

HANMER HOT SPRINGS.

This resort, under the new management, is rapidly becoming more widely and favourably known outside the colony, and the increased number of foreign visitors is a noticeable feature of the year's business.

The total number of visitors to the spa increased from 437 for the previous year to 491, and the receipts from £1,200 16s. 10d. to £1,341 0s. 6d., to which should be added £119 2s., value of free accommodation granted to twenty people.

The baths taken have increased in number from 21,719 for the previous year to 26,211. The gross receipts from baths, massage, and games rose from £790 8s. 5d. to £949 2s. 8d., and free baths, &c., to the value of £34 19s. were given.

The gross receipts for 1903-4 from all sources amounted to £2,326 9s. 10d., and the total value of free accommodation and treatment to £154 1s., as compared with £1,991 5s. 3d. and £162 10s. respectively for the previous year.

Extensive improvements have been put in hand during the year, which will shortly be completed. A tea-house in the grounds will be finished next month, and will enhance the attractions of Hanmer. New and commodious stables have been erected, and other necessary outbuildings are in course of construction. The "Spa" dining-room is to be enlarged to meet the demand for increased accommodation. Some improvements have also been effected in the massage-rooms and bathing-pools, and a large cold-water swimming-bath is being constructed. Further improvements for Aix-massage treatment are required, also a vapour bath and inhalation-room, and better means for supplying drinking-waters to consumers.

The work in the gardens has been steadily pushed on by the staff of gardeners, and the further extension of the grounds to include a playing-field for football, cricket, golf, &c., is contemplated.

A reserve has been made on Conical Hill (Kohatanui), a rest-house erected on the top, and a track formed under the direction of the local committee has been taken over by the Government. This well-graded track and the rest-house at the top provide an easy and convenient means of obtaining an extensive panoramic view of the surrounding country.

An officer of the Public Works Department has visited Hanmer, and is preparing a report on a water and drainage system. Estimates for this work will be placed before you at an early date.

A much-needed alteration has been made in the railway service from Christchurch, enabling visitors from the north to reach Hanmer on the day of arrival at Lyttelton. A daily coaching service from Culverden throughout the year has been arranged, towards which this Department contributes a subsidy of £100 per annum.

PUKAKI ACCOMMODATION-HOUSE.

The business at this house during the year has been satisfactory, but the accommodation has been found quite inadequate to meet demands.

In October Mr. Ross resigned the caretakership, and Mr. F. W. Glasson and his wife were appointed.

The total receipts were £467 14s. 1d.

Plans and specifications for enlarging and improving the house have been approved and the contract for the work let by the Public Works Department. A much-needed rowing-boat for the lake has also been ordered, and will be ready for use next summer.

The pigeon service established between this house, the Hermitage, and Te Kapo has proved of much assistance to the management.

MOUNT COOK "HERMITAGE" (SOUTHERN ALPS).

Although the season for this resort was a month late in opening owing to bad roads, the business done shows an increase on the previous year. The number of visitors totalled 165, and the receipts £965 15s. 6d. This shows that the substantial increase reported last year was not temporary. The following figures supply gratifying proof of the value of the Department's work in advertising and making attractive this particular resort: Receipts—1900-1, £358 16s. 6d.; 1901-2, £597 10s. 4d.; 1902-3, £914 15s. 6d.; 1903-4, £965 15s. 6d.

The question of rebuilding the "Hermitage" on a new site at Governor's Bush requires early consideration. I cannot recommend any great expenditure on the present premises, as the site on which the house stands is a most unsuitable one.

Regarding the mountain and glacier work during the season, Chief Guide Clark reports:—

"Weather conditions, which are the most important consideration in the mountains, were on the whole favourable, and in very few cases prevented the carrying-out of any expedition arranged for. The unsurpassed attractions of the upper Tasman Glacier and the views from Malte Brun Hut are at last deservedly recognised and appreciated. In previous years the largest number of visitors to the Malte Brun was twenty-eight. This season the figures are reversed—eighty-two made the trip, while 103 made use of Ball Hut, as against seventy-three for the former year.

"The surface of the Tasman Glacier remained remarkably smooth for the whole period; this is very unusual, as generally it becomes crevassed and ridgy towards the end of March and April, and the broken part near the Malte Brun Hut is negotiated with no little timidity by people not used to ice travelling. Excursions were also made to the various interesting points in the district, Sealy Range and snowfields, Mueller and Hooker Glaciers, &c. Five persons crossed the Ball Pass (from Tasman to Hooker Valley), including two ladies—the first for a long time. Several very fine long tunnel ice-caves have formed on the Mueller Glacier near Kea Point, only two miles from the Hermitage. These make a charming trip for all, but especially for people unable to travel far and who enjoy proportionately the novelty of being 100 ft. in the heart of the ice. Four parties were on the Hochstetter Dome at the extreme head of Tasman Glacier, but only three made final ascents.