

WAITOMO CAVES.

The cash returns for the hostel and caves amount to £7,280, an increase of £1,037 over the previous year, due no doubt to the splendid weather conditions which continued through the tourist season, with the result that the motor traffic increased by over 200 per cent. With improved roads this branch of our work will become greater each year, and motorists now make this hostel the stop-over place between New Plymouth and Auckland or Rotorua, on account of it being so centrally situated.

The number of visitors for the year was 7,400, and would have been greater only we could not give accommodation to all who desired it. This especially applies to the Christmas and New Year period.

During the year the painting of the hostel and buildings was completed, and all buildings, fences, and tracks have been maintained in good order.

The new bridge over the Waitomo Stream leading to the Aranui Caves was completed, also the work of regrading and metalling the hostel road.

The principal increase in the business for the year is made up as follows: Accommodation, £607 17s. 9d.; caves fees, £531 4s. 6d.; equipment, £46 10s.

TE AROHA.

The affairs of the Department at Te Aroha are in a healthy condition. There is an improvement in the financial position, as will be seen from the tables previously printed. The tea-kiosk was closed, as it was a losing proposition, and visitors were well catered for in this respect by private enterprise. The building was converted into a residence for the Tourist Agent.

The total number of baths taken during the twelve months amounted to 23,743, as compared with 23,673 for the previous year.

	1923-24.	1922-23.
Private baths	10,165	11,801
Public baths	13,085	11,232
Electric baths	493	640
	<hr/> 23,743	<hr/> 23,673

Bath Buildings and Drinking Springs.—The necessary maintenance work in connection with these buildings, &c., has been carried out, and the working of these institutions has been quite satisfactory. During the twelve months 146 cans of No. 15 Spring water have been forwarded to Rotorua. The water-supply has not given any trouble.

Night Bowling.—The wet stormy weather prevented bowlers getting in much play at night. The revenue from this source was £44 18s., and the cost of lighting the green from the 8th December, 1923, to the 21st March, 1924, £9 19s. 8d.

Massage.—During the year, as indicated in my last report, a massage department was established, and 733 treatments, value £183 5s., were given. New massage-rooms have been built on to the Cadman Bathhouse, and electrical apparatus is being installed. When this is completed the massage department will be practically up to date, and able to cope with nearly all the treatments that are likely to be required. This departure is sure to result in a largely increased business at Te Aroha.

General.—The general work in connection with the whole institution has been carried out in a most satisfactory manner, and the general prospects are most encouraging.

WAIKAREMOANA.

The past year has again shown a decided increase both in the returns and the number of people who have visited the hostel, and proved the growing popularity of this resort.

Although the number of visitors was greater this year, the manageress (Mrs. Dickson) endeavoured to accommodate as many as possible in the house itself, without utilizing outside buildings, and this fact was much appreciated by the guests. The staff again proved satisfactory, and everything worked smoothly and well.

The launch was in great demand, and was the subject of many pleasing comments, both on her usefulness and the order in which she was kept. The five small boats were also freely used, and, while the wear-and-tear during the busy season was very heavy, proved satisfactory.

A feature of the season was the increased number of overseas visitors who included Waikaremoana in their itinerary, and all spoke in glowing terms of the many and varied scenic beauties.

Although the bad roads, floods, &c., again prevented a lot of people from visiting the hostel during the latter part of the season, the fact that metalling operations are now being carried a further stage should ensure next year a further and much larger increase.

THE HERMITAGE, MOUNT COOK.

This most popular resort has been administered by the lessees, the Mount Cook Motor Company (Limited), in a very satisfactory manner, and they have effected many improvements in the building and surroundings. These have all been made with the approval and assistance of the Department. The main improvements have been in the hot-water heating-system, the erection of a new dormitory building for use in the busy season, the provision of billiard-tables, gramophone, tennis-courts, artificial skating-rink, motor-garage for private cars, and several other minor matters. The lessees inform me that there has been a very great increase in the traffic during the last season, and this they ascribe to the large amount of advertising and publicity work they have done. No doubt they have done a great deal in this respect, and are entitled to congratulations on the result. A very large amount of work still requires to be done in the way of electric installation for lighting and heating,