

In 1930 an area of 1 acre 3 roods 36.5 perches at Ohope Beach was purchased for recreation purposes out of funds contributed by the Bruce Trustees and the Whakatane Borough and County Councils, and by arrangement with the contributing bodies the Borough Council was appointed as a Domain Board to have the control and management of the area. During the year the Borough Council suggested that the County Council should take over control of the Domain, and the necessary Order in Council was accordingly issued. Important additions are being made to this Domain. An area of 143 acres 1 rood 27 perches of the Ngatiawa Native Land Development Block has been acquired by this Department from the Native Department at the price of £179 15s. for land and fencing so that it can be reserved for recreation purposes. This area is mostly bush-clad, and the decision to acquire it as an addition to the domain land in the vicinity has given general satisfaction. Thanks are due to the Native Department for its ready co-operation in the matter. Another area of 42 acres 0 roods 35.1 perches lying between the original domain and the native area has been transferred by the Council to the Crown and is also being added to the domain, which will thus finally comprise a total area of 187 acres 2 roods 18.6 perches. The County Council's action in transferring its land to the Crown so that the whole area can be administered as public-domain land is greatly appreciated by the Department.

Orders in Council were issued appointing sixty-two Domain Boards to control domains for further terms, while eighty vacancies on various Boards were filled by the appointment of suitable persons. In a number of cases additional members were also appointed to Domain Boards.

The Westport No. 2 and the Westport North Beach Domains were united to form one public domain.

Permission was granted in fifteen cases for Domain Boards to increase the charges for admission to their domains on special occasions during the year. One set of by-laws was approved, and permission given in two cases to the setting-aside of camping-grounds 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 six cases during the year.

Numerous leasing proposals were submitted by Domain Boards and fully investigated before approval was given to the issue of leases. Domain Boards generally are realizing the advantage of being able to ask for advice and assistance in this important phase of the administration of domain lands, and on its part the Department is prepared to do all that it can to see that areas are leased, consistent always with the proper requirements of recreation, to the best possible advantage, and that the terms and conditions of leases are fair and reasonable from all points of view.

A number of applications on the part of Domain Boards for the felling of old plantations or parts of plantations on public domains were investigated during the year, and permission given in all cases where it was clear that the trees concerned had outlived their usefulness. It is usually insisted that any cleared areas are to be replanted in suitable trees and shrubs.

The pressure brought to bear on the Department for the setting-aside of public domains in districts where no provision has been made to meet recreation requirements is increasing every year. The Department has always been generous in the matter of the reservation of Crown land for recreation, but it is often difficult in districts where no Crown land is available to obtain suitable land for the purpose. It is, however, recognized that districts where no reserves have been set aside for public recreation and where no Crown land exists have a fair claim to some assistance from the State, and within the somewhat rigid limits of the small annual appropriation that has so far been permitted the Department endeavours to meet the position by the purchase of suitable areas. It is, as a rule, necessary to ask the districts concerned to contribute towards the cost of purchasing recreation areas, and this in many ways is a good arrangement for all concerned, as experience has shown only too plainly in many cases that what is too easily obtained is not always properly appreciated. During the year under review the Department contributed the sum of £1,800 towards the acquisition of recreation areas, and was also able to make some small grants to assist Domain Boards, particularly in country districts, to improve their domains and provide additional recreation facilities for the people. Arrangements were also made during the year for the diversion of funds standing to the credit of certain domains for use on other domains not so happily situated in the financial sense.

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, 1933, also dealt with several other matters affecting public domains and Domain Boards. Section 14 of the Act cancelled the reservation over an area of 7 acres 3 roods 35 perches of the Kopuru Domain and authorized its disposal to an adjoining owner. This domain is situated on the west coast of North Auckland, and comprises an area of some 1,087 acres of sandhill country. It is controlled by the Hobson County Council acting as a Domain Board, and in the summer is used a good deal for camping. In order to improve the access to the beach the Council has formed a new road running from a county road partly through domain land and partly through freehold property. The area of freehold required for the new road is 1 acre 3 roods 32 perches, and the owner gave his consent subject to the condition that he be allowed to acquire an area of 7 acres 3 roods 35 perches of the domain. This latter area is not required for recreation, and under the circumstances it was considered desirable to cancel the reservation and to authorize the disposal of the land to the freehold owner. The difference in value between the freehold area required for the road and the domain area to be disposed of will be paid into the domain account before title is issued.

Section 17 authorized the Waiuku Town Board to expend the revenue from certain land in managing, administering, and improving the Massey Park Domain and other land set apart for recreation purposes and under the control of the Board. By the Waiuku Recreation Reserve Act, 1879, an area of 78 acres which had previously been reserved as a recreation-ground and Volunteer drill-ground was vested in a Board of Trustees. By section 4 of the Reserves and other Lands