

*Bush-fires.*—Two fires occurred in Pukete Forest, and one at Kauri Park. The former were put out by the Caretaker and timber-measurers, after passing over about 10 acres and scorching some three hundred kauri-trees. As the portion affected is under preparation for disposal, the damage is unimportant. With regard to Kauri Park, about one-third of the standing bush has been scorched during this and previous years, and the remainder will in all probability be seriously damaged as soon as the adjoining standing bush is being worked. This shows how difficult it is to preserve kauri forests, especially when adjacent to close settlement or standing bush, as in the present instance. Should any further damage ensue it may be found desirable to dispose of the whole of the timber in the park.

*Gathering Gum, Waipoua and Warawara State Forests.*—Referring to last year's report, I have to state that small contracts for the above have been completed, and it is not proposed to renew them for the present, but to utilise a portion of the Warawara Caretaker's time for the purpose of stripping gum as circumstances permit. The amount of gum disposed of during the period is as follows: Waipoua—2 tons 17 cwt. 1 qr. 20 lb.; amount realised, £99 6s. 6d.; Warawara—11 tons 7 cwt. 3 qr. 13 lb.; realised, £549 5s. 4d.; total amount realised, £648 11s. 10d.

There still remains in the hands of the gum-brokers at Auckland for disposal about 1½ tons second-class, and about 2½ tons unassorted, gathered by the Caretaker, and still in Warawara Forest. This will be dealt with in due course.

JOHN STRAUCHON,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

## APPENDIX IV.

### THE MOUNTAINS OF THE TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK: AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MANY ATTRACTIONS, WITH NOTES REGARDING THE VARIOUS ROUTES, AND MAPS ILLUSTRATING SAME.

[By H. E. GIRDLESTONE, Assistant Surveyor.]

THE Tongariro National Park, taking in the mountains Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro, and the surrounding country, possesses a greater variety of scenery than any tract of the same area in New Zealand. Since the opening of the Main Trunk Railway, its many beauties have been brought before many hundreds of people, but very few have taken the opportunity of exploring for themselves the very many places of interest within easy reach. It is here intended to give a description of the routes generally followed, with notes as to times taken, camping-places, and points of interest.

December is the favourite month for visiting the mountains, when the days are long, though the ideal day is after a frosty morning about March. Bush-fires during February prevent anything like a good view being obtained of the surrounding country. In December there is still a large amount of snow on the mountains, and travelling over the snowfields is quite an easy matter, but in March most of the loose snow is gone, and only the hard glacier-ice is left, which cannot be crossed without an ice-axe, so that most of the climbing is done up the rocky spurs.

The following is an account of a trip occupying five days from Waiouru made by a small party one Christmas holiday, which takes in most of the principal points of interest:—

The party met at Waiouru on a Friday night, bringing rugs and personal necessities, and obtained stores from the proprietor of the accommodation-house.

*First Day.*—Left Waiouru on the following morning about 7 a.m. by coach which runs to Tokaanu. Leaving the coach at the nineteen-mile peg, the party walked from there to the hut, which is about four miles distant from the main road, across almost level country. The Ruapehu hut is beautifully situated in a sheltered position, with a large belt of bush immediately behind it, and the Waiho-honu Stream passing about 5 chains in front. It is built of corrugated iron, double thickness, lined with pumice, and consists of two rooms, one of which contains a large fireplace. The floor is bare pumice, and there are three bunks in one room and two in the other. About half a mile away, to the south-east of the hut, is the source of the Ohine-pango Stream, which is crossed lower down by the road to the hut. Here a large body of water comes bubbling up out of the ground at the foot of a bush-clad terrace, forming a long narrow pool of beautiful green-tinted water before it rushes away in a foaming mountain-torrent across the plains. The whole place reminds one very much of the Hamurana Spring at Rotorua. After having a good look around there, the party crossed over to the north into the bed of the Waiho-honu and followed it up through the bush back to the hut, getting some charming peeps on the way.

*Second Day.*—Next morning by 4.30 a.m. we were well on our way for Ruapehu. For about two miles or more from the hut the tussock has been chipped off, making a track about 3 ft. wide, with large poles stuck up about every 5 chains. This leads up towards the main spur running up to the north peak (Te Heuheu), and by the time the track dies out, when the vegetation is left behind, there is no danger of getting off the proper route. There is a steady rise until a small saddle is reached about six miles from the hut, and from here to the top the climbing is fairly steep. We climbed steadily up a rocky spur with large snow-filled valleys on both sides, and kept to the spur until a little rocky knoll was reached a few hundred feet below the north peak. From here a snow-slope stretches upward, terminating in a perpendicular cliff about 100 ft. high, facing the north, but running away into the snowfields to the west. A detour was made to avoid the cliff, and,