

1947

NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE)

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of
His Excellency*

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND
HEALTH RESORTS to HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Wellington, 30th June, 1947.

I HAVE the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Department
of Tourist and Health Resorts for the year ended 31st March, 1947.

W. E. PARRY,
Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts.

His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS

Wellington, 13th June, 1947.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the organization
and work of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts for the year ended
31st March, 1947.

I have, &c.,

L. J. SCHMITT, General Manager.

The Hon. W. E. Parry,
Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts.

ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Department closed its fiscal year with a record gross turnover of £1,200,000 from all sources. The last comparable pre-war year, 1937–38, grossed £707,000, and therefore the increase over the last “normal” period is £413,000.

The figures indicate the tendency of more and more New Zealanders to explore the natural tourist and holiday resources of their own country.

The Department has been able to extend its activities in certain directions and to translate into accomplishment some of its plans for development, but the progress made and the attainment of certain objectives still aimed for are conditioned by factors at present beyond control. Every effort has been made, to the limits of the capacity of all concerned, to implement and expand the functions of the organization in the national interest and for the benefit of the tourist industry as a whole. The Department's best endeavours have been made to provide the fullest possible measure of service to tourists, travellers, and all those who seek acquaintance with New Zealand's varied natural and sporting attractions.

THE GENERAL POSITION AND OUTLOOK

(a) THE OVERSEAS FIELD

Booking activities overseas were resumed in the preceding year, but were confined to the United Kingdom and Australia. The volume of business transacted in 1946–47 was relatively small. Bookings dealt with by overseas offices represented 3 per cent. of the total passenger-booking turnover, whereas in 1937–38, the nearest comparable “normal” year, business booked abroad represented 25 per cent. These figures must be regarded as relative only—many overseas visitors defer definite booking arrangements until arrival in New Zealand. Moreover, the only statistics available are those disclosed by departmental records. Data relating to independent travel and the activities of private agencies are, of course, unascertainable. The low percentage of visitors booked abroad is regarded as a reasonable indication of the present state of transport facilities. There is still a world-wide shortage of surface passenger transport and balanced time-tables are not in immediate prospect. Aerial passenger transportation frequencies from overseas countries have shown marked improvements, but, in the main, the fares remain rather expensive for the average tourist visitor.

The United Kingdom.—The Department's Bureau in London reports that the number of requests for information received continues at a very high level and that the proportion of firm tourist inquiries is increasing. The opinion is vouchsafed that this increase is due to a growing belief that the time is coming when steamship passages will be more readily available.

Travelling-expenses in Britain and Europe have risen very sharply since the war. Touring costs in New Zealand have not advanced in the same ratio.

Another factor favourable to the development of tourist traffic from Britain arises out of the passing of the Exchange Control Bill, which limits expenditure by British tourists in countries outside the sterling area to £75 per person per annum. A wealthy class of person in Britain has long been accustomed to spend the winter in the sunshine of milder climates such as the French or Italian Riviera. This is no longer possible, and the legislation mentioned will have the tendency of diverting to New Zealand, and other Southern Hemisphere countries, a number of tourists who, in normal circumstances, would go to the Mediterranean area.

In the latter months of the year that has passed a few people travelling for pleasure have found their way by various means from the United Kingdom to New Zealand. This number has been small, but it is significant and encouraging. From now on, as the shipping position eases, there should be a gradual revival of the tourist traffic from Britain to New Zealand. In all probability the beginnings of this revival may be seen during the 1947-48 season; our London Bureau feels that New Zealand may look forward to seeing this traffic grow to substantial proportions in 1948-49.

Travel Agents in the British Isles are stated to be doing good business in all departments. Many offices have reopened, and new agencies—some specializing in air travel—have appeared. It is noticeable that there is a growing demand for New Zealand tourist information.

Some continental countries, notably Switzerland, France, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries, are encouraging tourist traffic across their borders. Travel conditions are reported as becoming progressively better, and various restrictions on international travel, including the need for visas, are disappearing. The number of tourist inquiries received by New Zealand from European countries is very small.

The Department's London Travel Manager represented New Zealand at the International Conference of National Tourist Organizations held in London in October, 1946.

Australia.—The year just ended was the first complete post-war period, and, considering the difficulties experienced, a total of 883 comprehensive tours planned and booked in Sydney and Melbourne is a reasonable start. Transport facilities between the Commonwealth and New Zealand, apart from air travel, have been irregular for most of the period and were disrupted by the mishap to the "Wanganella." As a result, many inquirers had to be turned away, but it is considered that a large number can be regarded as certain of retaining their interest in a New Zealand holiday and that they will return to finalize bookings when transport becomes more normal.

The position regarding the vessels which were on the trans-Tasman run in pre-war years, as near as it can be judged at present, is as follows: Union Line ships "Monowai" and "Aorangi," being refitted at Sydney, will not be ready until early 1948; Matson Line ships "Lurline," "Monterey," and "Mariposa," being refitted in America, will not be in service until late in 1947, and Huddart Parker's "Wanganella," although salvaged successfully after her grounding, does not appear likely to become available for an indefinite period. The service maintained by the Union Line's "Wahine" has been helpful, but mainly for "non-tourist" traffic.

The capacity of Tasman Empire Airways aircraft has been taxed to the fullest possible extent throughout the year. The placing of new Tasman class planes in service did not reduce the waiting-lists appreciably, and at most times it has not been possible to secure non-priority bookings at less than two months' notice.

Most returning tourists have expressed grateful appreciation for the service and facilities provided for them by the Department's organization during their visits to New Zealand.

Liaison has been maintained with the various Agents of the New Zealand Government Travel Service in Australia, and no opportunity has been lost to afford New Zealand's tourist attractions publicity.

South Africa.—Work in South Africa has been in the hands of the Honorary Representatives of the Department, and they have rendered valuable assistance in stimulating interest in New Zealand. A result of these activities is the large number of inquiries dealt with from the Union and from the Rhodesias, and a few tourists from South Africa have visited the Dominion.

North America.—The Department is at present without direct representation in North America, but has received a large measure of assistance from the established offices of the Government in Canada and the United States. Business activities in the tourist field are conducted chiefly through the recognized American and Canadian Travel Agencies, but direct bookings emanating at present from this continent are small. Absence of regular steamship passenger services is the principal factor restricting traffic from North America, and during the past year actual booking business in the United States has been discouraged by the imposition of a Federal tax of 15 per cent. on tourist tickets issued to overseas destinations. This is a wartime tax which is expected to expire shortly.

(b) THE DOMESTIC FIELD

For reasons that are apparent, most of the Department's business activities have been confined to the development of resorts and tourist facilities within New Zealand and the stimulation of internal tourist traffic. It is considered that in doing so the Department has made a substantial contribution to an improved economy. Brief reflection will show that travel promotion within the country has an effect of utilizing floating funds in the hands of the travelling public, and thus expenditure by the community on travel and touring would tend to retard inflation.

All Government Tourist Bureaux and the twenty-one Booking-agencies share in the increased turnover mentioned elsewhere in this report.

New Booking-agencies were established at Picton and Oamaru.

Auckland.—Passenger-booking sales at this Bureau are more than 40 per cent. greater than for 1945-46, and are about £40,000 in excess of the last comparable pre-war year. Approximately 10,000 tours were sold, and a total of 25,000 persons was booked through this office. During the year a large number of conducted party and group tours was operated in both Islands.

The Bureau now acts as a central booking-office for internal and external airways.

Various improvements, including the redecoration of the interior, were effected to the Bureau premises at Auckland.

Rotorua.—This Bureau established a record turnover for the year, an increase of 25 per cent. over the previous period. A large proportion of bookings for other offices in connection with accommodation is carried out by the Rotorua office in addition to the normal duties of a Tourist Bureau.

Te Aroha.—This Bureau is merely an adjunct to other activities, but a useful service is extended to local and country residents. The volume of business is not large.

Wellington.—In common with other Bureaux, this office showed a heavy increase in business, sales turnover having advanced over £20,000, compared with 1937-38—approximately £110,000 for the year just ended.

Conducted party tours and group tours were a feature of operations. In addition, many week-end excursions and several special car tours were arranged during the period.

A limited number of overseas tourist visitors was dealt with.

Christchurch.—This Bureau achieved good results notwithstanding very great difficulties. The original premises had outgrown their usefulness, and for some time efforts had been made to rehouse the Bureau in more satisfactory offices. A transfer to new and more up-to-date offices in the Post Office building is to take place during the coming year, with the result that a good service will now be available to the public. Passenger-booking business improved by approximately £12,000 during the year.

Conducted party and group tour work has developed greatly at this Bureau.

Dunedin.—An increase of approximately £20,000 brought the total business for the year to about £120,000.

Conducted party tours were popular, a good number having been operated.

Resorts in the district have been patronized fully, and in some instances, such as Queenstown and Wanaka, have been overtaxed, excepting for about three months of the "off season."

Invercargill.—Passenger-booking sales were more than double those of any pre-war year. The turnover amounted to £35,000.

Queenstown Inquiry Bureau.—The principal activities of this honorary office were to secure accommodation for visitors. The business was heavier than that of the preceding year.

Accommodation has been difficult to obtain, and many applicants were placed with private houses on a bed-and-breakfast basis, but during the peak periods great numbers were turned away.

Provision of adequate accommodation facilities at this popular resort has been engaging the attention of this Department for some time past, and it is hoped that some means may yet be devised for improvement. Any movement by private enterprise having that object in view will have the support of the Department.

All side-trips and excursions around Queenstown were heavily booked during the season. Some overseas patrons were among the visitors.

Booking Agencies.—The various Booking Agencies of the Department are located in most main centres of New Zealand and they provide similar service to that which is extended by the Government Tourist Bureaux in the main cities. They have again performed their duties for the Department in a very creditable manner, and their close co-operation and unvarying interest is appreciated. Our agencies have made a considerable contribution to this year's record business.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S WORK

I. ADVERTISING

Re-planning of Literature.—The work of preparation of advertising booklets has been completed, but the printing programme has been delayed.

Large quantities of booklets and miscellaneous publications are required to ensure adequate coverage in New Zealand and in overseas countries, but the physical limitations associated with paper shortages and printing difficulties have hampered output.

Special Colour Film.—Mr. E. H. Scott, who will be remembered as the New Zealand resident of Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., who has rendered unique services to New Zealand members of the Armed Forces in North America during the war years, undertook a comprehensive tour through both main islands during the summer of 1946-47.

With outstanding equipment of ultra-modern type, he secured some 4,000 ft. of 16 mm. colour film covering most of the major resorts of this country. This film, which is expected to serve a useful purpose overseas, was presented to the people of New Zealand—and specifically to this Department—as a "personal tribute to our unequalled scenic attractions."

II. MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF RESORTS, HOTELS, ETC., UNDER THE DEPARTMENT'S CONTROL

(1) SANATORIA AND BATHS

Rotorua.—The number of out-patients under the social security system remains high. A few overseas patients, principally from Australia, have received treatment at the Spa.

Difficulty has been experienced in maintaining the Baths and the Sanatorium at full capacity owing to the shortages of bath attendants, massage operators, nursing, and domestic staff, and the resultant waiting-list remains heavy.

The supply of hot mineral water to the Main Bath building has improved and justifies the tapping of alternative sources by means of bores earlier in the year.

The massage and physiotherapy section lost the services of some highly skilled operators, and this, together with restrictions on the use of electricity, has hampered the work in this department. Towards the end of the year treatments had to be rationed severely, with many patients receiving less than the institution would like to have given.

The average number of patients in the Sanatorium over the year was 31, as compared with 39 in the previous period. Altogether, 6,399 treatment baths were given to Sanatorium patients, and 6,425 received massage or special treatments. There were 1,158 first consultations and 2,099 second consultations with the Acting Government Balneologist.

Te Aroha.—Revenue receipts remained practically the same as during the previous year. There was increased patronage of the pleasure baths, but a marked falling-off in games revenue accounted for by the late opening of these facilities owing to bad weather.

All bathing installations have been maintained in good order, and improvements in the nature of cold water-supply to the swimming-bath and additional hot water to the children's bath have been effected.

Difficulty has been experienced in maintaining the supply and replacement of towels and bathing costumes. This also applies at Rotorua.

Considerable maintenance work was undertaken during the year. This included replacement of valves and pipes, restoration of temperatures and pressures to private baths, repair and repainting of interior of bath-house walls, reboring of both hot-water bores and the lifting and cleaning of the hot-water main.

Main pathways were resurfaced and the tracks to Bald Spur and the Mountain were completely cleared.

Morere Hot Springs.—This thermal resort continues to enjoy increasing patronage. Accommodation available has been severely taxed, and many visitors who would have stopped over here during the holiday periods were obliged to be content with an inspection of the reserve, brief enjoyment of the bathing facilities, and continuance of their journeys.

Boundary fences have been re-erected or repaired as necessary, all bath buildings have been painted, and the Caretaker's residence and establishment maintained in good order and condition. Additional seats were installed in the reserve. Parking facilities were improved.

Depredations of deer and goats are now only slight and are confined to the top ridges.

Helensville.—At the close of the preceding year representations were made to this Department in connection with the further development of this popular health resort.

Arrangements accordingly were made for experts of the Geological Survey to inspect the thermal springs. The comprehensive report furnished indicated that the sinking of additional bores would not materially affect the flow of hot mineral water to existing baths. No objection, therefore, has been raised against proposals to increase the supply.

(2) HOTELS, ETC.

Waitomo Caves.—*The Hotel Waitomo:* A further substantial increase in revenue over the previous period is shown. Part of this increase is attributed to conducted party and group tourists from the North and South Islands.

A start has been made on the replacement of the now almost worn-out Caves' lighting system.

The resort, with all its appurtenances, has been well maintained. Two housing units for married staff have been constructed. An improvement in hotel services was the installation of a loud-speaker.

Lake Waikaremoana.—*Lake House:* The Manager reports a busy year, with a marked improvement in revenue.

Following two very dry summers, Lake Waikaremoana reached an abnormal "low"—20 ft. below normal level. As far as the resort is concerned, it has meant the restricted operation of the popular excursion to Lake Waikare-iti, the first stage of which is covered ordinarily by launch on Lake Waikaremoana. The low level has also adversely affected angling.

Renovations have been carried out during the period, and the work covers repapering of rooms and passages and the repainting of the roofs. Meters have been installed in the huts at the motor camp.

Lake Taupo.—*Tokaumu Hotel:* An increase in revenue over the previous year is disclosed.

Accommodation was provided for an additional twelve fishermen. This consists of a building acquired from Hautu Detention Camp suitably converted. A double lock-up garage for guests' cars has also been constructed from fabricated material from the same source. Buildings and plant have been well maintained.

The Manager reports that there has been an apparent steady decline in Taupo fishing this season.

Mount Cook District.—*The Hermitage Hotel:* This resort also records a large increase in revenue. Receipts increased by approximately 30 per cent.

Renovations have been in progress for some years past, and, as material becomes available, it is hoped that all renovations and repairs required to bring this hotel to the high standard aimed for by the Department will be completed during the coming year.

Maintenance and repair work carried out included painting of the main building, Sealy Cottage, and the Chief Guide's residence, the completion of a new lighting-plant shed at Ball Hut, and certain work on the hut itself. A loud-speaker system has been installed. Completion of much-needed improvements to the kitchen is still held up for reasons outside our control.

Following a survey of the mountain huts associated with the Hermitage, arrangements have been made to repair and put in order Malte Brun, Haast, Hooker, and Mueller Huts as soon as the winter is over.

There was a record ski season at the Hermitage during the winter of 1946, and the first New Zealand championships since the close of the war were held at Ball Hut. Those concerned have expressed appreciation for the Department's co-operation.

A busy climbing season was experienced, and upwards of sixty first-class ascents were made. Parties also crossed Barrons Saddle, Fyfes Pass, Copland Pass, Pioneer Pass, Grahams Saddle, and Tasman Saddle.

Plans are in hand for the erection of staff cottages and a social hall to provide better amenities for employees.

Field trials, based on the Hermitage, were conducted in the central portion of the Southern Alps in connection with special radiophone *emergency* equipment. The results obtained by experts of the Dominion Physical Laboratory exceeded expectations, and the manufacture of sets for installation in this area and in other mountain localities throughout New Zealand will be put in hand. It is hoped that the sets can be installed during the next climbing season.

A preliminary survey has been made for the establishment of the first of a series of "alpine gardens" in the vicinity of the Hermitage Hotel and of Ball Hut. The plants will be representative of the whole of the vegetation of the district, and it is expected that the immediate surroundings of both places mentioned will be beautified permanently and naturally. Long-term policy envisages gradual restoration to various parts of the whole area of plants and trees native to the locality.

Lake Te Anau.—Te Anau Hotel: This hotel also experienced an increase in revenue over the previous year. Maintenance work was carried out, but there were no major alterations or additions.

On many occasions the hotel was fully booked, the peak periods being the months of January, February, and March.

Twenty-five personally-conducted party tours included Te Anau in their itineraries. A twelve-seater bus was stationed at Te Anau during the busy season by the New Zealand Railways Road Services for excursions to Eglinton Valley. These trips, and also those operated by the proprietors of the launch "Quinton McKinnon" on Lake Te Anau, were freely availed of by guests and visitors.

The m.v. "Tawera" recommenced its time-table between Te Anau and Glade House and operated over a period of about four weeks.

Here, as at other departmental hotels, great difficulty was experienced in securing suitable hotel staff.

Eglinton Valley.—Cascade Creek Camp: This camp was reopened during the season and again proved popular and was well patronized by visitors.

Fiordland.—Glade House and the Te Anau—Milford Track: Late in August opportunity was taken to prepare the Te Anau—Milford Track for seasonal tourist traffic, after being closed for over six years. The damage by avalanches, the broken bridges, grounded telephone lines, and the trimming-back of undergrowth made it impossible to reopen the "World's Wonder Walk" until 1st March, when 66 persons made the overland journey from the head of Lake Te Anau. The initial party to undertake the trip consisted of His Excellency the Governor-General and Lady Freyberg, accompanied by members of their staff. Very few of the travellers made the return trip over the track, the majority preferring to break new ground by returning via the Homer Tunnel.

The track will reopen in December, 1947.

Fiordland.—The Hotel Milford: Although the 1946-47 season constituted a record, it represents but a small proportion only of the numbers that would have passed through Milford had the road from Homer Tunnel to Milford Sound been put in order for traffic.

Launch excursions on Milford Sound by the "Donald Sutherland" have proved exceptionally popular. Many visitors made the return walking journey from Milford Sound to the Sutherland Falls and McKinnon Pass in preference to undertaking the complete overland trip to the head of Lake Te Anau. Popular short excursions were trips to Lake Ada and the Giants Gate Falls.

A number of conducted party tourists visited the Sound from the North Island, and notable visitors included Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady Freyberg and party, Ministers of the Crown (including the Hon. the Minister in Charge of Tourist and Health Resorts), and the Ministers of the United States of America, France, and the Netherlands.

Plans have been formulated for additions to staff quarters and for recreational amenities.

Tongariro National Park.—The Chateau Tongariro: The Chateau Tongariro remained unoccupied during the year, and no renovations to the building have been undertaken.

The hydro-electric-power installation, which was damaged extensively by abrasive ash ejected from Mount Ruapehu, was restored to full running-order in August by the Public Works Department. The system is not altogether satisfactory, as deposits of ash continue to enter the intake and tend to block the pipe-line following heavy rains. At such times the plant has to be shut down to obviate risks of blockage of hydro pipes and the known disastrous effects of ash on moving machinery. Whenever the Whakapapanui River is high it carries large quantities of ash. In the previous report it was stated that a source of ash-free water was being sought for guests' purposes. This ash-free source has now been located and a survey for a pipe-line has been made. It is hoped that some work may soon commence on the fresh-water supply.

Subsequent activity on Mount Ruapehu involved the ejection of very little ash, most eruptions being of steam and other vapours.

It is proposed to start the boilers and continue the central heating system of the hotel throughout the winter to help to maintain the building in a good state of repair. The cold and damp at that time of the year has a detrimental effect on walls, ceilings, fittings, &c.

The various huts and lodges in the vicinity of the Chateau Tongariro were maintained and made available for hire. Full advantage was taken of huts by members of ski clubs and by winter sports enthusiasts and others. Accommodation for 100 persons was provided, and each week-end from 1st July, 1946, to 31st March, 1947, the huts and lodges were fully occupied.

Steps were taken in October to restore the golf-links, which had lain idle since the Mental Hospitals Department took over the hotel temporarily. This asset has been prevented from reversion to tussock and will be ready for use when the Chateau Tongariro again reopens.

The Thermal Region.—Wairakei Hotel: This hotel, formerly conducted by Wairakei Ltd. (and for some time in the temporary possession of the Mental Hospitals Department), together with the lands and appurtenances associated with it, was acquired by the Department during the year.

Arrangements are being made for the complete renovation and refurnishing of the hotel and for the development and improvement of facilities and amenities which have fallen into disuse in recent years.

A Manager has been appointed, and the hotel will be opened for tourist business at the first possible opportunity. In the meantime, the operation of the principal side-trips, for which the resort is widely and favourably known, has continued under the conductorship of a former employee of Wairakei Ltd., now on the Department's local staff.

Lake Pukaki.—Pukaki Hotel: The Department's hotel at Pukaki, one of the original staging-places for horse-drawn tourist vehicles before the advent of more rapid transport, has been leased to private individuals for many years.

In view of pending hydro-electric developments at Lake Pukaki, which will submerge the site of the hotel, arrangements are in hand for the transfer of the premises to an improved situation some distance away.

(3) MISCELLANEOUS

(a) *Little Barrier Island*

The Caretaker of this Sanctuary reports that the native-bird life continues abundant, but that pigeons, silver-eyes, and long-tailed cuckoos have been less numerous than usual.

A number of cats and rats has been destroyed.

Post and Telegraph Department engineers have tuned the radio telephone installation to the frequency of Musick Point, and the island is now a telegraph station.

The concrete bird-bath mentioned in the previous report has now been constructed in the garden, and improvements have been made to the Caretaker's house.

The two tracks to the summit have been kept cleared, and regular patrols of the sanctuary have been carried out.

Visitors to the island were, as is customary, restricted to *bona fide* naturalists interested in ornithology and to botanists only.

(b) *Rotorua*

(1) *Electrical System*.—A profit has been made on this undertaking and the year was a fairly successful one.

During the year 245 new connections were made, comprising 225 residences (38 of them State houses), 13 commercial consumers, and 7 rural connections. A sharp demand for the installation of electrical appliances is expected when control measures are eased.

Work is in progress with the Kaharoa extension, but the work in connection with other approved extensions has not been commenced because of delays in the receipt of essential material from overseas.

(2) *Water and Drainage System*.—One hundred and seventy new connections to the water supply and 5 new connections to the sewage system were made. These include the village of Ngapuna, which was reticulated by the Department for the Arawa Trust Board. This reticulation involved 3,212 ft. of new mains.

Major additions to the main-street reticulations were 2,300 ft. of new 4 in. mains.

Capital works were kept to the minimum, but it was necessary to install for State Forest Development and for fire-fighting 2,387 ft. of 4 in. main, and, for timber firms, 810 ft. of 3 in. piping.

A major maintenance job was carried out in Fenton Street, where a 16 in. cast-iron main, after thirty-two years' service, was found corroded for 300 ft. It was replaced with new 12-in. cast-iron main, and precautions taken to resist acid action in the soil in this area.

The water and drainage system is still subject to negotiations with the Rotorua Borough Council following the Commission set up to determine the transfer price as provided by the Rotorua Town Act. The Hon. the Minister in Charge of Tourist and Health Resorts has announced that, subject to certain conditions, he was prepared to recommend to Cabinet that the system be handed over to the Rotorua Borough Council.

(3) *Gardens and Playing Arcas*.—Following the appointment of a Gardens Superintendent at Rotorua, a reorganization of staff has been put into effect which allows the adoption of a gardens and reserves policy on the lines of that in operation in the principal municipalities. This means that the gardens

are being restored to their original state and that planning is being undertaken to modernize and utilize all areas as details of climatic and soil conditions are assessed.

Playing-areas have been in full demand throughout the year and the maintenance methods being adopted should provide surfaces comparable with the highest standards obtaining in New Zealand.

The Model Pa at Whakarewarewa has been reconditioned.

(4) *Wharves and Beacons*.—The main wharf at Lake Rotorua is still in a bad state. Renewal of planking has been held up pending the receipt of suitable timber, but a supply is now to hand and it is anticipated that the essential repairs immediately necessary will soon be done.

(5) *Waimangu Round Trip*.—For various reasons it was not possible to operate this popular side-trip—"The Government Round Trip"—continuously throughout the year. The main obstruction was the condemnation of the launch "Manuwai" on Lake Rotomahana.

The launch "Antipodes" was taken over from the Marine Department through the War Assets Realization Board from Lyttelton and transported to Wellington, where repairs and an overhaul were effected. Renamed "Rotomahana," this vessel is now in operation. The "Rotomahana" carries only twenty-four passengers, and is therefore to be regarded as a "relief vessel" to a larger craft which it is hoped will be constructed later on.

(6) *Miscellaneous*.—Various improvements to land and buildings have been carried out. These include improvements at Hamurana Springs and to the recreation area at Lake Tarawera; repairs to the District Manager's residence; strip-lighting in the Ward Baths building and dismantling of the old Spout Baths building for re-erection in the form of a social hall for employees.

(c) *Queenstown*

(1) *Domain and Gardens*.—Queenstown experienced a late winter in 1946, and cold wet weather continued as late as December. These conditions were unfavourable for the propagation of seedlings and had a retarding effect on the growth on playing-greens. From early January, 1947, drought conditions ensued, and this made it difficult to maintain the various playing areas and gardens in their usual attractive state.

The provision of an additional bowling-green and renewal of two asphalt tennis-courts have been left in abeyance pending the easing of the position with regard to materials and labour.

All playing-areas were well patronized by visitors. The kiosk has catered to tourists' requirements in a satisfactory manner.

(2) *Tracks and Huts*.—The tracks and huts at the head of Lake Wakatipu have been inspected and are generally in good order, but recommendations have been made for repairs to tracks and huts and for the erection of two additional huts.

The Paradise interests have constructed a kiosk in the bush at that resort, and adequate luncheon arrangements are now provided for tourists undertaking the side trip from Glenorchy.

The bridge over Earnslaw Creek was damaged by flood in October, 1946, and arrangements were made to put repairs in hand.

A few chains of the Routeburn Valley road and a creek crossing were damaged at the same time, but repairs were effected immediately.

The tracks to Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill are in good order.

(d) Plane Tables and Viewing-apparatus

Arrangements are in hand for the installation of plane tables at various resorts and places of tourist interest. More than twenty sites have been selected, and most of these have been surveyed and direction-rays to identify visible physical features of the attendant landscape have been plotted.

Each plane table will have a simple alidade capable of alignment with selected rays to enable users to obtain positive identification.

Two telescopes and a powerful monocular are available for mounting on alidades of plane tables. The monocular is the salvaged half of captured Japanese equipment which, together with a very strong pair of coast-watching glasses, was presented to this Department by the Royal New Zealand Air Force. The latter war trophy will be mounted on a special tripod after reconditioning and made available for tourists' use at an appropriate resort.

III. PASSENGER-BOOKING ACTIVITIES

The sales turnover for the year under review has exceeded all expectations and points to an increasing appreciation by the travelling public of the facilities and advantages provided by the Department's popular booking service. Whereas the figures for sales in the preceding financial year amounted to approximately £850,000, the year just ended shows an increase of £150,000, bringing the total for the period to approximately £1,000,000.

As in previous years, special day, week-end, and organized party tours operated by the Department's Bureaux showed a marked upward tendency. From various centres 128 separate personally conducted party tours were despatched, and a total of 2,610 persons took advantage of this comprehensive and simplified form of travel. These figures are not indicative of the numbers of persons that could have been handled had transport and accommodation been more freely available. In the Department's experience such tours "sell" with astonishing rapidity, and bookings are often completed within a few days of advertising. There is a definite demand for this class of travel, and, as far as possible, having regard to the prevailing problems, that demand is being met reasonably satisfactorily. As time goes by the position becomes progressively improved.

Organized tours of all descriptions are thoroughly comprehensive; they cover almost every place of interest to tourists from one end of New Zealand to the other. Nearly every place accessible by land transportation in both main Islands is covered by one or another of the itineraries planned by the Government Tourist Bureaux, and "new ground" is being broken from time to time. The result is that many places inaccessible by normal transport services are enjoying increased popularity because of the extending field of the conducted party tourists.

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