

1909.

NEW ZEALAND.

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS DEPARTMENT

(EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE),

BY THE MINISTER OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS, HON. T. MACKENZIE.

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

THE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the
GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,— Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, Wellington, 21st July, 1909.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts for the year ending 31st March, 1909.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS MACKENZIE,

Minister for Tourist and Health Resorts.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.

THE appended statements by the departmental officers show that the Tourist and Health Resorts Department is increasing in its usefulness and in its service to the State.

During the autumn I visited a number of the resorts, in order to become familiar with them, and to look into their needs and requirements. A number of suggestions and improvements, involving no heavy outlay, have either already been taken in hand or are under consideration, and it is hoped the result will be of benefit alike to the State and to the travelling public. I recognise that with careful expenditure and good administration the Department may be made of great service, and secure a stream of visitors to our shores, many to remain permanently with us, whilst others, by the expenditure of money, assist considerably in the development of our country. In some quarters the opinion is apparently held that our scenic and health resorts are being maintained almost solely for the benefit of wealthy oversea visitors to this country. This is an erroneous conception. It is estimated that of those who take advantage of the facilities to view the Dominion's scenic glories and receive thermal springs' treatment three-fourths are New Zealand residents, and it is my special desire that our resorts shall be made more accessible to our own people by, as far as possible, improving the means of access and reducing the cost of transport and accommodation. More especially does this appear to me to be necessary in regard to our thermal springs, and in this connection I may say that endeavours are being made to make our sanatoria more widely available to suffering humanity. There are, unfortunately, very many people in poor circumstances in this country who suffer from rheumatism and kindred ailments, and who can be successfully treated at our hot-springs sanatoria, but who lack the means to avail themselves of the treatment, and consequently become a burden on the State when incapacitated from their usual avocations through these ailments. The Department has, since its inception, been providing free accommodation and medical treatment at considerable cost for a few of these sufferers annually, and I hope, with the co-operation of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards, to be able to extend this good work.

It will be seen from the report of the General Manager and other reports attached hereto that there has been a satisfactory increase in both oversea and local traffic. Each of the scenic and health resorts has attracted a greater number of visitors than in any previous year. There is room for improvement in the accommodation of huts, &c., in our remoter districts, and instructions have been given to extend facilities wherever possible with the means at the disposal of the Department.

At the Hermitage, where of late years there has been a marked increase in the number of visitors, a new accommodation-house is required. The present premises were originally taken over by the Government from a syndicate. The situation is not a good one, and lacks many advantages. There is, however, an excellent site at Governor's Bush, where the buildings to take the place of the present Hermitage should be erected. The site is a natural terrace, sunny, and from it a fine view of the magnificent scenery up the Hooker and Tasman Valley is obtained. A connection is also required between the Hermitage and the West Coast. Towards this I hope to do something during the coming year.

The country between Te Anau and Wakatipu, which, in company with Mr. H. Birley and Surveyor Murecott, I explored two years ago, has during the past season been opened up by a rough track, and the harder class of tourists may now proceed, *via* the Greenstone River, direct from Lake Wakatipu to the head of Lake Te Anau. The scenery along this route is exceedingly beautiful,