

I am more than pleased to report only a very small falling-off in the booking receipts as compared with last year. There is no doubt that, although owing to the war we have lost for the time being a great number of European tourists, we have secured visits to our islands from quite a number of Australians who otherwise would have visited the Home-land, Egypt, and the Riviera.

I have more than once during the year drawn attention to the scanty steamship service between Melbourne and the Bluff. Formerly we had no difficulty in booking visitors right through from Melbourne via the South when we could depend on the regular weekly service going and coming. Now there is one solitary boat in three weeks, and a second-rater at that. This has militated against our returns, in spite of which our figures for the year are £2,281 2s., against £2,553 3s. 1d. for the term covered in my last annual report. I venture to express the hope that this disability under which we labour will be removed at the first possible moment, as well in our interests as in those of shippers and of the travelling public.

I did not think it advisable to utilize the whole of the amount allotted to me for advertising purposes, in view of the lateness of the season and the fact that the results likely to accrue would probably not be commensurate with the expenditure involved, partly by reason of what has turned out to be the most severe drought ever experienced and that the war fever has sunk everything in the nature of an advertising campaign into insignificance.

I cannot refrain from quoting a few lines from a recent editorial in the Melbourne *Age* as follows: "The New Zealand and Tasmanian Governments appeal to tourists from almost every hoarding throughout the cities of Australia; they post up pictures of mountains and streams, and of vast hauls of fish said to have been made by visiting anglers. To the island State, ordinarily thought to be a sleepy hollow, and to New Zealand, the tourist traffic, chiefly from the mainland of Australia, is worth scores of thousands a year. Railway and coach revenue and private business gain enormously."

The systematic distribution of literature has been more than usually well carried out, and I have had, perhaps, even better supplies from the Head Office than formerly; and shipping offices, public libraries (even as far as Durban, Natal), doctors' and dentists' waiting-rooms, leading hotels, and in fact every resort where the public "most do congregate" have been amply supplied with reading-matter.

In this connection I was enabled to procure without cost a further edition of the very successful brochure "Maoriland," revised and brought thoroughly up to date. The Melbourne edition ran to 8,000 copies, and the original contributions from Sir John Madden, Professor Rentoul, Lord Plunket, and Professor Baldwin Spencer, whose beautiful illustrations we again used, were retained. I also put the man responsible for the cost of production, which was considerable, in touch with our Sydney Agent, with a view to his arranging for a similar issue.

The Dominion Day function at the Agency has now become something of a social event, and this year the attendance was larger than ever, and for the first time was graced by the presence of ladies. Congratulatory speeches were made on the occasion by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sir David Hennessey, Senator Pearce, Federal Minister of Defence, and the Russian Consul-General. All the foreign Consulates in Melbourne displayed their national flags as a mark of respect to the Dominion.

Amongst those for whom I have made arrangements for a trip through the Dominion are the Right Hon. Andrew Fisher, the British Trade Commissioner, G. T. Milne Esq., and Mr. S. G. Hart, of the Indian Civil Service.

Matters relating to Customs and commerce generally will be treated in my trade report to the Department of Agriculture, and need not be recapitulated here, though I may be allowed to refer in conclusion to the fact that other Government Departments—notably those controlling Immigration, Lands for Settlement, Customs, Mining, and Defence—are making more and more use of the facilities afforded by this Agency as time progresses.

REPORT OF THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT AGENT, SYDNEY.

The Agent (Mr. W. R. Blow) reports as follows:—

On the 1st July the office was removed from 339 George Street to Bull's Chambers, 14 Moore Street. The offices are very excellently situated, being in one of the main streets of the town, and only one minute's walk from the General Post Office. The rent of these premises is £250 per annum, as against £800 per annum paid for the old offices; the saving in rent that was made in taking these offices is therefore £550 per annum. A saving of over £50 per annum was also made in the cost of cleaning and lighting, thus making a total saving of over £600 per annum.

BOOKING TOURISTS.

In connection with the booking of tourists to and through the Dominion, I regret to report that the money taken at this office is £671 17s. 6d. less than the amount taken for the previous year. Our experience has not been exceptional, as the Union Steamship Company, the Huddart-Parker Steamship Company, and Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son have each suffered a great falling-off in their New Zealand passenger business since the outbreak of war. The following figures will no doubt be found interesting:—

	Year, 1913-14.	Year, 1914-15.
Number of persons booked	191	156
Amount of money received for bookings	£2,952 18s. 11d.	£2,281 1s. 5d.

IMMIGRATION.

Over three hundred foreigners were examined during the year, with a view to seeing if they could pass the education test as prescribed by the Immigration Restriction Act. Of this number, 276 were successful, and certificates were consequently issued to them.