing of any kind."

As a matter of general policy, the Board will not grant permits to remove plants from any portion of the park. So far as is at present known, there is no plant peculiar to the park, and all plants that occur there can be found outside its boundaries in the adjacent mountains, swamps, or forests.

#### OHAKUNE MOUNTAIN HUT AND TRACK.

Mr. T. A. Blyth, of Ohakune, reports that the number of visitors to the Ohakune Mountain Hut during the year shows a slight falling-off. Ordinary repairs have been carried out to the track, and the same is in good condition.

At a meeting of the Board held on the 18th March, 1932, a by-law was passed fixing a charge of 2s. for each horse traversing this track.

#### WARDEN'S REPORT.

Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., Warden of the Park, in his annual report remarks as follows:—

"The marked decrease in native bird-life still continues, and will do so as long as stoats, weazels, wild cats, and sparrow-hawks are allowed to increase. Cats in the wild are really more destructive of bird-life than either stoats and weazels. Cats climb the trees and destroy the young in the nests and also stalk the ground-nesting birds and their young. Sparrow-hawks kill pigeons, kakas, tuis, and bell-birds, as well as the smaller birds. Some years ago Californian quail were plentiful in the park, but now there are scarcely any to be seen there.

"A portion of the dressed stone wall at the western approach to the Whakapapanui Bridge has been damaged by vandals who levered off about three yards of the heavy coping stones as well as the course of heavy dressed stone immediately underneath the coping-stones, leaving all the stones lying in the water-channel. The coping-stones are so large that it will take two men to lift them back into position.

"There are four of these dressed stone walls, two at each end of the bridge. The stones were dressed by prison labour, the intention being to erect a stone arch over the Whakapapanui River, but on this scheme being abandoned the stones were used in erecting protecting-walls and were set in with cement mortar. The stones were levered off with tools found in the Prison Scoria-pit right alongside."

#### MEETINGS AND CHANGES IN PERSONNEL OF BOARD, ETC.

On his retirement from the Public Service at the end of April, 1931, Mr. J. B. Thompson, C.B.E. (late Under-Secretary for Lands) relinquished his position as Chairman and member of the Board, a position which he had occupied from 1922. In September last Mr. Thompson was reappointed as a member of the Board to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. F. F. Hoekly.

On the 11th June, 1931, Mr. W. Robertson, Under-Secretary for Lands, was appointed Chairman of the Board by His Excellency the Governor-General, pursuant to section 7 of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922.

Mr. E. Phillips Turner, who was a member of the Board by virtue of his position as Secretary of Forestry, retired from the Public Service on the 31st March, 1931, and his seat on the Board was filled upon the appointment of Mr. A. D. McGavock as permanent head of the State Forest Service.

Mr. B. C. Aston was re-elected for a term of three years as the representative of the New Zealand Institute on the Board.

The Financial Adviser to the Government (represented at Board meetings by Mr. G. C. Rodda, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury) ceased to be a member of the Board upon the redemption of the loan from the Public Trustee, following on the taking-over of the Chateau by the Government. The Financial Adviser to the Government was a member of the Board by virtue of the provisions of section 29 of the Finance Act, 1929.

The present term of office of the nominated members of the Board will expire on the 16th January, 1935.

Five meetings of the Board were held during the year—viz., 27th April, 1931 (at the Chateau), and 21st July, 1931, 18th August, 1931, 11th December, 1931, and 18th March, 1932 (at Wellington).

Statutory provision was made in section 20 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1931, to enable the Board from time to time to appoint standing or special committees of two or more persons (being members of the Board) and to delegate to any such committee any of the powers and duties of the Board. Any committee so appointed is, however, subject in all things to the control of the Board, and is required to carry out all directions of a general or special nature given in relation to such committee or its affairs.

This power will considerably aid the Board in carrying out the details of administration connected with the management of the park.

#### FINANCE, ETC.

On entering into possession at the Chateau on the 20th February, 1931, the Board's funds amounted to £1,665 5s. 3d., and during the period of management receipts totalling £15,264 17s. 3d., inclusive of a grant of £4,000 from the Government, were lodged to the Board's bank accounts. Practically the whole amount of £16,930 2s. 6d. was disbursed in meeting the working-expenses of the Chateau, with the result that at the 31st March, 1932, the funds standing to the credit of the Board amounted to £715 16s. 6d., against which there were commitments of £348 11s. 2d. It will thus be seen that the funds of the Board are practically exhausted, and it will not be possible to carry out any further development-work at the present time.

A grant of £192 13s. 3d. was received from the Mayor of Auckland's Fund (Ruapehu Mountain Calamity) out of which £50 was definitely allocated for the erection of poles on the mountain route between the Chateau and the Ohakune Hut. The fund referred to was allocated by the special committee set up to deal with the distribution of the moneys as follows:—

|  | £           | s.       | d.       |
|--|-------------|----------|----------|
| Claims by searchers .. .. .            | 270         | 14       | 4        |
| Food .. .. .                           | 67          | 9        | 1        |
| Medical account .. .. .                | 18          | 4        | 3        |
| Transport .. .. .                      | 79          | 0        | 0        |
| Chateau staff .. .. .                  | 31          | 0        | 0        |
| Payments to unemployed workers .. .. . | 50          | 10       | 0        |
| Expenses of committee .. .. .          | 9           | 15       | 0        |
| Advertising .. .. .                    | 3           | 2        | 0        |
| Exchange on cheques .. .. .            | 0           | 16       | 7        |
| Tongariro National Park Board .. .. .  | 192         | 13       | 3        |
|  | <u>£723</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>6</u> |

The Hostel Loan of £40,000, 1929, and the Hostel Loan (second) of £20,000, 1930, from the Public Trustee to the Board were secured by two issues of seventy-three debentures each, the last in each series maturing in 1965. On the 11th November, 1931, being the date upon which the Government assumed control of the Chateau and other buildings, only eight of the debentures had been redeemed and the loan liability to the Public Trustee then amounted to £58,925 1s. 1d. By the passing of section 13 of the Appropriation Act, 1931, power was conferred on the Minister of Finance to repay the loan out of the Public Works Fund, notwithstanding that the due date for the repayment thereof had not arrived. Financial provision was made on the Public Works Fund Supplementary Estimates of 1931 under vote "Development of Tourist Resorts," and the outstanding balance of the loan to the Public Trustee was duly discharged by the Treasury.

The taking-over of the Chateau by the Board involved the Board's executive officers in a large amount of additional detailed work in connection with accounts and correspondence, and it is desired to place on record the excellent services rendered by the Secretary and Treasurer.

#### EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(T. C. LIST, Chairman.)

The continuation during the past year of the duties of administration and conservation of the area comprised in the Egmont National Park has been a source of anxiety to the Board, owing to the general economic conditions and the very drastic curtailment of its finance. The best work possible on the limited income has been done, but the position of the Board at the end of the year did not leave any funds available for work the Board consider necessary, and the uncertainty as to what revenue would be available for the following year necessitated a serious curtailment of the policy which the Board considers necessary to the carrying-out of its responsibilities in relation to the reserve.

Valuable financial assistance—£250—was again received from the trustees of the estate of R. C. Bruce, and contributions were also received from the local bodies which, as heretofore, were allocated to the various local committees. The other free revenue received by the Board was very small, and was absorbed in the general work of administration.

The restriction of finance has necessitated a serious curtailment of the work of destroying the goats in the reserve, which has had to be restricted to the amount of the special subsidy for this purpose, £81 4s. During the year, 840 goats were destroyed, bringing the total to date to 5,120 since this work was started four years ago. The destruction carried out has already resulted in signs of rejuvenation of the native forest, which was very seriously menaced when the work of destruction of goats commenced, and the Board is continuing its policy as far as funds permit, as until the goats are exterminated they will continue to destroy the young trees, and thus prove a detriment to the preservation of the native bush. A continuance of the war on goats is consequently looked upon by the Board as of vital importance.

*Local Committees.*—During the year the various local committees have again co-operated with the Board in every way in catering for visitors to the reserve and in the preservation of the bush and the maintenance of the roads and tracks.

*North Committee.*—With the assistance of unemployed labour the area adjacent to the accommodation-houses has been improved, and the tracks maintained in good order. The lower portion of the main road was also regraded and improved. The North Hostel has been kept open continuously throughout the year, and all visitors have been well catered for. Repairs to the buildings were carried out where necessary.

*South Committee.*—The road and tracks at Dawson Falls House have been kept in good order. The old accommodation-house has been demolished and rebuilt as a commodious camphouse. This, as well as the hostel, has been well patronized. Minor repairs were carried out at the Syme Hut, which has attracted an increasing number of visitors, and plays a useful part as an attraction to the higher slopes of the mountain.

With the assistance of unemployed labour a ski-track has been formed above Dawson Falls, and a small hut erected for use of visitors in the ski-ing season, which will be much appreciated.

A winter sports meeting was held by the Mount Egmont Club, and proved a great success, visitors being present from Ruapehu and other mountain clubs, as well as unattached parties, and the numerous entries in the various events showed the popularity of the meeting.

*East Committee.*—The past year has seen great advances in the work carried out by the Committee on the east side of the mountain, a fine summer road having been made to continue the main road from the houses to the plateau at the Mangonui Gorge, and, in addition, many other improvements have been made, including the erection of a hut at the Mangonui Gorge and the formation of a ski-ing track, which, because of its easy access, should prove an attraction during the winter season.

The area of bush on the Pembroke Road as far east as the Barclay road has been fenced and planted.

*West Committee.*—With only very limited funds, this committee has been able to maintain its house and improve its tracks. The committee has authorized the formation of a track from Brame's Falls Track at the Reserve Line to the Kahui House via Oaonui and Okchu Gorges, which, when completed, will provide direct access to the house from the Opunake district.

*Afforestation.*—During the year the remaining area on the Kaitake Ranges—about 55 acres—was planted, mainly with *Pinus radiata* on the steep exposed country, macrocarpa on the level land, eucalyptus and *Acacia decurrens* (variety *mollis*) on the semi-level good land. The planting was done by unemployed labour under a foreman, and the results in the *Pinus* plantation are remarkable, the strike being as near as possible about 98 per cent. The *Acacia* and *Eucalyptus* have also been quite satisfactory. A number of the *Macrocarpa* will have to be replaced.

Unemployed labour was used for clearing the fence-lines and around the slower growing Oregon pine, Californian redwood, and some of the other trees.

The growth throughout the whole plantation of approximately 300 acres has been astonishing. The first area planted five years ago averages 30 ft. to 40 ft. in height, and notwithstanding that it was previously dense gorse brake, the undergrowth is now practically suppressed. In a period of about five years it is expected that the whole of the weed portion will be entirely suppressed, and, in place of the mass of blackberry, gorse, and ragwort which previously covered it, a clean forest will exist, as at present in fully half the area weeds are hardly visible, except at the boundaries. The planting of this area of weed-infested country has not only done a great deal to protect the native forest, but has been an object-lesson to the hundreds of farmers who pass this plantation day by day of what can be done with what was practically a waste of useless ground. A further area of land on the Pembroke Road and Barclay Road corner at Stratford was also afforested.

*Conclusion.*—The reserve offers great attractions to all classes of tourists, health-seekers, and nature-lovers, as, thanks to the gratuitous services of the members of the Board and local committees and honorary rangers, there is good accommodation on the various slopes of the mountain at approximately the 3,000 ft. level. At the hostelrys, which are well conducted, a pleasant sojourn can be made at any time of the year, and at a very moderate cost, and on the Kaitake Ranges there is beautiful bush of easy access, where pleasant hours may be spent by nature-lovers.

The Board uses every endeavour to protect and enhance the value of this great national asset.

#### ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

I have the honour to submit a report on the second complete year of the Board's activities. The general depression has reflected itself on the Board's operations, which are necessarily limited to the capacity of its purse. Where in the previous year a considerable sum was raised from local bodies, this avenue of revenue has been closed. The Christchurch City Council found itself unable to meet an earlier commitment to pay the balance of its grant, and to date the Government, from whom a pound-for-pound subsidy had been confidently anticipated, have made no grant whatever to the Board, except the allowance made for initial expenses over two years ago. The only revenue available has been derived almost entirely from rents and fees. While this reduced income has put a restraint upon the improvements that the Board had planned, nevertheless certain advances have been made, which have materially improved the amenities of the park and which have been the subject of favourable comment by many visitors.

The works undertaken by the Board have been directed by the Grounds Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. William McKay, of Greymouth, and the Board accounts itself fortunate in having the services of such an able and enthusiastic gentleman. Dr. McKay's report is appended hereto.

*Meetings.*—The Board met on three occasions during the year, the second meeting being held at Arthur's Pass on the 3rd June. This was an entirely successful venture, giving as it did the opportunity to members of inspecting completed works, and of viewing the site of future improvements. On this occasion the Board met representatives of the Canterbury Automobile Association and selected motor-camp sites, and inspected the track to the Temple Basin in company with members of the Christchurch Ski Club.

*Township.*—The transference of the Arthur's Pass Township to the Board was completed, and during the year leases were issued to the holders of allotments. The Board's control has already shown its beneficial effects, and the relationships between tenants and Board have been most amicable. Proposals for the betterment of the community advantages will be considered during the next year. The selection of vacant sections has naturally been very slow, but inquiries are numerous, and there is every indication that when national conditions improve there will be a notable increase in the number of tenants.

*The Tourist Traffic* was substantial during the winter. According to figures supplied by the Railway Department, twelve excursions were run during the year, and a total of 5,140 passengers was carried. Considering the many other visitors to the park, both during the winter and summer seasons, there is ample evidence of the popularity of the park not only as a tourist resort, but also as an attractive place for the ordinary holiday-maker and for a day's outing. The Railway Department is doing a great deal to popularize the park with this type of traveller.



It is, however, a pity that the Railway Department continues to refuse to arrange for a surcharge in the Board's favour. It seems the essence of equity that there should be reciprocation between the Board and the Railway Department in this respect. The revenue derived would be utilized in improvements for the greater convenience and better enjoyment of the railway patrons, and result in more extensive use of the railways. It is hoped that arrangements can be made with the Department to accede to the Board's suggestion.

*Alpine Climbing* is coming into greater vogue. The park provides all varieties of climbing, and particularly meets the demands of beginners in this strenuous sport. The Canterbury Mountaineering and Tramping Club reports its most successful year to date. The club has utilized the park to a great extent, and have not only had their sport, but have done some very useful exploration. The data collected will be of considerable service. The club, too, has rendered great public service in providing search and rescue parties on occasions when climbers have been reported as missing and in difficulties. The year has, unfortunately, not been free from fatal consequences to climbers. One young man collapsed during a night walk through heavy snow in an endeavour to reach Birch Nook Hut. Later, an accident occurred just beyond the boundaries of the park, and resulted in the death of two young men. Considering the amount of mountaineering going forward, it can be said that there is comparative freedom from accident. The Tramping Club is entitled to the thanks of the Board for the high example it sets for proper equipment and safe conduct in the field. The club has done service in blazing tracks, and has wisely kept the Carrington Hut in good condition.

*Winter Sports* are becoming very popular and, under the ægis of the Christchurch Ski Club, are properly organized. This club has now a membership of eighty, and has shown itself very active and prepared to do much work on its own behalf. The club has several times negotiated with the Board for financial assistance in the formation of a track and erection of a hut for ski-ing enthusiasts and climbers. But so far no proposal has commended itself to the Board as being capable of fulfilment, having regard to the resources of the club and the Board.

The club sports were arranged to be held on two successive days in August, but rain on the second day necessitated the abandonment of a considerable portion of the programme. The club has satisfied itself that earlier in the season provides more settled conditions, and intends holding its sports earlier in future for that reason. The club has, by voluntary effort, cleared a ground at Hills Peak for ski-ing.

*Deer.*—Last season the park was almost continuously licensed in blocks to deer-shooters. The sport obtained varied a good deal, but excellent heads were secured by several parties. So far there is not such a good demand for this season's licenses. As Dr. McKay remarks in his report, the damage caused by deer is becoming serious, and the Board will require to consider means of dealing with the menace.

*Extension of Park.*—After consultation with the Railway authorities a rearrangement of boundaries in the Township locality has resulted in areas being acquired by the Board, suitable for camping-sites. A further area is proposed to be added on the West Coast side, as a result of an inspection by the grounds committee and the honorary surveyor (Mr. James McKay). It is hoped that the boundary of the park will be extended to include Lake Kaurapataka, which provides a very fine piece of scenery. It would be a most valuable addition to the park, and, being easily accessible after the Otira River is forded, will prove a considerable attraction.

*The Ranger.*—The Board's resident ranger continues to retain the full confidence of the Board. He has served the Board and the public effectively, and his efforts have resulted in the almost entire cessation of the spoliation of the widely famed flora of the park. Residing in Arthur's Pass, he has been a material help to the Board and to the public. He has shown great interest in the public hall purchased by the Board, and has been able to raise some funds for the better furnishing of the same. He asks for donations of any suitable equipment for entertainment, such as a gramophone and old records, card-tables and cards, &c.

Mr. Warden reports that the township is in a much cleaner and more tidy state, and that several tenants have improved their properties. He also says that the flora of the park has made a delightful display this year, and has attracted many visitors bent on scientific research.

*Publicity.*—The Board is much indebted to the newspapers for the facilities placed at the Board's disposal for publicity. The press has exhibited a gratifying interest in and support of the Board's efforts.

#### WORKS AND GROUNDS.

Reporting for the Grounds Committee, Dr. Wm. McKay states: "The Committee, keeping in view the unique advantages of this park for those seeking single-day excursions, have endeavoured to cater in various ways for such visitors.

"(1) *Shelter-hall.*—The repairs and additions to the schoolhouse were completed soon after last annual meeting. Electric light and water-heating have been installed, while ample seating accommodation has been provided for concerts, lantern lectures, &c. The building has been let on several occasions for entertainments.

"(2) *Tracks.*—During the summer various visits to the park permitted the selection, rough grading, and final construction of two tracks. The first leads from the main highway just north of Lake Misery, proceeding along the right bank of the Otira River in its upper reaches. It extends for about a mile and a half, emerging on the shingle of the upper valley, where a splendid view is obtained of the Rolleston Glacier, the snow-fields of Mount Rolleston, and the giant cirque between the latter mountain and Mount Philistine. This route is not only a source of great interest and pleasure in itself, but also provides an easy way of return for those climbing Rolleston or Philistine by alternative routes. There probably exists no other snowfield in New Zealand that can be reached by so short a tramp from a main road.

“The second track is that to the top of Mount Barron (5,660 ft.) by way of Goat Creek. The Public Works Department's approach to the water intake leads to a height of 600 ft. above the railway. From the intake we have formed a track of easy grade, so that the climb has been greatly simplified, and beginning as it does from near the railway-station should, when better known, prove a popular one.

“(3) *Bridge over Bealey to Punchbowl*.—While your committee appreciate the advantages gained by the erection of a bridge in this locality, it was considered inopportune to proceed with its construction. The finance available was diverted to less costly and more general amenities. In order that access may be provided when finance is available, Mr. Johnston, of the Public Works Department, kindly visited the locality to secure preliminary data, and he will be furnishing a report at a later date.

“(4) *Fires*.—Two bush fires were reported this summer, the more serious one being in the lower Bealey Valley. Mr. Warden succeeded in securing the aid of several assistants, and took the necessary measures for combating the fire. His actions and the expenditure thus entailed were approved of. Your Committee has since drawn up suggested rules to guide the Ranger on future occasions. The second fire was near the park boundary at Aitkens, but being confined largely to dead timber, did no material damage.

“(5) Your committee recommend that the Board approach the Post and Telegraph Department with a view to having a post-office installed at the Pass. This would be of great convenience to the public, as at present one has to rely, in the case of delivery of telegrams or telephone messages, entirely on the good nature of the railway officers.

“(6) *Mingha River District*.—Many enthusiastic climbers and trampers have been making renewed explorations into this district. As detailed accounts of these efforts have from time to time appeared in the press, and much geographical information supplied to the Board, these excursions have proved of much value besides directing attention to the possibilities for rugged mountaineering existing in this district.

“(7) *Damage to Native Vegetation*.—While visiting the upper valley of the Otira River members of the Committee were made aware of the great damage being done by deer or chamois to some of the native subalpine plants. Over extensive areas the damage could be traced, particular execution having been carried out on the seed heads of the famous “Mountain Lily” of New Zealand—the giant *Ranunculus Lyallii*. All specimens seen had these parts cropped off. A continuance of these depredations will have results not difficult to forecast.

“The Grounds Committee wish to record its appreciation of the service rendered by Mr. J. McKay (Honorary Surveyor) whose co-operation has made possible the achievements to date.”

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