

at Whakapapa of fifty-four members, most of whom stayed for the full ten days of the club's visit. Accommodation was fully taxed, and several had to be housed in tents. Snow conditions gave more promise of good sport than last year, but, unfortunately, on the three days set apart for our actual races there was a heavy fall of snow, which quite prevented any ski-ing whatever. Owing to the fact that we are completely at the mercy of the weather, it is proposed for the 1927 season to hold the actual races on the first day during our stay upon which the weather appears to be suitable.

Most of the party spent the fine days indulging in ski-ing practice on Scoria Flat, and the keenness with which the novices are taking up the sport augurs well for its successful future in New Zealand. The more expert members tested out a cross-country course, which, with the clearing-away in summer-time of a few of the more outstanding rocks, will make an excellent course of about one mile. Careful investigation, however, failed to find a hill free enough from rocks to provide a grand slam, jump, or toboggan run, though numerous hills abound which would be suitable were the rocks removed for a sufficient space. A track free from rocks would enable winter sports to be held at any time, provided there was at least 6 in. of snow on the ground, whereas at present, even after a heavy fall, the presence of the numerous rocks makes ski-ing practice more or less difficult for the unskilled.

A party of thirty-two members, half of them ladies, left Whakapapa at 3 a.m. and made an ascent of Ruapehu under very windy conditions. No difficulty was experienced by even the weakest members in reaching the Crater Lake, and the descent was made in much calmer weather, enabling ski-ing practice to be carried out on the lower slopes.

No organized club parties visited the park during Easter or Christmas, although a large number of our members made up small parties both for ski-ing and climbing. Owing to numerous requests, the club may run more than one party at the park during the ensuing year.

During the last month the club has suffered a great loss in the persons of Messrs. Fenton Latham and Noel Baines, who were killed while descending Mount Egmont. Mr. Latham was a most enthusiastic climber, and a member of our committee, in which position his advice and practical assistance were much appreciated by the club. Mr. Baines was a younger member, who had, however, some experience in climbing both in New Zealand and abroad. This is the first climbing fatality which the club has had to record.

The club's membership now stands at 180, most of whom are active members. We have every prospect of greatly increasing our roll in the near future, judging by the large number of inquiries we have had from intending visitors to the park. There can be no doubt that ski-ing and climbing are getting a greater hold on both young and old among the people of New Zealand.

FINANCES.

With the exception of certain small contributions made by the Ohakune and Raetihi Dramatic Societies and by a visitor to the park, no donations were received during the year in aid of the Board's funds. It is pleasing to note, however, the increased revenue obtained from accommodation fees, &c., the sum of £451 15s. 6d. having been received, as compared with the sum of £306 8s. 6d. for the preceding twelve months.

On the 31st March, 1927, the funds of the Board, including the sum of £1,701 13s. 10d. from timber royalties, amounted to £4,051 3s., against which were liabilities totalling £1,558 3s. 10d., leaving a balance of £2,492 19s. 2d. available for expenditure. The erection of further accommodation at Whakapapa, will however, deplete the available funds of the Board, and it is hoped, therefore, that further contributions, augmented by Government subsidy, will be forthcoming to enable the Board to proceed with additional development works.

The sincere thanks of the Board are due to the societies and persons who assisted financially as indicated in the foregoing.

Attached are statements setting out the financial position of the Board, comprising Statement of Receipts and Payments, Capital Account, and Balance-sheet.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE HEATHER COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Tongariro National Park Board held on Friday, 10th December, 1926, Messrs. W. H. Field, M.P., E. Phillips Turner, and B. C. Aston were appointed a committee to examine and report on the present distribution of the heather, and to demarcate the boundaries of some of the areas so as to form a basis for observation to determine whether the heather is spreading.

Taking advantage of the fact that several members of the Board were visiting the north the members of the Heather Committee visited the National Park on the 5th, 6th, and 7th February, 1927. Your committee co-opted Mr. Salt in the place of Mr. Phillips Turner (who was leaving for England and could not attend), and commenced the work, in conformity with the above resolution of the Executive Committee.

In an area where the heather, represented by mature plants and seedlings, was growing abundantly, at a spot 520 ft. above the National Park Railway-station, a boundary was defined some 94 ft. long, at a position on the margin of a heather association. The number of adult plants on one side of this line was very small, and there were no seedlings visible. The locality was situated on a flat, wet piece of ground, which naturally was growing the following indigenous vegetation, and may be termed a *Hypolaena-Gleichenia* bog: Woody plants—*Leptospermum scoparium* (manuka), *Dracophyllum* (grass-tree), *Epacris alpina* (native heath). Herbaceous plants—*Gleichenia dicarpa* (umbrella-fern), *Carpina alpina*, *Cladium Vauthieria*, *Lagenophora* sp., *Schœnus pauciflorus*, *Hypericum japonicum*, *Utricularia*