

respect.

OF THAT OF BOYS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL metalwork classes.

Sir Keith Park will be asked to be the speaker.

# Kawaroa, the Park of The Long Reef

THE story of the creation of this most popular of New Plymouth's parks and reserves—at least as a children's picnic playground—is an epic of sustained voluntary service by civic-minded citizens that has extended for more than half a century.

To the younger section of the present generation it is perhaps just "Kawaroa Park," but there are still many of their elders who recollect this now delightful spot as a waste of sandhills, covered with furze and lupins, damped by the spray from the pounding seas that broke over the reef which fronted the area.

The task by which this transformation has been achieved was shared by successive groups of voluntary workers of the western part of the city, to all of whom great credit is due. There is, however, one name that stands out pre-eminently as a leader in this work for a long time. It is that of the late Mr. V. H. "Bo" Beal.

The present committee has decided to commemorate his work for the park by the erection of a memorial seat, to be built on one of the small knolls in the park.

Mr. Beal was a member of the original committee when a society, known as the West End Foreshore Improvement Society, was formed on January 25, 1913, and application made to the Borough Council for permission to control the reserve, which had then become known as Kawaroa Park.

In 1916 he was elected chairman of the committee, a position he held for 30 years, for 25 of which he was president of the society, which in the previous year had been re-named the Kawaroa Park Foreshore Beautifying Society.

### FRUITFUL SEED

It was a far-sighted vision at the end of the last century which saw the possibility of transforming this barren and unattractive spot into a seaside park. The seed then sown has yielded a rich harvest. At that time the land was Education Reserve and a lease was secured by the council from the Education Commissioners in 1901. It was subsequently vested in the council on October 12, 1914, as a public recreation reserve.

Before then, however, much work had been done in clearing lupin and scrub, levelling down some of the sandhills, and making tracks. One track led from the entrance to the reserve down to the beach at the western end of the park. Recognising the potentialities of the area the council erected a band rotunda to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Mayor, Mr. E. Dockrill, on Coronation Day, August 9, 1902. Following this a roadway from Weymouth Street to the rotunda was made and is now known as Tisch Avenue. Mr. Gustavus Tisch, a former mayor of the borough, had mooted the formation of a marine parade along the seafront, and this was regarded as the first step in the project.

The primary objective of the society formed in 1913, when given control of the reserve by the council, was the beautifying of the area surrounding the rotunda. The members of the society became a very live and hard-working body and rapid developmental progress was made—all by voluntary labour. The

levelling of sandhills was followed by the planting of ornamental shrubs and trees, the forming of walks, and an early start made with the provision of the many amenities which have made the park such a happy playground for children.

The official opening of the park took place on March 24, 1913, the ceremony being performed by the Mayor, Mr. G. W. Browne. The opening was the occasion of the first Easter Monday picnic in the park, and these annual galas were the means by which for many years the society raised thousands of pounds for park improvements.

The next important step was the erection of the tea bungalow. The design at that time was somewhat unique in New Zealand, but it was in keeping with the surroundings. The bungalow was opened on December 11, 1913.

Working bees were held regularly on Thursday and Saturday afternoons—the two weekly half-holidays of those times—to further level areas, spread soil (with the shovel and barrow method), sow lawns, lay down kerbings surrounding the lawn plots, and plant trees and shrubs. Protection work was also undertaken to combat sea erosion, and a concrete wall was built to check the sea encroachment along the frontage to which the bungalow faced.

With the facilities provided by the bungalow, euchre parties became another regular means of money-raising as did also the afternoon teas supervised by a

women's committee, which had been, and was for many years, a valuable section of the society's organisation. This committee was, in 1915, given complete control of its own affairs, with Mrs. W. Oliver as president, a position she occupied with distinction for many years. She was succeeded by Mr. Beal, who continued the office with equal success.

### AREA EXTENDED

The original area of the park was eight acres, but in 1914 the then president, Mr. George Tabor, realised that some breakwind shelter was required along the southern line of the reserve. Through his initiative an area of another four acres was added to the park by way of lease from the Railway Department. The development of this area involved more clearing and planting, but the wisdom of the decision is abundantly clear and greatly appreciated to-day.

The kerbing of Tisch Avenue was another major work undertaken. For this the borough council donated tons of kerbing stones and when they were laid both sides of the avenue were planted with pohutukawas and "cabbage" trees. Further developmental work and general maintenance occupied successive committees, and from time to time more playground amenities, including a paddling pool were added to the park equipment. Tennis courts and croquet lawns were formed, all of which add up to as fine a piece of civic work by enthusiastic citizens as could be seen anywhere. It is in this park, too, that the Municipal salt water baths are situated.

During its early years the society suffered in its administration by frequent changes in its chief executive officers. It was the accession of Mr. Beal to the chief office, and his maintenance of that office for so long that gave a continuity to the administrative work of the society and did so much to bring the park to its present state of attractiveness. It is true he was supported by a loyal and devoted band of helpers, to whom a share of the credit for the achievement must go, but his guiding hand and wise counsel was the inspiration of much that was done. He had one hobby, and that was Kawaroa Park, and it is fitting that so suitable a memorial to his work should be placed in this reserve.

That the value of his work is recognised is evidenced by the fact that as soon as it became known that a memorial was to be erected several donations, spontaneously given, were received from clubs and organisations which had enjoyed some of the many amenities provided in the park.—(R.L.C.)



THE MEMORIAL SEAT to be erected in Kawaroa Park to the memory of the late Mr. V. H. Beal. The seat, constructed in concrete, will be on one of the small hills in the park overlooking the sea. The back of the seat will be of split stone, and the base of the central octagon and the floor of the first lift will be finished in red quarry tiles. The cost is estimated at about £500.

ing to  
Auck-  
l about  
include  
la and  
ea trip  
n Fri-  
r jour-  
rways  
ho are  
nber—  
Ting  
with  
wards,  
hy not  
always  
"Ting  
and if  
medit-  
turbed  
docile  
much  
n her  
patch  
ion, is  
ck up  
  
N  
  
been  
com-  
ations  
  
s. d.  
5 6  
5 0  
0 0  
5 0  
0 0  
0 0  
0 0  
2 0  
  
17 6  
New  
erald.  
now-  
  
ald.)  
  
S  
m a  
ad-  
tle-  
  
ciety  
voir-  
say  
cans,  
both  
tle-  
rder  
of a  
ound  
and  
same  
mobs  
not  
are  
any  
nds,  
dg.  
back  
nent

shop  
pleas  
"St  
comm  
stylis  
"St  
the t  
—Ou  
1 F  
N  
am  
2  
to see  
in:  
7  
seas  
  
DUI  
express  
wool  
Otago  
extens  
The n  
council  
further  
Spes  
season  
of the  
One  
in stor  
last  
penall  
presse  
  
Im  
  
TA  
depre  
Isian  
cast  
Stron  
mode  
chanj  
becom  
temp  
day  
  
NE  
  
Read:  
New Pl  
ing the  
were:—  
minizu  
mum g  
shine.  
.25in.;  
fall thi  
  
Readi  
logical  
Humidit  
(rising);  
  
Wh  
  
Mayfair.  
Dirk I  
Regent-  
tair St  
Opera H  
Niven,  
State—  
(Susan  
Palladiu  
  
Plaza—  
Terren  
King's—  
Carla