1927. NEW ZEALAND.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD.

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

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 1st June, 1927. SIR.— I have the honour to submit to you the report of the Tongariro National Park Board, covering I have, &c.,

J. B. Thompson,

Nationa its operations up to the 31st March, 1927.

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

that the book will be widely circulated. The various chapters deal with the topography, geology, botany, alpine and volcanic features, history, and Maori folk-lore. It will be profusely illustrated, and will contain maps showing the boundaries of the park and the summits of the mountains.

Milling Operations.—As desired by the Board, the Prisons Department decided to discontinue work at Waikune, and sawmilling operations, including logging, actually ceased early in September, 1926. The question of arriving at a settlement as to the amount to be paid to the Board in respect

of timber cut is now being discussed with the Controller-General of Prisons.

Heather.—A considerable amount of criticism has appeared in the press from time to time in regard to the question of eradication of the heather now growing in the park, and it is fitting that some reference to the matter should be made in this report. The total area of the park is 149,470 acres. The patches of heather are scattered chiefly on the northern side, and occupy but an infinitesimal portion of the total acreage. It must be clearly understood that the bulk of the seed was planted many years before the present Board was established upon the passing of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922. With the object of controlling the introduction of exotic animals and plants into the park the Board, at a meeting on the 19th November, 1924, passed the following resolution: "That no birds or animals be introduced into the park, or trees or plants planted, or seeds thereof sown, without a resolution of the Board authorizing the same from time to time." At the February meeting in 1925 the matter was again discussed, and the following motion was carried: "That this Board is of the opinion that the heather now growing in the National Park should be eradicated." In December, 1926, the matter was again under discussion, and the following motion was carried unanimously: "The Board, being of opinion that it is impossible to eradicate the heather save at a cost beyond the means of the Board, resolves that no further heather-seed be planted, and that steps be taken to prevent the further spreading of the heather now growing in the park. The Board confirms its policy of opposition to the planting in the park of anything (except under domestication) not indigenous to the park, and that the previous resolution to eradicate the heather is thus automatically rescinded, together with the permission granted to plant Mount Cook lilies." Following on the last resolution a committee was set up to demarcate the boundaries of some of the patches with the object of carrying out a series of observations as to whether the plant was spreading to any appreciable extent. The interim report of the committee is attached hereto, and contains some instructive information on the Much of the criticism which has been levelled at the Board in this connection is based on an imperfect knowledge of the true position, and can serve no other purpose than to convey the false impression that the whole area of the park is a blazing mass of heather choking out all native plant-This, as will be seen by the report of the sub-committee, is contrary to fact.

Establishment of Botanical Garden.—The Board has under consideration in connection with the projected development works at Whakapapa the question of establishing a botanical garden for native trees and plants. This question has been the subject of correspondence with the Wanganui Scenery Preservation and Beautifying Society, and recently Messrs. Duncan and Davies, of New Plymouth, very kindly offered to assist the Board in this connection. The establishment of such a garden would add a feature of considerable interest and value to the park. Provision will be made for

such garden when designing the general lay-out of future buildings.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., Warden of the park, reports as follows:-

"I paid six visits to the park during the year just ended, and visited the Whakapapa and Mangatepopo huts as opportunities offered. There have been no violent outbursts of Ngauruhoe since May, 1926, and the Red Crater, which was very active, has shown no signs of activity since then. Ketetahi has, however, been very active, giving off immense columns of steam, which at times are very black and ascend to a great height. I had the track from the main road opposite Sir James Gunson's camp staked up to a point near the Mangatepopo huts: this will enable visitors to now go there without the risk of losing the track when it is covered with snow. When doing this work we were able to bring a Ford lorry within a mile of the huts."

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The following notes furnished by the various clubs are of interest:-

Tararua Tramping Club.—About twenty members of the club visited the park in the early part of September, 1926. The weather during the early part of the stay was of the best, but for the last few days conditions were somewhat unpleasant. The new kitchen and dining-room proved a great boon, and has done a great deal towards making the catering arrangements for large parties a less arduous matter for those in charge. The usual winter sports were indulged in, a feature of the stay being the Tararua Club's first winter-sports meeting. The shield for the Tramping Club ski-ing championship was won by our hon, chief guide, Les. B. Cross. Parties of club members also visited the park during the Christmas and Easter holidays, the Easter party paying more particular attention to Tongariro and Ngauruhoe, and establishing their base camp at the beautifully situated Waihohonu Hut. Accommodation has again been booked for this year's winter-sports season, when we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with Whakapapa, and our friend the ranger, Mr. Cowling, who s always ready to advise and assist.

Tongariro National Park Sports Club.—Several small parties consisting of members of the club visited the park during the year, but there was no combined effort to organize members to go there in

a body.

Ruapehu Ski Club.—As requested by your letter, I have pleasure in forwarding the following particulars of the club's annual winter meeting. On this occasion there was a maximum attendance

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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

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 Hypolæna-Gleichenia bog: Woody plants—Leptospermum scoparium (manuka), Dracophyllum (grasstree), Epacris alpina (native heath). Herbaceous plants—Gleichenia dicarpa (umbrella-fern), Carpha alpina, Cladium Vauthiera, Lagenophora sp., Scheenus pauciflorus, Hypericum japonicum, Utricularia monanthus (bladderwort), Hypolæna laterifolia, Thelymitra (blue-flowered orchid), Euphrasia cuneata (eyebright), Herpolirion. Many of these plants are indicative of wet, boggy soil, and the imported ling heather was abundant. It is hoped that subsequent visits to this spot will enable your committee to determine whether on this type of soil the imported heather is spreading in an aggressive manner likely to compete and occupy the place at present occupied by the indigenous vegetation, which contains some beautiful flowering-plants.

On the road to the Whakapapa and Haunted Whares your committee inspected many thriving patches of the introduced heather, but all were growing in somewhat damp, flat land. The track to Mount Ngauruhoe was next visited. Leaving the main road, the track led members to the summit of a small mountain, Pukeonaki (4,018 ft. above sea). On leaving the main road at a point 350 ft. above the National Park Railway-station, a few isolated mature plants of the ling heather were seen on the track, but the soil appeared much drier than where the heather was abundant round about the Haunted Whare and the Whakapapanui Stream (main road), and it was noticed that there were no young plants or seedlings. Few other heather-plants were seen until near the summit of Pukeonaki, and near here several mature plants were found, the product, according to Mr. Salt, of seed sown nine years previously. These were found to be well established in a primitive association of what might be called snowgrass-Dracophylium heath which comprised the following plants: Danthonia Raculii (snow-grass), Dracophyllum recurvum, Celmisia spectabilis, Euphrasia cuneata, Gaultheria antipoda (snowberry), Coprosma depressa, Wahlenbergia saxicola (bluebell), Olearia nummularifolia, Veronica tetragona, V. Salicifolia, Dracophyllum Urvilleanum, Schænus paucifiorus, Epacris alpina, Leucopogon Frazeri. The only exotic other than this heather observed was the capeweed, Hypochæris. It will be interesting to visit Pukeonaki at future Board meetings and endeavour to form some opinion whether the introduced heather can compete at this much higher, drier, and colder habitat with the natural vegetation to the extent of damaging its physionomy. On the actual summit of Pukeonaki only one mature plant of the heather was observed. Mr. Salt took a number of photographs for record purposes. Your committee was much indebted to Major R. A. Wilson, D.S.O., for motoring members over the park.

ACCOUNTS.

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1927.

Receip	ts.		£	s.	d.
To Balance, 1st April, 1926			3,637	15	7
Government grants			409	19	11
Miscellaneous receipts			16	12	0
Interest on Post Office S	avings-l	oank			
deposit			93	5	9
Interest on Government del	centures		31	4	8
Park fees			471	16	5
Sale of lithographs	• •		11	2	6

Payments.		£	s.	d.
By Road-construction—Bruce Road		866	12	9
Ohakune Track improvements		137	5	0
Expenditure on park buildings		364	3	8
Expenditure on park equipment		56	4	9
Telephone-line construction and	pur-			
chase of telephones	·	5	0	10
Maintenance of telephone-line, &c.		35	12	10
Expenditure on surveys		139	19	11
Expenditure on tracks, drains,	and			
bridges		71	0	10
Expenses of Board meetings		19	16	2
Miscellaneous expenditure		40	4	3
Maintenance of park buildings		6	12	7
Maintenance of park equipment		4	3	
Horse-feed, shoeing, &c		39	14	3
Fuel, oil, &c		38	1	0
Travelling-expenses		19	8	5
Printing		33	11	9
Postages		12	5	9
Insurances		13	2	1
Ranger's salary		270	0	0
Purchase of maps		10	14	0
Progress-payment for copyright of h	and-			
book		83	0	0
Secretary's honorarium		25		0
Treasurer's honorarium		12	0	: 0
Advertising		14	13	0
Balance, 31st March,				
1927— £	s. d.			
Cash in Bank of New				
Zealand 478	17 8			
Cash in transit, 31st				
March, 1927 26	2 6			
Cash in Post Office Sav-				
ings-bank 1,848	9 0			
		2,353	9	2

£4,671 16 10

£4,671 16 10

REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1927.

Dr.		£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
To Ranger's salary		270	0	0	By Park fees	471	16	5
Depreciation Account		200	6	-6	Government grant for Ranger's salary	270	0	0
Expenses of Board meetings		19	16	2	Interest on Post Office Savings-bank			
Fuel, oil, &c.		38	I.	0	deposit	93	5	9
Horse-feed, shoeing, &c		52	16	-0	Profit on sale of lithographs	2	0	6
Insurance		13	2	1	, and the second			
Maintenance of buildings		6	12	7				
Maintenance of equipment		4	3	10				
Maintenance of telephone-line an	d appa-							
ratus		39	4	10				
Miscellaneous expenditure		41	4	3				
Postages, telegrams, &c		12	-5	9				
Printing and stationery		33	11	9				
Secretary's honorarium		25	0	0				
Treasurer's honorarium		12	0	0				
Travelling-expenses		19	8	5				
Unserviceable, lost, or missing equ	uipment							
written off			15	7				
Advertising for tenders for Hostel			13	0				
Balance transferred to Capital Acc	ount	25	0	11				
		£837	2	8		£837	2	8
					:			

Capital Account and Balance-sheet as at 31st March, 1927. $Capital\ Account.$

	Expenditure to 31st March, 1926.	Expenditure during Year ended 31st March 1927.	Total.		Receipts to 31st March, 1926.	Receipts during Year ended 31st March, 1927.	Total.		
Bruce Road Ohakune Track improvement Telephones and telephone-line construction Tracks, drains, bridges, fencing, &c. Surveys Expenditure on buildings Expenditure on equipment	250 9 100 18 139 19 1	0 2,390 2 1 6 137 5 8 5 0 1 3 70 6 1 2 62 3	$ \begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Subsidies from local bodies Government grants and subsidies Miscellaneous receipts	£ s. d. 1,150 0 0 2,000 0 0 4,000 0 0 137 11 6	 139 19 11	1,150 0 0 2,000 0 0 4,139 19 11		
Copyright of book		8 2,709 18	100 0 0 9,281 2 5 £9,281 2 5	Balance carried down	7,287 11 6		7,444 3 5 1,836 19 0 £9,281 2 5		

Balance-sheet. Capital Account— Balance, 31st April, 1926 £ s. d. s. d. .. 4,869 14 Less balance from above account .. 1,836 19 0 3,032 15 5 Revenue Account—Balance 25 - 0 - 113,057 16 Depreciation Reserve 469 Sundry creditors ... 1,558 3 10

								£	s.	d.
Park buildir	ngs taken	over fro	m To	urist	Depart	mei	$^{\mathrm{nt}}$	1,005	0	0
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ment								- 18	0	0
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Sundry deb	tors						٠.	1,701	13	10
Cash in han	ds of Bo	ard's rep	reser	ta-	£	s.	d.			
tive at O	hakune				26	2	6			
Cash in Bar	ık of Nev	v Zealan	d		478	17	-8			
Cash in Pos	t Office S	avings-b	ank		1,848	9	-0			
		Ü						2,353	9	2
								£5,085	7	0

J. B. Thompson,

Chairman, Tongariro National Park Board.

H. SECKER,

 $22\mathrm{nd}$ June, 1927.

Treasurer, Tongariro National Park Board.

I hereby certify that the Revenue Account and Balance-sheet have been duly examined and compared with the relative books and documents submitted for audit, and correctly state the position as disclosed thereby.—G. F. C. CAMPBELL, Controller and Auditor-General.

£5,085 7

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (700 copies), £7 158...

By Authority: W. A. G. Skinner, Government Printer, Wellington.—1927.

REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENGINE 31st MARCH, 1927.

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