

1937.
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 September, 1937.

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, 1937.

I have, &c.,

W. ROBERTSON,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

The Hon. Frank Langstone, Minister of Lands.

REPORT.

PART I.—PUBLIC DOMAINS.

At the 31st March, 1937, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 780, covering a total area of 75,410 acres. Fifty of these domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 252 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, while the remaining 478 are under the control of local Boards appointed from time to time.

During the year five new domains, with a total area of some 93 acres, were reserved and brought under Part II of the Act, and arrangements made for their control. Additions totalling 302 acres were also made to nineteen existing domains.

The new domains consist of areas on Waiheke Island, at Waiomio, Reporoa, Tokaanu, and Kokatahi.

The Waiheke Island Reserve comprises an area of 2 acres 3 roods 8 perches situated within easy reach of either Surfdale or Oneroa. It was given to the Crown by Mr. E. Runnerstrum and members of his family for the purposes of a public domain, and their generous and public-spirited action is much appreciated by the Department and the residents of the locality. About half of the area is in light native bush which is worthy of preservation, and the reserve is very suitable for picnic purposes. A Domain Board of Waiheke Island residents has been appointed to control the area.

At Waiomio on the Thames-Coromandel coast an area of 11 acres 0 roods 29·5 perches was transferred to the Crown and made a public domain. The local bodies of the district and the public generally contributed generously towards the funds required to purchase this area, and the Department made a grant of £300 to enable its acquisition to be completed. There is very little ground available for public use along the Coast Road, and the acquisition of this area as a public domain should be greatly appreciated by all concerned. A Board has been appointed comprising representatives of the Thames Borough Council, the Thames and Hauraki Plains County Councils, and the general public.

When a township was laid off in the Reporoa Settlement some years ago a suitable piece of land was withheld from selection in order to meet future recreation requirements. During the year the residents undertook the responsibility of controlling and improving the reserve, which was thereupon made a public domain and placed under the control of a properly constituted Domain Board.

At Tokaanu a hot-springs reserve of some 57 acres was made available by the Tourist Department for reservation as a public domain, and was placed under the control of a representative Domain Board. The domain embraces several hot springs and pools suitable for bathing, and it is the Board's intention to gradually improve and extend the bathing facilities so that the greatest possible use of the reserve may be made by the public.

An area of a little over 6 acres at Kokatahi was made a public domain to provide for the recreation requirements of the district, and was placed under the control of a Board of local residents.

Two small portions of the Rangitoto Island Domain were set apart under the Public Works Act for defence purposes during the year.

The reservation over a small area of 1 acre 0 roods 24 perches of the Featherston Domain was cancelled, and the land sold to an adjoining owner for the purpose of providing access to her property.

An area of 1 acre of the Poukiore Domain was converted into a reserve for a resting-place for travelling stock. The Domain Board agreed to the proposal, and the Rangitikei County Council, at whose request the action was taken, paid the fencing, survey, and other costs involved.

An area of 109 acres 1 rood 9 perches of the Opotiki and Waioeka Domain was selected as the most suitable site in the district for an aerodrome, and was made available for that purpose during the year. The domain contained a total area of 299 acres, and the portion dealt with for aerodrome purposes was not required as a recreation-ground.

A portion of the Omaka Domain at Blenheim was dealt with in a similar manner. In this case the area concerned was one of 242 acres set aside for recreation many years ago, but not required for sports purposes. The area is now regarded as absolutely essential for aviation purposes, and has therefore, with the consent of the controlling authority, been formally reserved as a site for an aerodrome.

The appointments of the Sunnyside and Mangamahu Domain Boards were revoked at the request of those concerned, and the administration of the reserves has been taken over by the Department.

Arrangements were made at the request of the Domain Boards concerned for the control of several domains to be taken over by local bodies. The cases dealt with in this way were—

Local Authority appointed.	Domain.
Mangonui County Council	Kaimaumuau.
Kaikohe Town Board	Reed Park.
Waiuku Town Board	Massey Park.
Howick Town Board	Cockle Bay.
New Plymouth Borough Council	Huatoki.
Hutt County Council	Korau Park.

Orders in Council were issued appointing forty-nine Domain Boards to control domains for further terms, while forty-seven vacancies on various Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the various districts concerned.

The Garth and Ahaura Domains were united to form one public domain.

The name of the Waihou Domain was changed to that of the Te Aroha Sports Domain.

Permission was granted in sixteen cases for Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains on special occasions during the year. Five sets of by-laws were approved, and approval given in four cases to the setting-aside of camping-sites and parking-places in domains.

Under the provisions of section 13 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1932, rental concessions were granted in fifteen cases during the year.

Numerous proposals to lease domain lands were carefully scrutinized, and the advice and assistance of the Department made available to Domain Boards in that connection.

During the year it was found desirable to provide that the consent of the Minister should be obtained before any part of a public domain could be set aside for any specific purpose of public amusement or recreation. The relative statutory provision dealing with this aspect of public-domain administration was accordingly appropriately amended by section 64 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1936.

The Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1936, also dealt with several matters affecting public domains and requiring special legislation.

Immediately outside the New Plymouth Borough boundary there is an area of 48 acres 2 roods 32 perches generally known as the Huatoki Domain, and used extensively for recreation purposes. One portion of the area, containing 12 acres 2 roods 20 perches, comprised the actual Huatoki Domain, the control of which was vested in a special Board. Another portion of the area, comprising 9 acres 3 roods 15 perches, was a scenic reserve, controlled by a separate Board appointed pursuant to section 13 of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1908. The Scenic Board had control over a further portion of 8 acres 2 roods 11 perches, which it was acquiring from the Crown for scenic purposes pursuant to the authority contained in section 26 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1922. The balance (17 acres 2 roods 26 perches) of the area first mentioned was freehold land purchased from the Crown by the Borough Council in order that the native bush thereon might be preserved. It was considered advisable that the whole area should be constituted a public domain, and the control thereof vested in the Borough Council. The Council, the Domain Board, and the Scenic Board were all agreeable, and action was therefore taken to revoke the appointment of the Domain Board, and to appoint the Borough Council to control the actual domain area. The Council's property of 17 acres 2 roods 26 perches was transferred by the local body to the Crown and later added to the domain. Special legislative authority was, however, required to revoke the reservation for scenic purposes over the area of 9 acres 3 roods 15 perches, and to determine the right of the Scenic Board to acquire the area of 8 acres 2 roods 11 perches, and to add both those areas to the domain, and the necessary provision was made in section 12 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act.

Adjoining the Lyttelton and Heathcote Domain is an area of 2 acres 1 rood 13 perches of railway reserve, which since 1912 has been held without statutory authority for the purposes of a recreation reserve by the Lyttelton and Heathcote Recreation Trust on a year-to-year tenure under a deed of lease from the Railways Department. The Trust was constituted by statute in 1877, and was thereby

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.

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF NATIONAL PARK BOARDS.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

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

Meetings of the Wellington Executive of the Board were held on the 28th April and 12th June, 1936, to deal with the business of the Board.

DISPOSAL OF DEAD TIMBER ON PARK LANDS NEAR OHAKUNE.

The dead trees as marked by the Forest Ranger in the Park land adjacent to the Ohakune development block were disposed of to the Small Farms Board at the royalty assessed by the State Forest Service for the purpose of posts and battens. The felling, logging, and splitting operations are being carried out under the control of the Forest Ranger. The royalty value of the timber is £232 16s.

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The manager at the Chateau reports that the New Zealand Ski-ing Championships and first inter-Dominion meeting were held in August last, and a representative team from Australia competed, victory going to the Australians by a narrow margin in the inter-Dominion competition. The fact of an Australian team being present added largely to the interest shown in the winter sports, and the accommodation at the Chateau and the huts was taxed for many weeks. Unfortunately, the weather was not good for the sports period.

The following clubs have kindly submitted short accounts of visits of their members to the park during the year under review, and extracts from these accounts are quoted:—

The Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).—The past year has been characterized by atrocious weather at high altitudes, but in spite of this frequent visits were paid to the Park, mainly by ski-ing parties. This has been rendered possible by the use of the club's new Glacier Hut, which was completed last Easter.

“The club's usual Winter Sports Party was held in August in conjunction with the Dominion and inter-Dominion championships, and was attended by over a hundred members—a record to date. Owing to the almost continuous blizzard conditions and the need for giving first place to the championships, many of the club events had to be cancelled.

“During the visit the hut was opened formally by Mrs. Syme, the wife of the President, in the presence of about fifty members and visitors.

“A summer ski sports meeting was held on the Whakapapa Glacier during the Christmas holidays, when handicap ski races were tried out, and novelty events such as roped pairs were run off.

“There were large club parties on the mountains on every public holiday, and smaller parties on many other occasions. Although weather conditions tended to keep climbers to the better-known parts, quite a lot of climbing and exploring of new routes on the western and northern sides of the park was undertaken.

“A feature of this last summer has been the relatively low level at which the toe of the Whakapapa Glacier has remained, due probably to the heavy winter precipitation and the absence of really hot weather. Snow conditions have generally been very good, and all-the-year-round ski-ing has been available within reasonable distance of the hut.”

The Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—“One trip to the Tongariro National Park area was organized by the Tararua Tramping Club during the year. The total strength of the party which visited the Chateau during the winter-sports season in August was thirty-nine, of whom thirty-one were members of the Tararua Tramping Club, the remainder being members of other tramping clubs in the Wellington District. On the arrival of the party there was a tendency to a scarcity of snow, but during the last three days of the stay heavy falls of snow occurred. Weather conditions were disappointing, there being not one fine day during the nine days of the party's sojourn, and at times conditions were very unpleasant on the ski-ing grounds.

“Most of the members at some stage saw something of the sports, a portion of which was run under great difficulty owing to adverse weather conditions.

“The Tararua Tramping Club's ski-ing championships which are usually run in conjunction with the visit of the club's official party to National Park were not held.

“Small parties of club members were also organized for Easter, 1936, and Easter, 1937. In both instances the parties camped near the Ohakune Hut on the southern side of Mount Ruapehu. The parties climbed all the peaks possible, visited the various places of interest in the district, and a few were able to practice ski-ing.”

The Alpine Sports Club (Inc.).—“The only officially organized club expedition to the Tongariro National Park took place during Easter, 1937, when a well-attended party camped in some old mill huts on the northern outskirts of the Park.

“Although the general bad weather was experienced, a successful climb of Mount Ngauruhoe was made via Ketetahi and the Tongariro craters.

“Visits were also paid to Lake Roto-a-Ira and neighbouring places of interest.

“While there was no official visit to the Park during the earlier part of the year, various club members paid individual visits to the Park during the winter-sports season, and occasional long week-end visits were made during other times of the year.”

ERUPTION OF MOUNT RUAPEHU.

The following report was submitted by Mr. C. Risberg, late Chief Guide at the Chateau :—

“ Probably the most interesting happening concerning Tongariro National Park during the last twelve months is the eruption of Mount Ruapehu, which took place during the month of May this year.

“ It appears that for forty-one years the great crater has kept its activities within its own border, but there are tales of a magnificent eruption which occurred in 1895. As the mountain evidently was not climbed immediately afterwards it is impossible to say if any solid matter was ejected and to what extent. From the description of the late Mr. Josiah Martin, who claimed to be an eye-witness of the eruption from the Ross Terrace Hotel, Taupo, we draw the conclusion that volcanic matter was freely distributed at the time.

“ In December, 1934, when Mount Ngauruhoe gave its majestic volcanic display, simultaneously Mount Ruapehu sent a column of steam over 2,000 ft. into the air. During the months following this occurrence I often witnessed the lake steaming so heavily that at times the water was entirely obscured.

“ During the last year the activity in the lake (for such is really the big crater of Mount Ruapehu) has appeared to be at a standstill. Imagine my surprise when on the morning of the 11th May, 1936, I ascended to the lake accompanied by Messrs. C. Tucker and G. Burns of Auckland, and found the beautiful white snow-fields of the crater basin transformed into fields of mud. The colour of the lake had changed from a muddy green to almost clear water, and the slopes towards the lake had a coating of the smoothest and most treacherous ice, evidently caused by the freezing of the water ejected. There was clear evidence of where the water had found its way back to the lake leaving the edges of the lake smoothly rounded off. The condition was so treacherous that close approach to the lake was out of the question. No doubt this eruption and consequent changes were the prime cause of the sad fate of the late Mr. Gordon, of Taurarunui, who fell into the lake after a skid of several hundred yards.

“ Later we made our way round to the Cathedral Rocks, and here we found a tremendous field covered with mud. The strong southerly winds which had prevailed during the three previous days were no doubt responsible for the mud spreading over such a wide area. An indication of the violence of the eruption is the fact that the Cathedral Rocks, which are situated just about half a mile from the lake, were black with mud. The intervening field was a study in black, and closer to the lake there appeared to be a wall of solid mud, which, on subsequent examination, was found to consist of an ice ridge covered with a layer over 3 in. thick. The distance from the edge of the lake to the rim of the crater is approximately 400 ft., so this alone presents a great obstacle in the ejection of the contents of the lake. The mud ejected was blue-black in colour, of a smooth, watery consistency, and very evenly distributed.

“ Two days later I again ascended with two companions armed with crampons and equipment to enable further investigations. Our efforts were hampered by a snowfall of about 6 in. that had occurred since our previous visit, but I was able to estimate that the quantity of solid matter (apart from water) ejected was between 2,000 and 3,000 tons. On this latter visit the colour of the lake had again changed to a dark muddy colour, with traces of sulphur scum on the surface, and there appeared to be a fair amount of rotation of the water. In two places the water seemed to have a movement as that of an artesian well or a pot just on the boil, but there was very little steam coming off the surface. These movements no doubt indicate two main vents under the surface of the water, one of which is situated almost in the centre of the lake and the other north-west thereof.

“ On the occasion when we recovered the body of the late Mr. Gordon I was the last one to be hoisted up from the crater, and while I was waiting on the beach I noticed that the level of the lake rose fully 3 in. and then receded again.

“ The supposed flooding of the lake as reported by Mr. Henry Hill in 1889, who drew his conclusions from the water-marks in the snow round the lake, was no doubt caused by the outlet being blocked by a cave-in of the ice. During the warm summer of 1934–35 the ice melted in such a way that the existence of an outlet or overflow from the lake was definitely established by people who ventured down to its shores. The outlet is on the southern side.

“ The most probable date on which this year's eruption occurred was 9th May, 1936, although there is no eye-witness to this. The mountain had been covered with heavy clouds for a few days so it is quite possible that the eruption would have gone quite unnoticed even had it happened in broad daylight.”

WARDEN'S REPORT.

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

“ The Park area has been fairly free from tussock and scrub fires during the year, the only fire that occurred was one that started on Maori land east of the Wanganui River and spread within the Park boundary and burned the tussock on the northern slopes of Tongariro Mountain as far as Ketetahi Hot Springs. Deer are still fairly plentiful in the bush areas, and will continue so as long as large herds exist in the Kaimanawa Ranges on the east and in the Kakaramea and Pihanga Ranges on the north of the Park. Bird-life is still on the decrease and will continue to decline till such time as wild cats and weasels have been exterminated. The number of the former is increasing rapidly.

“ A team of eight working-bullocks which has been allowed to run at large and feed on the shrubs and plants in the bush has done considerable damage to the undergrowth by feeding on the soft-wooded shrubs, as well as breaking down young trees. The owner of the bullocks has been warned to keep his animals away from the Park in future.

EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

The members of the Egmont National Park Board can look back upon the year ended 31st March, 1937, with considerable satisfaction. In the absence of any fixed revenue or endowments the Board is dependent upon the Government of the day for finance, and it can be said with gratitude that the present Government has been generous.

Goats.—At the beginning of the year the Government made £500, which had been promised by the previous Government, available for the destruction of goats. The Ranger since has been steadily killing goats in the more sunny parts of the reserve where they herd. Of late, too, he has been able to work in much more satisfactorily with the farmers whose properties adjoin the Reserve. There are now few who refuse permission to the Ranger to hunt and kill goats on their properties. If the keeping of goats within a mile or two of the Park boundaries were made illegal, it would be a very great help towards their final extinction.

In May last year the Board appointed its first permanent Ranger, Mr. P. De Launay, but unfortunately Mr. De Launay met with an accident during his first week and had to give up, and Mr. N. Gibson was appointed in his stead. It has been a distinct advantage having a Ranger who is directly responsible to the Board. In addition to the destruction of goats, the Ranger has had the supervision of the opossum-trapping, the prevention of the trespassing of cattle in the Reserve, and the protection of its bird-life and fauna. The control of 79,227 acres is a heavy job for one man. The Board looks forward to the time when, with more permanent revenue, it will be able to appoint a forest expert able to devote all his time to the development of the afforestation side of the work.

There is now a move by the Board in conjunction with the Taranaki Education Board's agricultural experts to interest the schools surrounding the mountain in the raising and cultivation of native trees. This should serve to create a very real interest in our forests.

Local Committees.—The Board is very much indebted to the members of the North, East, South, and West Committees who have devoted so much time to the upkeep of the hostels and tracks in their areas. With the improved times, the hostels have been much better patronized, and satisfactory financial results have been reported in the case of the three main hostels.

Alpine Clubs.—Here again the Board has been fortunate in the success of the Alpine Clubs and in the enthusiasm shown by the ever-increasing numbers of members. Mount Egmont, with the development of the technique of ski-ing, is fast gaining a reputation as one of the finest grounds in New Zealand for this sport, thus bringing visitors, not only to Taranaki, but also to the other fine ski-ing grounds in New Zealand.

Recently a new Alpine Club, with headquarters at Okato, known as the Bells Falls Alpine Club, has been formed. The Board will gladly give this club every encouragement.

Afforestation.—The *Pinus* plantation of 300 acres continues to make very satisfactory growth. During the year Mr. D. McPherson, Director of Forests, inspected the plantation, and, in a comprehensive report, recommended that thinning, lopping off the lower branches, and cutting-out of dead and badly grown trees should not be delayed. This work the Board will have done with the help of unemployed labour during this spring. If properly cared for these plantations, handy to the main road and close to New Plymouth, should be a valuable asset to the Board in the years to come.

Main Highways and Finance.—During the year efforts have been continued towards the taking-over by the Highways Board of the roads in the Reserve leading to the three hostels. This is closely wrapped up with the finance of the Board, and the financial support due to the Board by the local bodies surrounding the Egmont Park. It is to be hoped that some settlement, satisfactory to all, may be reached.

It is pleasant to report that since the end of the year the three Taranaki Power Boards have contributed their quota for the upkeep of the Reserve. This is the first occasion upon which the Power Boards have been asked to contribute, and their prompt response is most gratifying.

In conclusion, we can report an increasing public spirit and interest in the Reserve. More and more it is realized how much this wonderful National Park means not only to the young people interested in alpine sports, but also to the residents of Taranaki, who are so dependent upon Egmont for their never-failing water-supplies.

To the Hon. Mr. Langstone, Minister for Lands and Survey, under whose control our Reserve is vested, and to the Hon. Mr. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, we owe a special debt for their continued interest and help in our work.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

I have the honour to submit for adoption and presentation to the Hon. the Minister of Lands a report on the Board's affairs for the seventh complete year since the Board was instituted.

In reports of recent years we have deplored the lack of funds which had seriously hampered the Board and stultified much of its endeavour to exercise its proper functions. However, it is a matter for gratification that our financial worries appear to have been removed, because the Government has granted during this year the considerable sum of £1,100, and there is reason to believe that, when our requirements merit further assistance, it will be forthcoming.

In May last the Hon. the Minister of Lands (Hon. F. Langstone) received a deputation from the Board under the leadership of Dr. William McKay, and heard an appeal for a monetary grant. The outcome was a payment of £500 in September and a further £600 in March. In conversation with representatives of the Board in March when intimation of the second grant was given, Mr. Langstone

indicated that he expected the Board to seek further assistance from local bodies and from the public generally, and that the Government should not be relied upon entirely for financial supplies. It will be for the Board to consider the Hon. the Minister's wishes at the annual meeting.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the Board is highly appreciative of the courteous and sympathetic reception accorded its representatives by the Hon. the Minister, and his ready and generous response to their claim for assistance. The most stimulating aspect is, of course, the knowledge that the Hon. the Minister appreciates the worth of the Park and the value of the Board's endeavours, and is prepared to encourage its activities in a practical way.

Personnel.—Since our last report—although prior to the last annual meeting—the Board has been reappointed for a term of three years, and Messrs. K. G. Archer and J. D. Pascoe have been added to its strength. During the year Mr. J. F. Quinn, the Chairman of the Board, was transferred to Wellington, and consequently vacated his position on the Board. The Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr. L. J. Poff, has acted as Chairman pending the arrival of Mr. N. C. Kensington, who succeeds Mr. Quinn. Professor R. Speight was on leave most of the year while he was abroad, but he has now returned.

Meetings.—The Board met twice during the year, in April and September, and held its annual inspection on the 23rd June. Although a fourth meeting should be held, there were several matters not ready for consideration in December, and it was thought best to defer the meeting. At the September meeting the Board fixed its programme of works for some time ahead, and this will be carried out as finance allows. The Grounds Committee, under Dr. McKay, has made several inspections, accompanied by Mr. M. J. Barnett, and work has thereby been carried out under adequate control.

Township.—Commendable improvement continues to be made in the appearance of the allotments and buildings. Rents have come in very well, none of the arrears mentioned in the Statement of Accounts being due from township leases. There is every indication of some demand for new allotments, although inquirers are deterred by the information that there are no sections left in the main township. The big majority of the present leases expire on the 31st March, 1938, having run a period of seven years. The Board will soon have to decide its policy regarding the renewal of these leases.

Sports.—The most unfavourable year since the inception of the Board was experienced this year. Snow conditions were again poor in the winter, and railway excursions were few and indifferently patronized. The summer months were marked for an inordinate amount of rain. The two clubs, the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and the Christchurch Ski Club, who centre their activities in the Park, seem not a whit discouraged. The former has erected a capacious and attractive club-house, and the latter has made additions to its hut in the Temple Basin. The construction of a tennis-court, which the Board subsidized, has proved a boon to residents and visitors. A club has been formed, and is active in controlling the game and maintaining the court.

General.—The completion of the Waimakariri Bridge is one of the most important advances in the history of the Park. With the bridging of some smaller streams which is proceeding, the main road is free of any particular difficulties, and traffic is increasing considerably. This improved access has had a noticeably favourable effect on the use made of the Park.

The memorial to Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson, the discoverer of the pass, and a foundation member of the Board, has been finished, and an unveiling ceremony, to which the Board is invited, will be held on the 18th April.

The destruction by fire of the Bealey Hotel removes a famous landmark. To those who suffered by loss of life and property, the Board has tendered its sympathy.

So far no steps have been taken by the Highways Board to straighten and widen the road leading into the township. The removal of the railway turntable ought to facilitate this.

The survey for the hydro-electric power-lines from Canterbury to Westland has been completed, and the erection of the towers bearing the transmission-lines over the pass is to be undertaken immediately.

The Board's Ranger (Mr. C. E. Warden) has submitted his annual report, and this is available to members.

Thanks are tendered to Mr. M. J. Barnett for his continued supervision of work and his advice in various matters; to the Railways Department and its officers for courtesies in connection with supplies of tools; to the public press for its steady encouragement and much-valued publicity; to our Ranger and honorary rangers, in particular, Mr. and Mrs. R. Scott; to Dr. William McKay in his capacity as Chairman of the Grounds Committee, to which position he continues to devote much time and thought; to Messrs. W. A. Kennedy and J. D. Pascoe for their gifts of photographs for publicity purposes.

REPORT OF THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE.

This has been compiled by Dr. William McKay, and is submitted hereunder:—

“Since the last meeting of the Board in September, the weather has been of the worst description, constituting probably one of the most prolonged rainy periods ever recorded in the Park area. This has made outdoor work most difficult to carry out. The two works in the list considered of most importance by the Board were the Punchbowl Bridge over the Bealey River and the Alpine Rock Garden at the township.

“*Alpine Rockery.*—The almost incessant wet weather made it impossible to commence this work until the beginning of February, when Mr. M. J. Barnett sent up three men, including a working foreman. Good progress has been made in spite of much broken time, so that already a good conception can be formed of the effect that will be produced on completion of the planting. Mr. Barnett has made several visits to the Park to overlook operations.

“ On being informed early in March that a further grant of £600 had been made by the Hon. F. Langstone, Minister of Lands, members of the Grounds Committee proceeded to deal with other items on the list of other necessary works.

“ *Shelter on the Pass.*—Investigations led the Committee to select a site quite close to the highway and about 200 yards west of the Divide. The locality is well sheltered from all winds, while the building would be scarcely visible from the road. Plans and specifications have been drawn up for a suitable shelter 20 ft. by 14 ft., with stone ends, and an estimate obtained of the cost. It is desirable that the erection of this shelter should be proceeded with immediately.

“ *Kelly's Range Hut.*—As the Board will understand, there is a great lack of labour offering for casual work such as this, as well as for track-making. Men who formerly could be readily procured are now engaged in more permanent positions. Your Committee has approached the Grey Alpine Club and the Westland Tramping Club concerning this hut, and is pleased to report that both these clubs have expressed their willingness to help in the way of transporting material to the tops. All that now remains is to decide on cost, and to secure the services of a suitable builder.

“ *Tracks.*—Two new tracks were recommended by the Committee, one being an alternate approach to Avalanche Peak and the other ascending Mount Aitken from near the Punchbowl.

“ It is pleasing to record that in spite of the rains, our honorary Ranger, Mr. R. Scott, has devoted considerable time and energy to roughly forming a graded track to Avalanche Peak. Already negotiable for quite half the distance from highway to tussock-land, this track opens up some new and pleasant prospects across the pass towards the West Coast. Throughout the work, Mr. Scott has been very loyally and effectively aided by Mrs. Scott. In this self-help policy, both of them have shown a spirit well worthy of emulation by others, and one that calls for recognition by both the Board and the general public. The Committee is endeavouring to secure a suitable workman to carry out the benching and heavier cutting necessary to consummate the labour so enthusiastically undertaken by Mr. and Mrs. Scott.

“ *Guide-poles on Mountains.*—The Committee is of the opinion that this matter would be better left in the hands of the various Mountaineering Clubs, who could choose the sites for the poles and help to place them in position, while the cost could be borne by the Board.

“ *Foot-bridge over Upper Bealey River.*—Recent inspection of this structure showed that the decking was perishing, rendering it unsafe for traffic. A notice has been posted to this effect, and negotiations entered into with suitable workmen to put new beams into position without delay.

“ *Depredations by Animals.*—Good work in killing off deer and chamois has continued. In December the Internal Affairs Department asked the Board to co-operate with Captain Yerex in his campaign by issuing no further permits to shoot within the Park until April. This would enable him more effectively to plan his operations, and I understand he is obtaining good results.

“ *Highway within the Park.*—Steady improvements continue to be carried out by the Highways Board, more particularly in that portion between the township and the Waimakariri Flat, and in the extensive deviation near Kelly's Creek, where railway crossings are being eliminated. The road surface within the Park is kept in good repair.

“ *Ground Markings.*—The concrete milestones have now been placed in position, and a notice, similar to that at the Bealey, but defining the western boundary of the Park, has been erected.

“ Relevant notices regarding tracks and regulations are now erected throughout the Park adjacent to the main highway.”

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (700 copies), £9 10s.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1937.

Price 6d.]