

WAITOMO CAVES.

The cash returns for the financial year show a decrease of £623 15s. 3d. compared with last year; but when one considers the financial stringency that this country is passing through it must only be expected that a decrease in the tourist traffic would take place. With the reduced express train service and wet summer the number of visitors shows a big reduction. Last year 7,600 people visited the hostel and the caves; this year the number is 6,178, which is a big decrease for one year, and has affected the guiding returns to the extent of £487 16s. 6d.

All buildings have been maintained in good order; the interior of the hostel was renovated during the spring, and the tracks and fences were improved during the winter months.

This year a change was made in the matter of conveyance of visitors from the railway-station, motor-buses having replaced the horse-coaches. This is a decided improvement, and much appreciated by the travelling public.

The following is a statement of the cash receipts for the year: Accommodation, £4,289 3s. 6d.; guiding, £2,338 10s. 6d.; equipment, £229 6s.; rent, £12 13s. 4d.; water rates, £19 12s. 6d.; sale of tanks, £20; total, £6,909 4s. 10d.

TE AROHA.

The receipts from Te Aroha amounted to £1,894, against £1,999—a slight decrease.

Number of Baths taken.—The total number of baths of all classes taken during the year was 31,207, compared with 37,038 for the previous year. The details are:—

	1921-22.	1920-21.
Private baths	15,207	17,784
Public baths	15,074	18,968
Electric water	926	286
	<hr/> 31,207	<hr/> 37,038

Bath Buildings and Drinking-springs.—Expenditure has been withheld within all reasonable limits owing to the financial stress, especially during the latter months of the year; but during the first month of the year the bath buildings were all repainted (also all other Domain buildings, including administrative office, tea-kiosk, bowling-pavilion, &c.), and now present a smart and attractive appearance. Equipment has been kept up to the usual standard, and hot-water supplies have been adequate, and no difficulty of any particular moment has been experienced in maintaining proper temperatures. All the springs and reservoirs are in a good state of repair. Supplies of water from No. 15 spring have been railed, as usual, to Rotorua whenever required.

Garden and Playing-lawns. These have been maintained in first-class order, leaving little to comment upon, and there has been a very fine show of flowers throughout. The playing-areas have worn well, and have been favourably commented upon by players.

WAIKAREMOANA, TE PUIA, AND MORERE.

The needed extensions at Waikaremoana were not proceeded with during the past year, but great improvements were effected in the drainage-system: a septic tank was installed, and removes what was a continuous source of complaint. The launch and boats have all been overhauled and placed in order by Mr. A. Warbrick, of Rotorua, and should be in first-class order for the coming season. Waikaremoana has, in common with other resorts, suffered by the financial stringency. The scheme of the new hostel at Te Puia is still awaiting the return to better conditions, and the springs and baths are being cared for by the previous lessee, Mr. Cottrell.

At Morere a permanent building has been erected for the residence of the caretaker, who maintains the baths and approaches thereto in proper order.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

There has during the year been a lot of traffic to the park, and the time is rapidly approaching when the question of the erection of an up-to-date hostel will have to be faced. In the meantime, pending improved financial conditions, a new hut has been erected at the Whakapapa site, and also one at the Ohakune side of the mountain. Some nine miles of track have been completed, and there is now fair access to all the huts. The Department would be very glad to be able to proceed with the erection of an hostel commensurate with the requirements and deserts of the park, and to develop its scenic and sporting attractions, but in the meantime the matter has to remain in abeyance.

HERMITAGE.

I regret to have to report another unsatisfactory year at the Hermitage. The expenditure was reduced from £8,010 to £7,438, but unfortunately the receipts dropped from £6,596 to £5,458. This trip, while admittedly among the finest under the control of the Department, is undoubtedly an expensive one, involving as it does a rail journey from Christchurch and motor of some hundred miles from Fairlie or Timaru. It is impossible to charge a low tariff at the hostel when all supplies have to be carried by motor-lorry from the rail-head at Fairlie, ninety-five miles away, and the hostel service must be kept up to a good standard. Patrons required to pay the necessarily fairly heavy charges for accommodation naturally require that accommodation shall be of the best.

The problem of making both ends meet at the Hermitage is a difficult one at all times, and it is frankly impossible when existing circumstances prevent the normal number of people visiting the place. Each visitor naturally contributes a large amount in the way of rail, motor, and Customs charges, but this, unfortunately, is not credited to the institution, and it is necessary to maintain a complete staff during the season whether business is brisk or not. It is no easy matter to obtain staff at short notice at such a place, and naturally the cost of transfer of the hostel servants during the season runs into a large sum.