

During the first year of operation a large number of leaks were experienced. Three serious ones and about three hundred minor ones were repaired, and this has raised the maintenance cost to a considerable extent. This was quite anticipated, with some fifteen miles of newly laid wood stave pipes, but as the timber swells the pipes are taking up a more permanent condition, and the leakages are becoming less. In the very limited areas in which the soil is impregnated with sulphur, the binding wires on the wood stave pipes are rapidly corroded, and the three serious breakdowns have been due to this cause. In repairing them they have been enclosed in concrete, which should protect them indefinitely.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM.

The drainage system has operated satisfactorily during the year, the quantities of sewerage pumped being as follows: 1908—April, 820,000 gallons; May, 850,000 gallons; June, 990,000 gallons; July, 870,000 gallons; August, 740,000 gallons; September, 740,000 gallons; October, 810,000 gallons; November, 850,000 gallons; December, 900,000 gallons. 1909—January, 990,000 gallons; February, 850,000 gallons; March, 970,000 gallons.

There are now 112 private houses connected to the sewers, for which £1 each per annum is charged; and sixty connections in hotels and boardinghouses, for which payment is made by means of the meter charge on the water used; and eighteen connections in the baths, sanatorium, and other departmental connections for which no credit is allowed. These charges were only fixed at the end of the year, and no revenue was therefore collected last year.

The cost of pumping and maintenance for the year was £325, in addition to a share of the office salaries and expenses—say, another £100.

There are still about 320 dry pans in the town, of which about 122 are within reach of the sewers, and will consequently be connected up in due course, thus increasing the revenue.

The connections already made have effected a very marked improvement in the health and comfort of the town and its popularity amongst the visitors.

RESERVES.

The reserves under the control of the Department will always constitute the main attraction of the town to the visitors, and their maintenance is one of our most important functions.

The expenditure in upkeep has been about £2,174, which has been distributed approximately as follows: Rotorua Gardens, £1,858; Pukeroa Park, £20; Kuirau Reserve, £4; Whakarewarewa Reserve, £180; Arikikapakapa Reserve, nil; Hamaurana Reserve, £53; Okere Reserve, nil; Waiotapu Reserve, nil; Medical Officer's Reserve, £21; Courthouse Garden, £26; Post-office Garden, £12; total, £2,174.

The question of making these reserves self-supporting is an important one. The main source of revenue hitherto has been from the playing-fees in the gardens, which yielded £214 last year. This is a steadily increasing amount, the returns for the past four years being as follows: 1906, £120; 1907, £137; 1908, £179; 1909, £214.

Improvements are proposed in the croquet-greens which should add considerably to the revenue from this source. In the meanwhile the tennis and bowling greens have been maintained in the best condition, and have fully justified the recent increase in the price of the season tickets for these games.

Various improvements have been made in the gardens. The bowling pavilion and sports ticket-office buildings, which seriously obstructed the view of the new baths, have been moved to more convenient positions, and a camera obscura erected on top of the ticket-office, which is being largely patronised at a charge of 3d.

A nursery of native trees and shrubs has been laid out during the year, into which eight hundred plants of thirty-five varieties were transplanted from the bush. In spite of the change in circumstances, and the difficulty in transplanting native trees, over 95 per cent. have struck, and will be available for planting the reserves and gardens during this year.

The question has been raised of making a charge for entrance to the gardens, in order to make the revenue sufficient to cover the cost of maintenance; but the difficulties in the way of collecting such a charge are very serious.

Pukeroa Park has been maintained at a cost of £20, which has been spent in cleaning the drive and mowing the grass during the year. This is a very valuable reserve, and is not yet by any means appreciated at its full value. The football-ground at the top of the hill is probably the most beautifully situated sports-ground in the world, and the park deserves a great deal more attention. It might be made self-supporting if a small stand were built, with the necessary dressing-rooms, seating-accommodation, and conveniences, and a charge of £2 to £5 made for the use of the ground, with the right to charge for entry for the ten occasions per annum that such charge for entry can be made.

Nothing has been done in the Kuirau Reserve beyond the cleaning-up of the paths. This remains one of our most interesting spots for future development, but the demand is at present well supplied by the other reserves.

Whakarewarewa Reserve still preserves its charm for both visitors and residents. It has been kept in first-class order, several rustic seats erected, and drinking-water laid on for the convenience of visitors, the total cost amounting to £180 for the year. Waikite, Pohatu, Kereru, and Papakura Geysers continue to play regularly. Wairoa Geyser has been soaped ten times, but has only responded four times during the year.

Arikikapakapa Reserve also remains a very useful attraction for future development, but at present its wonders are entirely neglected by the visitors, though they are easily accessible by a good network of paths.