Observatory Dome Erected In Hawera Park

Built by volunteer labour.

The fruits of about 10 months' planning and work were seen in Hawera's King Edward Park on Sunday when a band of volunteers from the Hawera Astronomical Society and other interested persons placed the dome on the new observatory there. The dome is now on the tea kiosk in place of the disused band rotunda, and is believed to be the only one in New Zealand built with voluntary labour.

The idea of an observatory for Hawera germinted when a series of lectures on astronomy was given in the town by Mr. J. M. Townsend under the auspices of the Victoria University College Regional Council of Adult Education. At the end of the lectures Mr. N. R. Burrell said he would donate to an observatory a five-inch telescope that had been the property of his father, the late Mr. A. W. Burrell, Stratford. The only provisions were that the Hawera Borough Council should find a suitable site and help with the expenses of the project.

Work on the dome was begun in July. Plant and space were donated by the National Dairy Association Ltd. and the engineering and sheet-metal working firm of Burrell and Wood Ltd. in whose shops the work was done. The galvanised sheets were wheeled up by Skerton and Lines, panel beaters.

Smooth Operation

Efficient organisation before the actual job resulted in a smooth operation. A team of 15 men removed the dome from its store and loaded it on a truck at about 8.45 a.m. One hour later it had been lifted over the gates into the park, carried to the site and slip up previously erected skids to its position, where it was temporarily but firmly fastened.

It now rests its 39-foot circumference securely on an 18-foot high base. It is constructed of 22-gauge galvanised sheeting and angle irons rolled to the correct curves. It was constructed to a tolerance of one-eighth of an inch.

There is a two-foot wide shutter through a quarter circumference on a vertical plane, and with the fitting of suitable trunnions to enable free revolution the dome will allow full coverage of the heavens.

Next task will be the training of suitable observers before the observatory can be opened periodically to members of the public, like those at Wanganui and New Plymouth.

Messrs. Corbett And Sheat Both Seek Nomination

Mr. E. B. Corbett and Mr. W. A. Sheat have both indicated their intention to offer themselves as National Party candidates for the Egmont electorate at the next general election.

This notification was received at the annual meeting of the party's electorate at Manaia last week. The selection of a candidate will be made at a later meeting.