

summit of Ruapehu was arranged, and some members took advantage of this. Generally speaking, good climbing conditions were experienced throughout, and this attributed considerably towards the success of the trip.

Private tours: In addition to the organized club trips, individual members in small parties have visited the park at various times during the year. Traverses have been made on Pinnacle Ridge, south-eastern *arête* of Girdlestone, and other interesting rock climbs.

RUAPEHU MOUNTAIN DISASTER.

The details in connection with the grave dangers and difficulties met with by some of the members of the Auckland University College Field and Alpine Club who left the Chateau on Saturday, the 29th August, 1931, for the purpose of ascending Mount Ruapehu have been so fully set forth and discussed through the medium of the public press that there is no occasion to refer to the incident at great length in this report. Of the eight men and six ladies included in the party, thirteen returned to the Chateau or were rescued by the search parties, but the remaining member, Mr. Joseph Warwick Stanton, of Auckland, died as a result of exposure and exhaustion after a gallant struggle to find a way out of the dense bush covering the lower slopes of Ruapehu to bring assistance to other members of the party lost in the bush.

Mr. Harold John Addis, of Nelson, who was also a member of the lost party and likewise attempted to find a way out of the bush to bring assistance was rescued in an exhausted condition on the 1st September by one of the search parties. Although no effort was spared by the members of the various search parties to find the late Mr. Stanton, it was not until Sunday, the 20th September, that his body was found by a party under the leadership of Mr. F. H. Waters, Chief Surveyor, and Mr. W. G. Nelson, Surveyor, Wellington.

The work undertaken by the Chateau staff, the officials of the various mountaineering clubs, and the Mayors of Auckland, Taumarunui, Ohakune, and Raetihi in organizing search parties and raising funds, and the self-sacrificing efforts of the members of the search parties are worthy of the highest praise. The willing co-operation and assistance of the various Government Departments involved—viz., Police, Defence, State Forest Service, Lands and Survey, Prisons, and Railways—should also be recorded.

It is appropriate on this occasion to call the pointed attention of the public to the dangers of the mountain blizzard. Looking back over the events of last year, it is abundantly clear that there were all the elements of a mountaineering disaster unparalleled in the history of New Zealand.

SAFETY MEASURES IN CONNECTION WITH THE CLIMBING OF MOUNTAINS IN THE PARK.

Following on the mountain fatality of last year, a large number of suggestions in regard to safety measures were received from mountaineering clubs and private individuals, and the Board decided to set up a special Committee comprising Messrs. T. A. Blyth, J. Cullen (Warden), and E. A. Marchant to deal with these suggestions. A sum of £50 out of the Mayor of Auckland's Fund (Ruapehu Mountain Calamity) was allocated for the special purpose of erecting poles along the bush-line between the Ohakune Mountain Hut and the Chateau Mountain Track at Lower Scoria Flat, distance two miles and a half above the Chateau. The distance is eleven miles, two miles of which at the Ohakune end had been marked with silver-pine poles in 1930.

The expenditure of this sum on the work specified was left to the Committee appointed by the Board, and in January of this year Mr. Blyth determined the location of the route and marked the same with 200 beech poles. A camp was also established on the northern branch of the Makatote Stream. In March 200 totara poles (each 2½ in. by 2½ in. and 7 ft. 3 in. long) were purchased from Messrs. Goldfinch and Co., of Ohakune, and seasoned in order to reduce the weight. The poles were then painted with black and white bands at the top before being placed in position. Pack-horses were used to a limited extent, but much manual labour was necessary. Eighty of the poles were taken up the Ohakune Track and 120 were taken via the Chateau. The work is now completed, and special mention should be made of the excellent work of Mr. Blyth in this connection. The route referred to traverses the scoria and tussock slopes of Ruapehu and is marked by 440 poles, the average space between poles being 2 chains. The new route will provide a popular tramp when the weather is too stormy to permit of a trip across the top, and, what is of greater importance, it will provide a most valuable safeguard against lost parties wandering into the bush. The knowledge that such a line exists should prevent a repetition of the disaster of last year.

The further suggestions in regard to safety measures will be considered by the Board at its next meeting.

SWIMMING IN THE CRATER LAKE ON RUAPEHU.

The Warden has drawn attention to the dangerous practice of swimming in the Crater Lake on Mount Ruapehu. In one instance it was reported that two swimmers encountered considerable difficulties owing to the excessively cold and warm patches of water met with.

Swimmers under such conditions are liable to cramp in the cold areas of the lake or may possibly find themselves suddenly surrounded with scalding water. There is also the danger of meeting gas of an overpowering nature arising from patches of the lake. The Manager at the Chateau has been instructed to warn visitors of the dangers referred to, but the Board desires to give as wide a publicity as possible to the matter, with a view to preventing adventurous spirits from embarking on such a foolhardy exploit.

REMOVAL OF BOTANICAL SPECIMENS.

Applications are received from time to time for permits to remove botanical specimens from the Park, and it is opportune that the position of the Board in this respect should be clearly stated.