

1927.

NEW ZEALAND.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st June, 1927.

I have the honour to submit to you the report of the Tongariro National Park Board, covering its operations up to the 31st March, 1927.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON,
Chairman, Tongariro National Park Board.

The Hon. A. D. McLeod, Minister of Lands.

REPORT.

THE growing popularity of this park is evidenced by the fact that the visitors who were accommodated in the various huts and tents numbered 1,216 for the year under review. This total does not include one-day parties visiting the Whakapapa Huts by motor-car via the Bruce Road. Approximately three hundred cars traversed this road during the year. The number of camping-parties was less this season owing to the unfavourable weather conditions.

Vice-Regal Visit to Park.—It is gratifying to record the visit of Her Excellency Lady Alice Fergusson and a party from Government House in August last. Her Excellency spent three days in the park, visiting the various points of interest in the vicinity of Whakapapa.

Accommodation for Visitors.—As stated in last year's report, applications were invited for the right to erect and conduct a hostel and other services within the park, but it is with regret that the Board records that no applications were received. It is, of course, impossible for the Board to erect and furnish an expensive hostel at the present time, owing to lack of funds; and with a view to improving the present position the Board has under consideration a proposal to erect further buildings at Whakapapa, somewhat on the lines of the bungalow camps which are favoured in some of the Canadian parks. A start will probably be made with a dining-kitchen block, with separate buildings to provide extra sleeping-accommodation, as soon as finance is assured.

Bruce Road.—Under the supervision of the Public Works Department this road has now been completed to the Whakapapa huts, and in addition a loop line has been metalled in front of the huts, and a parking-stand formed and metalled for the convenience of motorists. It is considered that with a small amount of labour—raking in parts of the metal until thoroughly set—this road should give good service for some considerable time.

Erection of Fencing.—To prevent damage to the bush by trespassing stock in that portion of the park adjacent to the Ohakune Railway-station, 24½ chains of fencing and two gates were erected during the year, at a cost of £68 10s.

Ohakune Mountain-track.—During the past year the sum of £161 12s. was expended on the track. The work consisted of straightening and shortening the route. This entailed much cutting, clearing, and formation, and the erection of several small bridges. Some 30 chains of corduroying was also laid down. Visitors to the Ohakune Mountain Hut numbered 296—almost the same as last year.

Crater Lake, Ruapehu.—Mr. T. A. Blyth reports that the water in the Crater Lake is still cold on the surface, and will probably freeze again this winter. This lake was frozen over last year for the first time on record for the last thirty years or more.

Publication of Book prepared by Mr. James Cowan.—At a meeting held in December last the Board decided that the book prepared by Mr. James Cowan, F.R.G.S., of Wellington, and purchased by the Board, should be published. The work is now well under way. Mr. Cowan has spared no pains to place on permanent record the many features of interest connected with the park, and it is anticipated