

MAGNIFICENT GIFT

"HAPURUNUI" FOR BOROUGH

Reserve for the People

GENEROUS ACT OF MR. AND MRS. C. H. BURGESS

DONORS' BEAUTIFUL PROPERTY.

By the generous act of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess, their magnificent property known as "Hapurunui," situated at Mangorei, and adjoining the Crown scenic reserve known as the Meeting of the Waters, is to become the property of the people of New Plymouth, the gift having been made in commemoration of the diamond jubilee of the borough, which is to be celebrated early next month. The gift of this beautiful property by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess to the borough was announced publicly yesterday afternoon, when a special meeting of the Borough Council was held for the purpose of formally receiving the offer and acknowledging the generosity of the donors towards the people of New Plymouth.

The area consists of nearly 13 acres, the greater part of which is in beautiful native bush and this will now become for all time a public reservation. Adjoining it is the Meeting of the Waters reserve which consists now of some 62 acres.

The borough also owns a block of land about the hydro electric powerhouse, including an area recently acquired from the estate of the late Mr. Henry King, of some 25 acres, and there are the hydro works farm lands, approximating some 555 acres which are leased, and the lands around the Mangamahoe lake which have been extensively planted with trees, so that altogether in that area there will now be a very large reservation in addition to the leased farm lands, belonging to the people of New Plymouth.

In accepting this gift as another expression of the public spiritedness of the donors, the members of the council yesterday paid tribute to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess to the town of New Plymouth, and reference was made to the other gifts they had made and to their splendid work for the borough while Mr. Burgess occupied the office of Mayor during the war years and to their work on behalf of the returned soldiers since that time.

Not Yet Open to Public.

It should be clearly understood by the public that until the property is transferred to the borough it is not open to the public, who will not be entitled to enter upon it until the legal formalities have been complied with and the official opening takes place. It is the intention of the council to arrange for the official opening of the property as a public reserve to take place during the celebration of the diamond jubilee of the borough, which comes about August 11, and it is hoped to arrange for the Governor-General to pay a visit to New Plymouth and perform the official opening of the new reserve.

"This is not the first time, by any means," said the Mayor, Mr. E. R. C. Gilmour, in announcing the gift at yesterday's meeting of the council, "that Mr. and Mrs. Burgess have given concrete evidence of their great interest in the town in which they live and of the warm affection they bear for its people. Nor is it the first time that the people of New Plymouth have benefited from their public spirit and generosity."

amongst whom they have lived so long. Steps will require to be taken to arrange for the official opening of the park. This I hope may take place next month during the celebrations in connection with the diamond jubilee of the borough. In this connection it seems a happy augury for the celebrations that a gift as this, adding so much to the amenities of the town, should have been made just at this time.

The Mayor then moved the following resolutions, which were carried unanimously:—

1. That this council in the name and on behalf of the people of New Plymouth gratefully accepts the gift of the property "Hapurunui" tendered by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess as a public resort for the recreation and enjoyment of the people and undertakes that it will be faithfully maintained for the purposes for which it has been given.

2. That in conveying the preceding resolution to Mr. and Mrs. Burgess the Mayor be requested to ascertain whether they will permit the park to be known as "Burgess Park."

3. That this council again places upon record its appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess to New Plymouth and District and for the spirit of goodwill evinced by them throughout a very long period of public service in actively associating themselves with every movement having for its object the advancement and prosperity of the town and the welfare of its people. That the council also reiterates its grateful thanks for the gifts which they have from time to time made to the town and gladly embraces this opportunity of expressing the hope that Mr. and Mrs. Burgess may long be spared to the town and to each other in the full enjoyment of the best of health and every prosperity and that always amongst the most pleasant memories of their lives may be the knowledge of the efforts so wide so sustained and so varied which they with manifest public spirit have made for the welfare of the community in which they have lived so long.

Climax of Generosity.

In speaking to the resolutions Councillor P. E. Stainton referred to the gift as a climax to what Mr. and Mrs. Burgess have previously done for the borough and people of New Plymouth, and he said such a beautiful gift would come to be regarded as one of the most beautiful spots in the Dominion. It was a wonderful thing that there were in New Plymouth persons like Mr. and Mrs. Burgess able and willing to make such a public gift. Travellers from abroad had been heard to say that this particular property was one of the most magnificent they had seen anywhere. Local residents, with perhaps not so wide an experience of travel, would endorse those sentiments, and realize that the new reserve would become one of the finest of the borough's assets so far as public reserves were concerned. He therefore joined with the Mayor in expressing the sincerest appreciation of the generosity of the donors and this further evidence of their public spiritedness. He hoped the pleasure the borough felt in accepting the gift would be shared no less by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess in making the gift. It would be appreciated by the present generation and perhaps still more by succeeding generations.

Councillor Stanley J. Smith also joined in the expressions of appreciation, and said that as a member of the council at the time when Mr. Burgess was mayor he formed a very high opinion of him as the chief citizen of the town and realized that his wish was that the ratepayers should always receive full value for what they paid into the borough. He endorsed what the Mayor and Councillor Stainton had said and agreed that it was a very gratifying thing to know that there were persons like Mr. and Mrs. Burgess who were prepared to make a sacrifice in order to give such a magnificent property to the people.

Councillor R. S. S. Richardson said he

T. H. 17 July 1936.

Personal Service.

We have in mind, he said, the beautiful kiosk in Pukekura Park which they erected, furnished and fitted out entirely at their own cost. Then amongst many other things too numerous to mention we have the Burgess children's playground at Wallace Place, so popular amongst the children of that locality, another gift from Mr. and Mrs. Burgess. Their gifts have been extremely generous and have shown the wonderful public spirit which animates them. These gifts are, however, surpassed by the personal work they have done and the personal interest they have taken during a long period of years in everything pertaining to the development of the town and the welfare of its people. They have worked with and assisted so many organisations in this town that I will not attempt to enumerate them.

Outstanding War Work.

As Mayor and Mayoress of the town from 1915 to 1919 they did outstanding work, and their work for the benefit of the soldiers going to and returning from the war and for the benefit of the returned soldiers after the war form a glorious chapter in their lives and an inspiration to everyone. And now as a climax to all that has gone before, they have given to the people this beautiful property "Hapurunui."

This property is well known throughout the district. It is situated at the Meeting of the Waters and contains over 12 acres, 2 1/2 acres of which is beautifully laid out in lawns and shrubberies, the balance being good bush protected from the winds by hedges of exotic trees. The buildings, which I believe have cost over £3000 to erect, harmonise perfectly with their surroundings and can, at a moderate cost, be converted into a modern and up-to-date tea kiosk. The property adjoins a large scenic reserve owned by the Crown and controlled by a scenic board of which the Mayor of the borough for the time being is a member. The property can be linked up with this scenic reserve and the two combined will form a wonderful heritage for the people. The outlook from the property is really inspiring and taken in conjunction with the scenic reserve is a beauty spot impossible to equal in its class in the Southern Hemisphere. This is a big thing to say but this is not only my impression but it is the impression of many people familiar with beauty spots in all parts of the world.

The only condition attached by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess is that the council shall maintain the property for the use and benefit of the people and we can in all thankfulness accept the trust.

"Burgess Park."

In the transfer of the property to the council later on it will be necessary to fix the details of the trust, but this will be arranged by the borough solicitor with the donors. It will also be necessary at a later date to name the property and I am sure that you will agree that the only name we can give it will be "Burgess Park." As such it will remain for all time as an abiding memorial of the great public spirit of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess and of the warm affection they have always evinced for the town of their adoption and for the people

Councillor R. S. S. Richardson said he experienced a thrill when he first saw the property and another when he learned of the gift. It was really a wonderful gift to the town and in years to come the residents would be very proud of what had been done by the donors of the property. Contrasting New Plymouth with some of the big centres of the world he said this place was exceedingly fortunate in that it had so many open spaces as public reserves. He recognised it must have been a great sacrifice for Mr. and Mrs. Burgess to give up such a beautiful place, but it was only another evidence of what they had done for the people of this place and especially for the returned soldiers.

Councillor F. S. Grayling also emphasised the value of the gift and the value of the work done by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess for the returned soldiers. In the large centres open spaces had had to be acquired at great cost, but New Plymouth was singularly fortunate in that respect and this latest gift still further enhanced its value in that respect.

Councillors F. J. Hill and J. W. Darby said they could add nothing to what had been said and they agreed that the gift was a magnificent one for which the donors deserved the sincere thanks of the present and succeeding generations.

A sub-committee consisting of the Mayor and Councillors Stinton and Hill, with the town clerk (Mr. F. T. Bellringer) was set up to deal with matters relating to the transfer of the property and the arrangements for the official opening.

Announcement Acclaimed.

The Mayor, Mr. E. R. C. Gilmour, in the course of his address at the new Frankleigh Park public hall last night, referred to the gift of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess of their property at the Meeting-of-the-Waters. Loud applause followed the announcement.

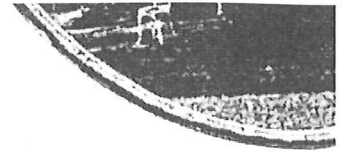
"It is hard to appreciate fully the wonderful gift given the people of the town and district and to the coming generations. The property contains some of the finest native bush in the province," the Mayor concluded.

Reference to the gift was also made at a meeting of the committee of the Twenty Thousand Club last night, and a resolution was passed expressing appreciation of the gift and the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess.

Original Reserve.

In connection with the gift of this portion of native bush to the borough it is interesting to recall the genesis of the reserve known as the Meeting-of-the-Waters, as the latest gift really rounds off the areas previously set aside, thus making a complete block which will be less subject to the risk of fire and will also afford a more complete panoramic picture than could have been obtained apart from the inclusion of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess' property in the block.

Mr. W. H. Skinner was instrumental in saving the area from being lost to the public, which in fact, might easily have happened through an inadvertence in the leasing of a portion of land in



A BEAUTY SPOT.—A glimpse "Hapurunui," on the banks of River.

that area. The land was originally education reserve and in giving a lease to a settler the area of this reserve, which had been set aside, was mistakenly included in the land leased. That original area comprised 14 acres 1 rood 20 perches, and was that area situated between "Hapurunui" and the dairy factory and the main road and the river. It was Mr. Skinner who discovered the error and he at once got in touch with Mr. C. W. Govett and they interviewed the Reserves Commissioners, and the result of their representations was that the lease was called in and a new lease prepared excluding the reserve area. Had the lessee of the property acted promptly the bush on the land might have been felled and the whole value of the reserve been destroyed. Since then various areas have been added to the reserve and to-day the area measures 61 acres 3 roods 1 perch, including 9 1/2 acres of riverbed. The new area to be added will bring the total size of the reserve up to approximately 74 acres.

This morning Mr. Skinner said that when he heard of the gift by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess he was not altogether surprised, knowing as he did of their love of beauty and nature and their artistic outlook generally. As one who had been interested in the original reserve and had a hand in saving it over 40 years ago, and who was still a member of the Scenic Reserves Board which controls the reserve, he deeply appreciated this last gift, completing, as it would, a very fine block containing some of the most beautiful bush in the district.

Mr. Skinner emphasised the need for a strict supervision of the area, as his own personal fear, and that of the board, as a result of past experience, was that much damage might be done through wanton mischief by persons who did not place such a high value on the flora contained within such places. In the original reserve there had been a class of fern peculiar to that area, but the variety had been completely lost through the depredations of persons who did not appreciate that they could not be preserved outside their natural habitat unless those who had them knew how to look after them. He counselled the greatest care that nothing should be removed from any part of this area.

Jubilee Celebrations.

A meeting of ladies willing to assist at the Jubilee and children's balls will be held at the Borough Council Chambers on Monday afternoon at 2.30 p.m.

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Beautiful "Hapurunui" Presented to the Borough

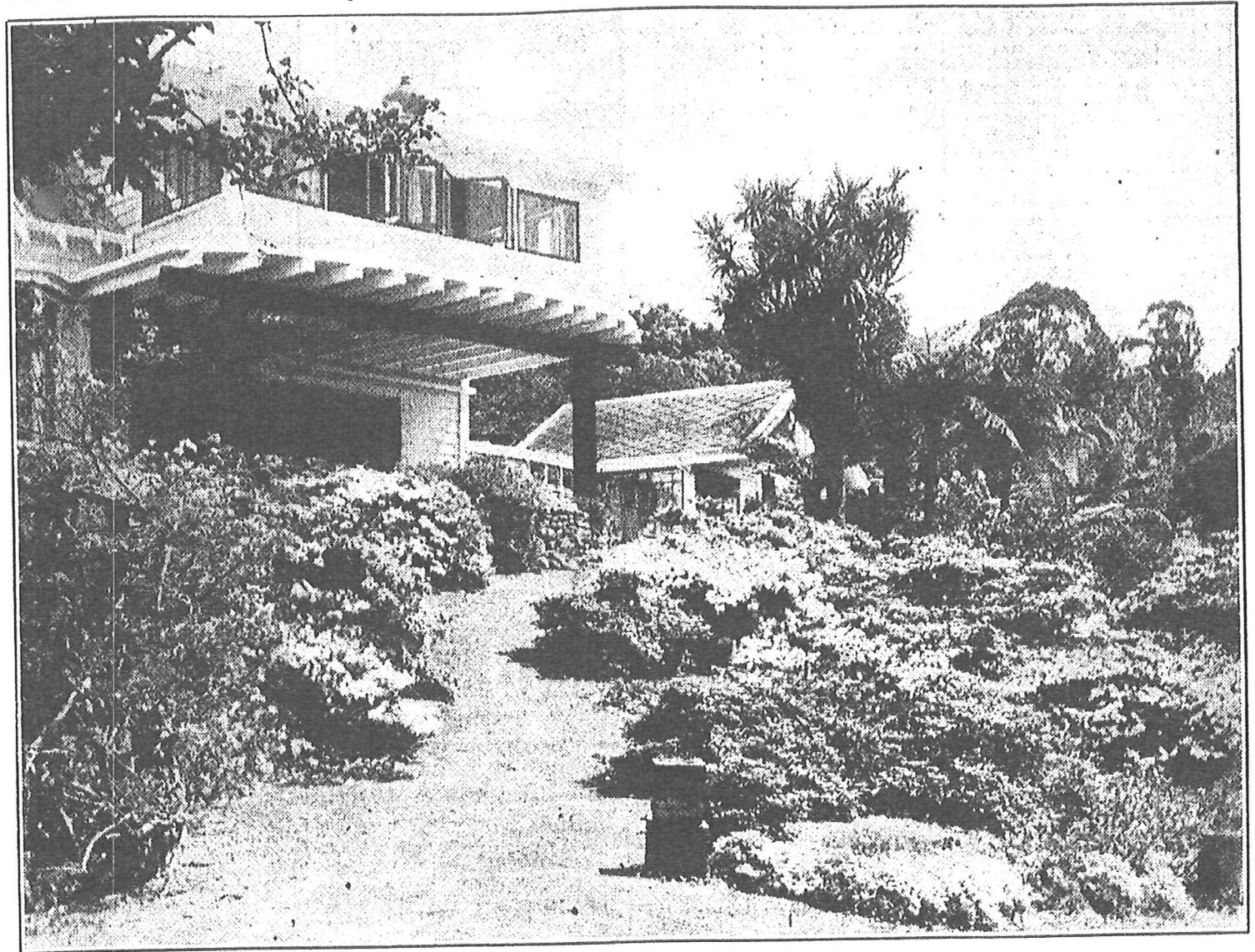
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A MAGNIFICENT GIFT.—"Hapurunui," the well-known property of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess and one of the beauty spots of the town, has been presented to the borough. The donors' generosity has been expressed in many public-spirited actions, but none more appreciated than the gift of their beautiful park and garden. The picture shows the lovely home of the donors and portion of the garden, which at this spot is a wealth of azaleas.