

1938.

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.

Department of Lands and Survey,
Wellington, 30th June, 1938.

SIR,—

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, 1938.

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, 1938, the total number of public domains administered under the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, was 789, covering a total area of 75,779 acres. Fifty-two of these domains are controlled by the various Commissioners of Crown Lands, 255 are controlled by local authorities acting as Domain Boards, while the remaining 482 are controlled by local Boards appointed from time to time.

During the year eleven new domains, with a total area of 183 acres, were reserved and brought under Part II of the Act, and arrangements made for their control. Additions totalling 357 acres were also made to twenty existing domains.

The new domains comprised the following :—

- (a) An area of 5 acres at One Tree Point, Whangarei, now known as the One Tree Point Domain.
- (b) An area of 2 acres 1 rood 10 perches on the Church Mission Block at Matakawau, now known as the Matakawau Domain.
- (c) An area of 5 acres in the Kaitaia Town District, now known as the Tangonge Domain. This area has been placed under the control of the Kaitaia Town Board.
- (d) An area of 1 acre 1 rood 17·8 perches in Tairua Village, now known as the Tairua Domain. Tennis-courts are being constructed on the reserve. The land was settlement land, and the Department is arranging for the payment of an appropriate sum to the Land for Settlements Account on account of the capital value of the area.
- (e) An area of 5 acres 3 roods 3 perches at Waimarama, Hawke's Bay, now known as the Waimarama Domain. This domain has been placed under the control of the Hawke's Bay County Council.
- (f) An area of 12 acres 1 rood 32 perches at Clifton, now known as the Clifton No. 2 Domain. This area was donated by the late Mr. F. L. Gordon, the Department paying the costs of survey and also portion of the legal charges incurred in connection with the transfer of the land to the Crown. A generous donation of £100 was made by Mr. G. Husheer, of Napier, towards the cost of fencing and the erection of bathing-sheds, and other improvements. Local interest in the new domain is very keen, and the Domain Board appointed includes representatives of the Napier and Hastings Borough Councils and of the Hawke's Bay County Council. The domain is a favourite picnic spot, and is also a stopping-place for visitors to the Cape Kidnapper Bird Sanctuary a little farther along the coast.

- (g) An area of 4 acres 3 roods 30 perches near National Park, now known as the Ngauruhoe Domain.
- (h) An area of 2 roods 33 perches in Reefton, now known as the King George V Jubilee Park Domain. In this case portion of the area was an asset of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, and the Department found the sum of £150 to clear the account. Another portion was freehold land which was acquired by the Inangahua County Council and then transferred to the Crown. The domain has been placed under the control of the Council, which is developing and beautifying it as a rest park.
- (i) An area of 4 acres 2 roods 25 perches at Burnett's Face, near Denniston, now known as the Burnett's Face Domain.
- (j) An area of 5 acres at Marshland, Christchurch. In this locality no provision had in the past been made for a recreation-ground, and it was necessary to purchase some private property for the purpose. The purchase-price was £430, towards which the local people raised £130, while the Department found the balance of £300.
- (k) An area of some 137 acres near Herbert, North Otago, now known as the Glencoe Domain. This area was purchased for £500, the Department contributing £200 and the Waitaki County Council, the Oamaru Borough Council, and the North Otago Automobile Association £100 each. The Domain Board which has been appointed includes representatives of the two local authorities and of the automobile association. The domain is bounded on one side by the north branch of the Waianakarua River, and the portion near the stream is an ideal picnic and camping ground. There is also sufficient level ground for a sports ground.

Additions to existing domains were made as follows :—

Land District.	Domain.	Area added.		
		A.	R.	P.
North Auckland	Orewa	1	0	2·9
"	Motuihi Island	1	2	36
"	Waiotira	1	1	10·8
"	Pahi	1	1	8
Auckland	Whakatane	4	1	22
"	Mount Maunganui	5	3	16
"	Ngongotaha	0	2	0
Gisborne	Te Puia	3	3	36·7
Taranaki	Tututawa	3	0	0
Marlborough	Havelock	233	0	0
"	Waitohi	0	2	33
"	Ngakuta	9	0	0
Nelson	Denniston	2	0	26
"	Stockton	1	2	28
Canterbury	Mackenzie	0	1	20·7*
Otago	Clyde	9	0	0
"	Pounawea	0	3	32
"	Waikouaiti	2	3	0
"	Glencoe	0	1	34*
"	Warrington	73	3	0
Total area added to twenty domains		356	3	26·1

* Closed road areas.

The additions made to the Pahi, Ngakuta, Stockton, Denniston, and Warrington Domains necessitated the passing of special legislation in each instance. In the Pahi case the area concerned was an endowment for primary education. For many years it was the site of the Pahi School, but some years ago the school building was removed, and the Education Board advised that the land would not again be required for school purposes. The Education Department very kindly consented to the area being added to the domain, and the matter was adjusted by section 19 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937. The area of 9 acres added to the Ngakuta Domain was portion of a scenic reserve at Governor's Bay, in Queen Charlotte Sound, much used by the public as a picnic resort and often by unauthorized camping parties. It was decided under the circumstances that it would be desirable to make the area domain land in order that efficient supervision might be exercised by the Ngakuta Domain Board, and section 21 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937, effected the required change of status. The areas added to the Denniston and Stockton Domains comprised small portions of the Buller Coalfield Reserve, and as there was no authority for the setting-aside of the areas for recreation purposes it was necessary to deal with the cases by means of special legislation—sections 15 and 16 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937. The Warrington case was dealt with by section 23 of the Act. The position was that the area concerned, comprising Rabbit Island and two smaller islands in Blueskin Bay, was, by the Blueskin Recreation Reserve Act, 1876, vested in trust in trustees to be used for recreation purposes only for the inhabitants of Blueskin and the

surrounding districts. The original trustees were dead, and no new trustees had been appointed. As the eastern arm of Blueskin Bay comprises the Warrington Domain it was considered that the area could be more effectively administered by adding it to that domain. The special legislation, besides adding the reserve to the Warrington Domain, also repealed the special Act of 1876.

During the year an area of 9 acres 3 roods 11 perches of the Wakefield Domain was exchanged for an area of 11 acres 3 roods 9 perches of freehold property.

Two small portions of 3 roods 26 perches and 1 rood 34 perches of the Bulls Domain were taken for street purposes during the period under review.

The reservation over a small portion of 23.2 perches of the Wanganui River Trust Domain was revoked by section 8 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937, and the area incorporated in an adjoining Crown leasehold. The Crown lessee concerned is surrendering his leasehold rights over an area of 15.9 perches of his holding, and this piece will later on be added to the domain. The exchange was arranged in order to give the lessee more convenient road access to portion of his land and at the same time to enable improved access to be provided to part of the domain.

The Kaihoka Lakes Domain of some 54 acres in the Collingwood district was, by section 26 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937, declared to be a reserve subject to the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act, 1908. The domain adjoins an existing scenic reserve, and it was considered advisable that it should be administered under the Act governing scenic areas. Control of the reserves is being entrusted to the Collingwood County Council under the provisions of section 13 of the Scenery Preservation Act.

Arrangements were made at the request of the Domain Boards concerned for the control of the Tauranga and Silverdale Domains to be taken over by the Tauranga Borough Council and the Waitemata County Council respectively.

Orders in Council were issued appointing fifty Domain Boards to control domains for further terms, while forty-five vacancies on various Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons nominated by the residents of the districts concerned. In a number of cases additional members were appointed to Domain Boards.

The Green Island and Miller Park Domains were united to form one public domain, as were the Alexandra and Alexandra Town Belt Domains.

Permission was granted in seventeen cases for Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains on special occasions during the year. Three sets of by-laws were approved, and approval given in six 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 to lessees of domain lands were granted in nine cases during the year.

Numerous leasing proposals were dealt with and approved. These cases are always most carefully investigated with a view to making certain that fair rentals are obtained and that the rights of the general public over domain lands are jealously safeguarded. The usual form of lease permits the grazing of cattle, provided bulls and other animals likely to be dangerous are securely tethered. There is no doubt, however, that in all cases where a domain is much frequented by the public it would be of benefit to recreation generally if the grazing of cattle were absolutely prohibited. A similar prohibition would also tend to preserve the amenities of domains where the whole or portions thereof are covered with native bush or with ornamental trees and shrubs. These points are always given careful consideration when leasing proposals are being investigated, and as a general rule the Department does not encourage the grazing of cattle on public domains.

During the year the Department was happy to be able to make a number of small grants to assist Domain Boards, particularly in country districts, to provide recreation facilities and generally to improve the domains placed under their control. The Department is convinced that the use of a reasonable amount of State funds in this way is well worth while, and particularly so in cases where the people of the district concerned are prepared to help themselves in the matter. The annual amount allocated to the Department for this purpose is, however, very small, and could be greatly increased with advantage both to the State and the general public. It is becoming more and more widely recognized throughout the world that the State should take a kindly interest in the recreation of its people, and the Department hopes that in future funds will be made available for general domain purposes on a much more generous scale than in the past.

In addition to the cases referred to above connected with the addition of areas to existing domains by means of special legislation, the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1937, also dealt with several other matters affecting public domains and Domain Boards. Section 7 of the Act (introduced with the approval of the Audit Department) validated certain payments made by the Ohai Domain Board to a member of that body. Section 17 reappointed to the Patutahi Domain Board a member who had become disqualified to hold office on account of his having received, in connection with certain contracts with the Board, payments exceeding the limit of £25 allowed under section 3 of the Local Authorities (Members' Contracts) Act, 1934. In this case the member concerned paid into the Board's account the amount he received in excess of such limit, and it was deemed advisable to arrange for his reappointment to the Board.

Section 22 provided extended leasing-powers with respect to the Pukaahu Hot Springs Domain. This domain is situated about eight miles from Whakatane, and contains hot springs of considerable value. The controlling authority, the Whakatane County Council, has endeavoured to arrange a lease of the area under conditions ensuring the development of the springs to provide up-to-date public bathing-facilities at all times at reasonable cost. Difficulties have, however, arisen in arranging a suitable tenancy, as public domain land may be leased only for a maximum term of twenty-one years. The legislation therefore provides that the Governor-General may from time to time lease the whole or any portion of the domain for such period not exceeding twenty-one years, with such rights of

renewal, and subject to such rents and conditions and in such manner and form as he may think fit, and it is anticipated that under these powers it will be possible to arrange a suitable lease in the public interest. Section 27 made special provision for the management and administration of the Mount Smart Domain. The domain comprises a volcanic cone which originally rose to a height of some 286 ft. The reserve was constituted in 1877 by the Onehunga Endowments Act, which vested the management of the area in the Onehunga Borough Council subject to the rights of the Government and certain local authorities to take metal therefrom. By special legislation in 1925 power to dispose of quarrying-rights was granted to the Borough Council. Quarrying operations have been carried out somewhat indiscriminately, and in order that the area may eventually be made suitable for recreation purposes it has been decided to fix a definite level of 115 ft. below which no quarrying may take place. In 1921 special legislation was passed providing that the funds of the Mount Smart Domain and of the Onehunga Domain (also controlled by the Borough Council) should form a common fund. It has now been decided that all moneys received in respect of the Mount Smart Domain should be held in trust for the ultimate improvement of the land for recreation purposes, and also that control of the domain should be vested in a Board representative of the Crown and of the local authorities directly interested. The special legislation therefore repealed all former legislation affecting the domain, cancelled the rights therewith vested in the Onehunga Borough Council, and made the domain subject to the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928. A fully representative Board will now be appointed, and in future all moneys received will be retained solely for the management, administration, and improvement of the domain. It also fixed a level of 115 ft. below which quarrying may not be carried out, and made the granting of any quarrying rights subject to the prior approval of the Minister. The right of the Railways Department to extract scoria above the level of 115 ft. has been protected.

The public domains of the Dominion are now playing a very considerable part in the daily life of the people, and the various Domain Boards are in general carrying out their duties in a commendable manner. The members of these Boards give their services gratuitously, and in many cases the amount of time and work involved is very considerable. The Department is grateful to the Boards for their good work, and on its part is always willing to give any assistance in its power to assist the Boards in every possible way.

The policy of the Department has always been to make ample provision for recreation reserves when land is being subdivided, and the results of this policy may be seen in the hundreds of splendid domains that exist throughout the country. Ample powers are contained in the Land Act, 1924, for the reservation of areas of Crown lands for the use and recreation of the general public, and in the great majority of cases these areas, after reservation, are created public domains and placed under the control of local authorities or special Boards constituted pursuant to the provisions of Part II of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928. Difficulties arise, however, in the case of those districts where no reserves have been set aside for public recreation and where no Crown land is available. In such cases the Department always endeavours, within the limits of its financial resources, to assist in the acquisition of suitable land, and in this way a number of recreation areas have been provided for districts which previously possessed no available sports grounds. A great deal more could be done in this direction if the Department could receive a more generous allocation of funds for general domain purposes.

PART II.—NATIONAL PARKS.

The national parks of the Dominion at present comprise the following areas:—

Name of Park.	Approximate Area in Acres.	Reference to Constitution.
<i>North Island.</i>		
1. Tongariro	150,000	The Tongariro National Park Act, 1922.
2. Egmont	79,000	The Egmont National Park Act, 1924.
<i>South Island.</i>		
3. Arthur Pass	117,000	Part III of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928.
4. National Park in Minchin, Bealey, Davie, and Hawdon Survey Districts	94,060	Reserved under the Land Act, 1892.
5. Sounds (Fiordland) ..	2,407,000	Reserved under the Land Acts and special legislation.
In addition to the above, the following areas are also commonly regarded as national parks:—		
6. Peel Forest Park	1,305	The Peel Forest Act, 1926.
7. Hooker Glacier	28,000	Reserved for recreation purposes under the Land Act, 1885.
8. Tasman Park	97,800	Reserved for recreation purposes under the Land Acts, 1885 and 1908.
9. Godley Glacier	18,900	Reserved for recreation purposes under the Land Act, 1924.

NOTE.—The original area of No. 4 was 150,000 acres, but approximately 56,000 acres are now included in No. 3.

The Tongariro, Egmont, and Peel Forest Parks are controlled by special Boards appointed under the provisions of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, the Egmont National Park Act, 1924, the Peel Forest Act, 1926, and Part III of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928, respectively. The greater part of Tasman Park and the whole of the Hooker Glacier and Godley Glacier areas are administered under the Tourist and Health Resorts Control Act, 1908, while the other areas are administered under the provisions of Part I of the Public Reserves, Domains, and National Parks Act, 1928.

The general principle underlying the administration of our national parks is that the parks are established for the well-being of the nation and are to be preserved so far as is humanly possible in their natural state so that the people may receive in full measure the inspiration and benefits that mountains, forests, lakes, and rivers have it in their power to give. Commercialism has no place in the setting-aside of national parks and but little in their administration, for, while it is necessary and desirable to provide adequate facilities for the public to visit and enjoy them, the aim has always been to retain public ownership and control, and to prevent the growth of vested interests within the national reserves.

The parks are becoming more widely known year by year, and are fulfilling in an ever-increasing measure the important purpose of providing extensive tracts of virgin country for the use and enjoyment of the general public. The Park Boards are displaying good judgment in the management and administration of the areas under their control, and the various mountain clubs and other kindred associations throughout the Dominion are showing a keen and sympathetic interest in national-park matters, and are performing a valuable work in helping to create a healthy public opinion directed towards the safeguarding of the parks.

No new parks were constituted during the year, but an area of 29,400 acres in the Taramakau Valley was approved for addition to the Arthur Pass National Park. The area comprises 11,110 acres of Crown land and 18,290 acres of State forest.

A patrolman was engaged to control camping on the areas along the new Te Anau - Milford Sound Road and to generally supervise the reserve there. The road is very popular with touring motorists, and some £56 was collected in camping-fees during the season. During the early summer fires having their origin in adjoining pastoral country spread to the boundaries of the park, but, fortunately, no damage was done to the bush. Deer continue to be a grave menace to the forests of the park. During the season deer-destruction parties under the Internal Affairs Department were operating in portions of the park, and consequently no permits were issued by this Department to deer-stalkers.

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, I.S.O., Under-Secretary for Lands, Chairman.)

The business of the Board did not necessitate the calling of frequent meetings. The Wellington Executive met on the 11th June, 1937, and a full meeting of the Board was called on the 20th July, 1937.

DOMINION BUSH-CONSERVATION AND AMENITY PLANTING CONFERENCE.

A Dominion conference on bush-conservation and tree-planting was convened by the Department of Internal Affairs for Friday, 2nd April, 1937, at Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Mr. B. C. Aston was appointed as the Board's representative at the conference.

A copy of the report of the conference was transmitted to the Board by the Department of Internal Affairs, and the Board was asked for any suggestions it might desire to submit in regard to the proposed Interim Committee and constitution of the National Organization. With the approval of Board members the matter was discussed and dealt with at a meeting of the Wellington Executive, and a resolution was passed expressing the view that the proposed constitution of a National Organization with District Councils and Committees should be approved.

APPLICATION BY TONGARIRO TRAMPING CLUB FOR HUT-SITE.

The Tongariro Tramping Club applied in April, 1937, for authority to erect a mountain hut on the southern slopes of Ruapehu. The site eventually selected lies between Trigs. F and G, and is not far distant from the Ohakune Hut.

The club was advised of the general conditions laid down by the Board with respect to granting of facilities for the erection of huts by mountain clubs and organizations of a like nature not incorporated for pecuniary gain. The application had not been finally dealt with at the close of the year.

SCORIA FLAT ROAD.

A proposal that the road leading from the Chateau to Scoria Flat should be declared a main highway was received through the Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist and Publicity. The Board, at its meeting of the 20th July last, approved of the proposal, and an Order in Council dated 10th November, 1937, issued under section 3 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, was duly published in *Gazette* of 18th of that month.

The distance proclaimed is 2 miles 40 chains, extending from the junction with the Bruce Main Highway at the Whakapapa Huts to the parking-ground near the northern boundary of Block VII, Ruapehu Survey District, and covers the existing formed length. It is hoped that in due course the remaining section of the road will be constructed and similarly declared subject to the Main Highways Act, so that easy access to the Salt Hut and the main ski-ing grounds will be available to visitors to the park.

LIBERATION OF TROUT-FRY IN STREAMS ADJACENT TO THE CHATEAU.

The question of granting authority for the liberation of trout-fry in the waters of the park was considered as a policy question at a meeting of the Board in 1934, and the Tourist Department was granted authority to liberate fry in the Whakapapa-nui and Whakapapa-iti Streams and their tributaries, the authority to be operative for a period of two seasons.

In October, 1934, 25,000 fry were liberated through the medium of the Waimarino Acclimatization Society as follows: Mahuia Stream, 5,000; Whakapapa-nui, 10,000; Taranaki, 10,000.

In January, 1936, further representations were received from the Tourist Department that the streams of the park be stocked, and the Board dealt with this matter at a meeting held on 20th July, 1937, when a resolution was carried granting the necessary permission.

TIMBER TRESPASS ON NORTHERN SLOPES OF TONGARIRO.

In September last an examination of the bush areas on the northern slopes of Tongariro was made by the Chief Inspector of the State Forest Service and a Field Inspector of the Lands and Survey Department, and these officers, in the course of their reports, drew attention to what appeared to be an encroachment on park land. Immediate arrangements were made with the Chief Surveyor, Wellington, to send a surveyor to the spot to traverse the boundary-line and locate the survey pegs. This work was carried out, and it was found that an area of about 7 acres inside the park boundary had been felled and cleared. A number of fencing-posts, strainers, and logs found on park land were seized by the surveyor and branded pending full investigations as to the question of legal remedies.

Suitable arrangements are being made to prevent any further encroachment taking place.

BUSH LANDS NEAR OHAKUNE.

As stated in last year's annual report, the dead trees on that portion of the park adjacent to the Ohakune Development Block were disposed of to the Small Farms Board. The question of measures necessary to protect the bush edge by the planting of suitable trees will receive the early consideration of the Board.

The thanks of the Board for the valuable help and assistance afforded by the State Forest Service in the administration of this area are recorded.

DEER-DESTRUCTION.

The Board desires to place on record its thanks and appreciation of the services offered by the Department of Internal Affairs in connection with deer-destruction operations. The Department mentioned that in connection with its plan of campaign on country to the north of the park an opportunity would be afforded of dealing with the deer in the park. Formal authority was issued to the officer in charge of operations (Captain Yerex) and the staff under his control to shoot deer within the boundaries of the park subject to special safeguarding conditions, and the result of the operations will be reported later.

FIRES IN THE PARK.

Fires continue to present a serious problem to the Board, and it is difficult to formulate practical measures to prevent damage to the vegetation of the park.

The Warden in his report again refers to several outbreaks during the dry seasons of the year. With such a large area to control, and the extensive road frontages, the formation of fire-breaks and regular patrol of boundaries appear to be the only remedies, and these questions are engaging the attention of the Board.

TRESPASSING STOCK.

A certain amount of trespass by stock occurs from time to time on lands of the park, and impounding of animals has been found impracticable. Representations have been made to the Government to have the provisions of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, strengthened to enable the Board to take appropriate legal action against the owners of horses, cattle, or other animals found trespassing in the park, and it is hoped that the necessary amendment will be made to the Act at an early date.

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

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 club's year as far as the National Park is concerned has been a very active one. Snow conditions between June and November were particularly good, the virtual absence of high winds being remarkable. As a result the snow above the 5,500 ft. level was in very good condition, although the fine weather played havoc with the lower slopes.

"The ski-ing season lasted from May to January, the official ski-racing season being opened by the Mitchell Cup races in July, which were followed by the club's usual major sports meeting in August and a Summer Ski Tournament at Christmas.

"The winter party at the Chateau was a complete success, though attendance was smaller owing to the absence of a ski-ing team in Australia and the fact that no Dominion championships were held this year. The club championships, as well as novice and novelty events, were run off without difficulty during the visit under excellent conditions, which also permitted more tuition to be given to beginners.

"The unusual warmth of spring and early summer brought about the early disappearance of the snow, and so the ski-ing season came to an end earlier than last year. By the end of January the snow had practically all disappeared and the glaciers were beginning to crevasse badly. Within a couple of months the whole surface of the larger glaciers had opened up into ice ridges separated by crevasses up to 25 ft. across.

"The unusual conditions, however, provided some good ice work and possibly were more or less responsible for more summer visits to the new hut. These members made some interesting trips in the Fell Field area and above to the west and south-west side of the mountain.

"Other parties visited Tongariro, Hauhungatahi, and the Ohakune, Maungatepopo, and Waihohonu Huts.

"The new hut again proved a great boon. A great deal of ski-ing has been enjoyed there which would not have been practicable for members residing at the Chateau level. Late spring and summer ski-ing, though favoured by the longer day and milder weather, is, of course, only available on the higher levels. In the past, few members visited the park more than once a year. Now three and four visits are not unusual.

"It is a matter of great regret from the skier's point of view at least that the Scoria Flat Road was not proceeded with during a very favourable summer. In seasons of comparatively high snow-levels such as we have had recently many hours of ski-ing are lost and much energy is dissipated between the present terminus of the road and suitable running slopes."

The Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—"Forty-eight members of the Tararua Tramping Club visited the Tongariro National Park for the winter sports during the only official trip organized by the Tararua Tramping Club. The trip was for nine days, from 22nd to 31st August, 1937.

"The greater portion of each member's time was spent on the ski-grounds, but the majority of the members also visited all the places of interest in the vicinity of the Chateau. For the most of the time snow was not plentiful near Salt Hut, and a large number of the members of the party preferred to proceed higher up the slopes of the mountain and enjoy their ski-ing in the vicinity of the Ruapehu Ski Club's hut, where it was found that the snow conditions were better and the slopes gave better ski running. The major disadvantage in frequenting this part of the slopes of Mount Ruapehu is that there is no shelter available and there are no facilities for obtaining refreshment such as exist at Salt Hut.

"In addition to giving instruction to members of the party by the more experienced members of the club present, the Tararua Tramping Club held its annual ski championship races. The Slalom race was run on the course usually used for the New Zealand Championship races in poor weather, and the downhill race was run on an excellent course near the Ruapehu Ski Club's hut under ideal conditions."

WARDEN'S REPORT.

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

“About the middle of last November a series of scrub and fern fires were started on the eastern slopes of Tongariro Mountain and destroyed a considerable area of scrub and fern country. Some of these fires when started were within the park boundary and others were outside it. These fires appeared to have been wilfully caused by some persons who were tramping on the mountain-side. I happened to be fishing at the Tongariro River at the time these fires started, and saw them started in six or seven different localities. Other fires were set going along the northern face of the mountain and travelled along the faces of the foothills for several miles, burning some of the Native bush on their way.

“About the middle of August a fire started in that portion of the Military Reserve just west of the main road and bounded by the Tawhai Stream on the south, the Whakapapa-iti on the west, and the Ngatakutai Stream on the north; the frontage to the Waimarino-Tokaanu Road was one mile and the depth to the Whakapapa-iti Stream two miles. All vegetation and trees within the area were completely destroyed. The weather had been very dry at the time, and I am of opinion the fire was caused by some one in a passing car throwing out the end of a cigar still alight. The winter sports were on at the Chateau at that time, which was the cause of a continuous stream of cars passing to and fro to the Chateau. Luckily, the wind was from the north-east at the time; had it been from southerly or westerly direction the fire would have crossed the road and burned all the area up to the Haunted Whare. I was at my cottage at the time the fire started. Bird-life in the native bush is being destroyed by cats that are wild in the bush. The team of bullocks that have been destroying native shrubs in the bush are still allowed to wander in the park. Deer continue to come and go between the park and Kakaramea and Pihanga Mountains on the north and the Kaimanawas on the east.”

TRAMWAY LICENSE THROUGH PARK LAND NEAR OHAKUNE.

In 1930 a license for tramway in favour of Messrs. Bennett and Punch was granted (in conjunction with the Department of Lands and Survey) partly over Crown land and partly over National Park land. The tramway is situated to the east of the Mangawhero River and traverses a portion of the park near the Ohakune Railway-station. The annual rental fixed under the license for the park land was £10.

In May, 1937, the license expired, and the Land Board resolved to grant a new license for a term of seven years over the Crown land. As the reports indicated that the company will require the tramway access for a considerable period in connection with its sawmilling operations on lands adjacent to the park, the Board resolved to grant a further right for seven years at the same annual rental.

The departmental inspecting officers report that steam locomotives are not being used on the tram-line, and that the bush on the National Park has not suffered in any way through the exercise of the right granted by the Park Board.

RESIGNATION OF MR. J. B. THOMPSON, C.B.E., FROM BOARD.

It is with regret that the Board announces the resignation of Mr. J. B. Thompson, C.B.E., as a member of the Board. Mr. Thompson was appointed Chairman of the Board upon its reconstitution under the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, and continued in that capacity until his retirement from the Public Service on 30th April, 1931.

He was reappointed as a member of the Board on the 7th September, 1931.

During his whole period of office Mr. Thompson took a keen and active interest in the welfare of the park, and his services were highly appreciated by the members of the Board.

EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

It is my duty to record the work of the Egmont National Park Board for the year ending 31st March, 1938.

I think members may again congratulate themselves upon a year of progress. There has, undoubtedly, been a greatly increased public interest in the work of the Board and in the welfare of the reserve, upon which Taranaki is so dependent for its continued fertility and prosperity.

Finance.—Finance has been the great difficulty during the year. The deadlock with the Government over the upkeep of the roads in the reserve and the question of the repayment of the £3,000 loan on the North Egmont Road is no nearer a solution. Seeing that the protection of the reserve is of such importance and value to Taranaki, the Government, in the absence of joint help from the local bodies surrounding the mountain, might well find this necessary assistance out of the Consolidated Fund. Unfortunately, whilst the impasse continues, the Government is also withholding any further financial assistance for the routine work of the Board and the maintenance of the area of 78,922 acres which it controls. To say the least, this is most disheartening to members, who are so deeply interested in the protection of the tree and bird life of this wonderful reserve.

This year local bodies have, without exception, made their annual contribution to the Board, and, in addition, the four Power Boards deriving their water-supply from the reserve have for the first time contributed, generously I think, to the Park Board's funds.

During the year just ended, in spite of appeals to Ministers, no financial help whatever has been received from the Government, and as the Board has no endowments or fixed revenue of any kind the position is most unsatisfactory. Unless Government help is received during the next month or so it will be necessary to dispense with the services of the ranger.

Ranger.—Mr. Norman Gibson, the Board's ranger, continues to do excellent work. He has a great interest in the flora and fauna of the mountain, and he never spares himself where the Board's interests are concerned. He has, too, won increasing co-operation from the farmers adjoining and in proximity of the radius line. During the year just ended he has destroyed 800-odd goats. It seems that now the menace is well under control.

During the coming season it is suggested that with the help of honorary rangers, who will form themselves into shooting parties, the goats may be almost exterminated. This, though, will not be possible until farmers within a definite radius of the mountain are prohibited by legislation from keeping goats. The ranger reports that as the winter approaches the nanny goats make for the lower levels and that the winter shooting party finds that its bag consists largely of billy goats.

There have been cases of stock trespassing in the reserve, but the ranger has kept a very close eye on this, and there is actually little cause for complaint, nor has it been necessary to prosecute offenders. Unbranded cattle and cattle which cannot readily be mustered in the reserve the ranger has not hesitated to destroy. He reports, too, that there is an increasing care by the public of bird-life in Taranaki and that the numbers of birds in the reserve are definitely on the increase.

He reports that he has not detected any unauthorized cutting of trees within the reserve. This matter has his constant care.

Native Trees.—At the Winter Show in New Plymouth the Taranaki schools, under the direction of Mr. Duncan McKay, Senior Instructor in Agriculture for the Taranaki Education Board, and with the encouragement of the Park Board and its ranger, made a most excellent display of native seedlings. The Board's wish is at all times to encourage in every way the raising, planting, and protection of native trees. The display made by the schools was most encouraging.

Opossum-trapping.—For the coming year, which has been declared a close season for trapping, the Board has, rather than allow the opossums to unduly increase in number, obtained special permission from the Minister to trap. Blocks have been let on a royalty basis of 6d. per skin, the trapper in addition to pay 6d. per skin for the cost of stamping.

Pinis Plantation.—With the help of the Unemployment Board the work of lopping off the lower branches of the *Pinis insignis* and the thinning-out of the dead and weaker trees in the 300 acres of plantation continues. This work is being undertaken under the advice of the Forestry Department, and should be completed by the end of the 1939 winter. It has been a much heavier work than was anticipated. This forest should be a valuable asset to the Board in the years to come, besides providing a valuable protection for the native bush.

Local Committees and Alpine Clubs.—These bodies continue to do most valuable work. To the three hostels valuable improvements have been made largely out of revenue during the year. This has been possible owing to the increasing numbers of visitors and tourists to Mount Egmont. The alpine clubs, too, have progressed, and it is pleasant to report the friendly co-operation which exists among the House Committees, the alpine club, and the Park Board.

The Park Board is in entire sympathy with the Government for the physical improvement of the young people of New Zealand and will do all that it can to encourage the members of the five alpine clubs in Taranaki.

Before concluding I should like to state that it is my hope that in the event of some system of permanent revenue being established for the upkeep of the park, a permanent forester be appointed. This should be a young man, a forest enthusiast, who could look forward to a life's work in gradually developing the protection of the forest and the scientific reforestation of the reserve, a work which should be invaluable to Taranaki in the years to come.

In conclusion, I wish to express to members of the Board my sincere appreciation of their valued support and encouragement during the year, and to Mr. Hugh Baily, the Board's Secretary, and Mr. Norman Gibson, the Ranger, for their work and interest in the affairs of the Board. Since the year closed the Board lost the services of Mr. W. H. Moyes and Mr. P. E. Stainton as Board members. Both have done most useful work for the park. The new representatives for the North Committee are Messrs. F. Amore, New Plymouth, and G. W. Gibson, Kaimiro.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

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

The 31st March, 1938, marked the end of the eighth year of the Board's activities, and I have the honour to submit for adoption and for presentation to the Hon. the Minister of Lands a report on the Board's affairs for that period.

Financial.—The Board has again had the benefit of a financial grant from the Government, this year the sum of £250 being advanced for the employment of permanent labour in the way of track-making and the maintenance of earlier works. The Board is most grateful for the generous assistance which has been given by the Government over the last two years, which, needless to say, encourages the Board considerably in its work. Assistance from local bodies has not, however, been so stimulating, and a generous grant provisionally proposed by the Christchurch City Council has so far not been made available. The general question of financial assistance will no doubt be considered by the Board at its next meeting.

Personnel.—During the year there have been changes in the personnel of the Board through the regrettable demise of Mr. W. K. McAlpine and the resignation of Mr. J. D. Pascoe. Mr. N. C. Kensington has succeeded Mr. J. F. Quinn as Chairman, and Mr. A. G. Flower and Mrs. W. F. Tracey have been appointed members of the Board. Another change is pending due to the fact that His Worship the Mayor of Christchurch has decided not to contest the Mayoralty at the forthcoming election. While welcoming his successor in advance, the Board will regret the departure of Mr. Beanland from the Board table.

Meetings.—The Board held four meetings during the year, in April, September, and December. At the December meeting it was decided to prepare a programme of future works, to be carried out as finance permits.

Staff.—During the year both the Secretary and Treasurer, Messrs. S. T. Barnett and E. McKenzie, tendered their resignations owing to their transfers from Christchurch, and the Board expressed its appreciation of their work. Messrs. C. B. Robson and J. A. Foster were appointed to fill their positions in acting capacities.

As a result of the generous grant from the Government and in order to maintain and extend the Board's works in the park, it was decided to appoint a permanent and full time officer at the Pass. The Board therefore appointed Mr. Martin Burke, who has been approved by the Hon. the Minister of Lands as a ranger, and who has been carrying out his duties under the supervision of the Chairman of the Grounds Committee. Mr. C. E. Warden, who has served the Board for some years as ranger, was advised of the Board's appreciation of his work. Although Mr. Warden's active connection with the Board ceased in November, his honorarium was continued until the 31st March as an expression of the Board's appreciation of his past services, while his occupation of his section without payment of rent will be continued during the pleasure of the Board.

Township.—Rents have continued to be paid promptly, and the arrears owing are small. All the leases which expire in 1938 have been renewed for a further period of seven years.

Sports.—The winter was most unfavourable for winter sports, and railway excursions were few and poorly patronized. The matter of rail access to the Pass was discussed by a deputation of the Board which waited on the Hon. the Minister of Railways. The Minister stated that he hoped as soon as possible to institute a rail-car service between Arthur's Pass and Christchurch.

The two clubs which use the park as their base, the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and the Christchurch Ski Club, have continued as actively as ever, and the latter is about to build a club house in the township.

General.—The activities in the park of the Main Highways Board have continued and have resulted in greatly improved access from both directions. An important work which is at present under construction is the Rough Creek Bridge.

The memorial to Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson, the discoverer of the Pass and a foundation member of the Board, was unveiled on the 18th April, 1937, the Board being represented at the ceremony.

Appreciations.—The thanks of the Board are due to Mr. M. J. Barnett, Superintendent of Reserves to the Christchurch City Council, for his continued supervision and advice; to the Railways Department for the courteous attention of its officers; to the public press for its encouragement of the work of the Board; to the Ranger Mr. Burke and to the honorary rangers, particularly Mr. and Mrs. R. Scott and Constable Gibb; and to Dr. William McKay, Chairman of the Grounds Committee, for his energy and supervision in the various works in the Park.

REPORT OF THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE.

The report of the Grounds Committee, which has been prepared by Dr. McKay, is submitted hereunder:—

“On account of the improved financial state of the Board brought about by the sympathetic policy of the Minister of Lands, the Hon. F. Langstone, many works long overdue have been completed during the past year. The appointment of a working ranger has enabled your Committee to effect many necessary improvements on old tracks, while commencing the laying down of new ones. Such work had been impossible for some two years owing to the difficulty of procuring casual labour in such a variable climate.

“*Punch Bowl Bridge.*—Since last annual meeting the bridge over the Bealey River has been completed and has given satisfaction for its general appearance as well as its solidity. This now enables visitors easily to make use of the camping and pleasure grounds on the northern side of the Bealey, as well as to visit the Falls or to climb the slopes of Mount Aitken.

“*Shelter at the Divide.*—This stone structure was put up by the contractors in a most expeditious and workmanlike manner. It fits well into the picture at the Pass and has already proved a great convenience to the public.

“*Footbridge over Bealey.*—The bridge on the way to Margaret's Tarn and Bealey Glacier has been completely renewed, and is now both solid and safe.

“*Kelly's Hut.*—As explained in the Committee's last report, the Grey Alpine Club undertook the task of transporting all the material for this hut to the top of the range at a height of over 4,000 ft. Not only have the members cheerfully honoured their promise, but they have, in addition, taken on the responsibility of erecting the building. The result is that practically all the material is on the site, while the hut, with concrete foundation, is already habitable. Only those in touch with this work will appreciate what a laborious task it has been. Great credit is due to the members of the club for their gratuitous efforts, which were so effectively stimulated and organized by the zeal of their late captain, the lamented Patrick Carrol.

“*Tracks:*—

“(1) In the last report the Committee referred to the *alternative track to Avalanche Peak*, on which such commendable work had been done by the honorary ranger, Mr. R. Scott. The new chief ranger, Mr. M. Burke, has recently devoted much time and attention to further levelling and benching, so that we look forward shortly to this being one of the best constructed tracks within the park.

“(2) The original *Avalanche Track*, commencing near the hostel, has now been cleaned up and some very satisfactory regrading and benching carried out.

- “(3) Bealey Glacier Track is next on the list for improvements to be done, as it is more used than probably any other track at the Pass.
- “(4) Surveys of New Tracks: The question of surveying track lines in the Mingha and Edwards Valleys has been deferred until the completion of the Mount Aitken and Goat Hill tracks. The latter would probably follow the line along Barrack Creek ridge laid down many years since by the Public Works Department.
- “(5) General: Endeavours have been made to blaze a suitable line for a track leading from the Mount Aitken ridge down into the Punch Bowl. In this connection Mr. R. Scott was invaluable in his assistance to the ranger, and the Committee hopes before long to have a favourable solution to the problem. Investigations have also been made into the possibility of forming a suitable approach to the Bowl up the creek itself, as these falls have a constant attraction for visitors, who seem always anxious for a closer view.

“*Lake Kaurapataka*.—The necessary formalities being now completed, there will be added to the park a large and interesting tract of new country extending up the Taramakau Valley on its southern side as far as Harper's Pass. This historic river valley is covered for many miles with grass-covered shingle flats, along which progress on foot or on horse-back can easily be made. It is flanked on either side by high peaks, most attractive to the visitor either in winter or summer. One of the beauty spots of this newly acquired area is Lake Kaurapataka, situated about six miles from Aitken's Railway-station, and at an altitude of 1,360 ft. It is one mile and a quarter long by about one-quarter broad. As it is surrounded to the water's edge by luxuriant bush, your Committee has commenced the formation of a two-mile track leading from the open Taramakau River bed up the Pfeiffer Stream to the western end of the lake. From this point it proceeds along the southern shore on to the eastern extremity overlooking the Otaheke Gorge, a little below the hot sulphur springs. When better known this addition to the park will attract many visitors.

“*Alpine Rock Garden*.—Mr. M. J. Barnett has continued to render valuable assistance and advice in the maintenance and stocking of this garden. Under his direction a gardener trained in this class of work devoted several weeks to improvements, with the result that the rockery is well stocked and the plants have become satisfactorily established.

“*Plants Protection*.—The question of plants protection is rapidly becoming one calling for more serious consideration. First of all there is much illegal pillaging of plants by visitors, more especially in the western portion of the park. This is difficult to combat with the very limited number of rangers at the command of the Board. In addition to this, numerous applications are being made from individuals and from institutions for permission to take plants and seeds from the park. A uniform practice should be adopted by the Board in dealing with such applications. There is probably no highway in this country passing through such an interesting alpine garden, the very proximity of which to the road is the source of much of the danger to the plants. Conservation is important as affecting not only this natural garden, but also our established rockeries. The more attractive the display in the latter, the more vulnerable they become to poachers. Already some of the rarer plants introduced into these plots have been illegally removed.

“*Noxious Weeds*.—These have become very plentiful in certain localities not only within the Park reservation, but on lands under the control of the Railways Department and the Highways Board. These two Departments on being approached very promptly agreed to co-operate in the eradication of broom, brier, gorse, fox-glove, and other noxious weeds. Good work has been done in this respect by their employees and also by our own ranger.

“*Fire-prevention*.—Although there has been a pleasing absence of bush fires during the past year, your Committee is pleased to report that arrangements for the creation of a fire district extending from the Divide down to the Taipo River are well advanced. This will not only help greatly in the prevention of fires, but will facilitate the control of such outbreaks as may unfortunately occur.

“*Highway within the Park*.—Improvements continue to be made by the Highways Board, chief among them being the building of a traffic bridge over Rough Creek within the township. It is hoped that, following the completion of this work, the necessary elimination of adjacent dangerous corners will be effected and the road generally straightened up. Later on the advisability of tar-sealing the highway within the township might be discussed. At Twin Creeks a sunken corduroy track has been provided, which, pending the construction of the proposed bridge, is making traffic much safer at this previously dangerous point.”

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