

given control of an area of 14 acres 3 roods, which by legislation in 1901 was brought under the provisions of the Public Domains Act, 1881, and now comprises the Lyttelton and Heathcote Domain. The Trust continued to control the domain until 1911, when a Domain Board was appointed under the provisions of the Public Reserves and Domains Act, 1908, but the Trust was not specifically abolished. The Trust entered into the deed of lease over the railway reserve, but the Domain Board has paid the rental and expended moneys in the maintenance and improvement of the area. The land is still used for recreation purposes in conjunction with the domain, and the legislation therefore validated the deed of lease and the past payments made by the Board in respect thereof, and also authorized the Board to make similar payments so long as the area continues to be used for recreation.

The Taupo Domain Board was authorized to expend domain funds towards repayment of a loan to be raised by the Taupo Road Board for the construction of thermal baths on the Taupo Domain. The Road Board is also the Domain Board, and under the provisions of section 60 of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, could raise a loan for the purpose required, but could not use domain funds in meeting the charges on the loan. The legislation therefore provided the desired authority for the use of domain funds in that respect.

Provision was made for the use of portion of the funds derived from the Opotiki and Waiouka Domain towards the establishment and improvement of an aerodrome. The domain comprised two areas, one of 174 acres (known locally as the Bush Reserve), and one of 125 acres (known as the Racecourse). An area of 109 acres 1 rood 9 perches of the latter has been selected as the most suitable site in the district for the purposes of an aerodrome, and the Public Works Department is proceeding with the development of the area. The Domain Board requested that the selected portion be formally set apart as an aerodrome-site, and the necessary steps were taken to change the purpose of the reservation. The Board also requested that authority be given to apply portion of its funds towards the establishment and improvement of the aerodrome. The utilization for aerodrome purposes of moneys in hand in the Domain Account will not prejudice the Board in the administration of the balance of the lands remaining under its control, and the legislation gave the desired authority subject, however, to the consent of the Minister being obtained before actually paying over any funds. It is proposed to vest the control of the aerodrome reserve in the persons comprising the Domain Board.

A perusal of the annual reports furnished by Domain Boards shows that in the great majority of cases the public domains of the Dominion are being maintained and improved in a satisfactory manner, and that the reserves are meeting public requirements as pleasure and recreation grounds. Many Boards find it difficult to obtain sufficient funds to adequately improve their domains, and during the year the Department was able to make a number of small grants, particularly to Boards controlling country domains. The policy of assisting in the improvement of public domains will be continued as circumstances permit.

During the year some cases of the erection of private buildings on domains have come under notice. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that domains are set apart for the use and benefit of the public, and not to provide sites for week-end cribs and baches, and a firm stand is being taken in this matter. Special instructions have been issued to the field officers of the Department to closely watch the position, and to report immediately any cases of unauthorized erection of buildings on public domains.

#### PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

No new parks were constituted during the year, but an area of some 55 acres was added to the Tongariro National Park.

The opening of the Te Anau - Milford Sound Road as far as the Homer Tunnel has proved very popular with the motoring public. An excellent motor road is now available to within a few miles of the Homer Saddle, and large numbers of motorists visited the Eglinton and Hollyford Valleys during the summer. The areas set aside as camping-sites and provided with fireplaces, &c., were extensively used, while the accommodation available at Cascade Creek was booked to capacity during the holiday periods. It is apparent that with improved access an increasingly large number of visitors will be attracted by the scenic beauty of the region. No patrolman was appointed during the season, but this matter will require attention during the coming summer in order to control camping and to minimize the fire risk. Owing to the wet summer experienced the fire risk was negligible, but in a dry season there will be a grave risk of fire damage unless every precaution is taken. Some permits were issued for the shooting of deer within the park boundaries, but unfortunately the animals appear to be increasing, to the detriment of the forest growth.

Extracts from the annual reports of the Tongariro, Egmont, and Arthur Pass National Park Boards are appended hereto. Substantial grants to the Egmont and Arthur Pass Boards were made during the year for general maintenance and park improvement purposes.