

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(J. F. QUINN, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

I have the honour to submit for consideration and adoption a report on the Board's affairs for the sixth complete year since the Board was constituted. Although the Board is still much restricted in its activities through lack of money, it has been a comparatively busy year, and considering the severe limitations imposed by financial considerations some progress and improvement may be claimed.

Personnel.—The Hon. D. G. Sullivan has relinquished the seat on the Board he held *ex officio* as Mayor of Christchurch. His appointment as a member of the Cabinet has been a matter of gratification to the Board, and its cordial congratulations have been extended to Mr. Sullivan. Mr. J. W. Beanland, having been elected Mayor of Christchurch, now takes the seat vacated by Mr. Sullivan. We felicitate Mr. Beanland on his election, and welcome him as a member of the Board. There has also been a change in the Mayoralty of Greymouth, and Mr. Meldrum as the present holder of this office is *ex officio* a member of the Board. Professor Robert Speight is taking an extended holiday abroad, but he has requested that the Board be informed of his desire to resume his interest in the Board's work on his return.

Meetings.—In accordance with the resolution adopted at its last annual meeting, the Board has met on four occasions, including once at Arthur's Pass, when an inspection was carried out and subsequently discussed. In addition, the Chairman, Dr. William McKay, and Mr. Darby met at Arthur's Pass to inspect various works undertaken by the unemployed camp.

Finance.—The position can be succinctly stated by saying that the Board can carry on for another year on its present overhead and with essential maintenance, &c. Any plans for undertaking any works can be put aside unless a grant is made by Government or funds raised from some source. Representations were renewed last year to the Government, but nothing materialized. On the appointment of the present Government the officers of the Board interviewed the Hon. D. G. Sullivan, and were assured of his co-operation. The plain facts are that if the Board is to exercise its proper functions it must have money. To secure funds and to obviate a hiatus in its activities it must move strongly in the matter immediately. A formal application on behalf of the Board has been made for special consideration of our claims when the estimates are being compiled.

Sports.—Another unfavourable season was experienced for winter sports, there being a repetition of the poor snow conditions that have been experienced for several seasons.

The Railway excursions were fewer in number than usual, and less than a thousand people patronized them. Nevertheless, the Christchurch Ski Club, whose activities are centred within the Park, appears to be in a robust state, and is at present engaged in making substantial additions to the Club's hut, to provide special accommodation for ladies. The Canterbury Mountaineering and Tramping Club continues to make commendable progress, and seems to be using the Park to an even greater extent.

The club has nearly completed a cottage at the Pass for the accommodation of its members. The toboggan run constructed by the Board at the beginning of the season had very little use, but it exceeded expectations as a "run."

Township.—A recent inspection disclosed a heartening improvement in the order and appearance of cottages and grounds. It is gratifying that lessees have responded to the Board's lead in improving the appearance of the place. Rents have come in very satisfactorily indeed. There have been more inquiries in the last month or so for allotments than for several years. It appears that from that aspect the Board will share in the returning prosperity of the Dominion. There is still a persistent desire for building lots in the main township, where there is only one lot of an unattractive nature remaining. There are, however, ample sites left in the other subdivisions. Several permits have been issued for additions and alterations and one permit for a new building. A provisional business license has also been granted.

Deer.—The issue of permits has been more than double the number of any previous year. One outcome has been the discouragement of the deer pest in the more accessible regions of the Park. As licensees more often than not omit to return a tally of the results of their expedition, it is impossible to give any figures. Nevertheless, it can be taken as a careful and conservative statement that there is a decided increase in numbers of deer in the Park, and that the pest is doing such damage to vegetation as is sufficient to give rise to public concern. It is understood that Government parties are gradually working northward on a systematic plan, but that at the present rate of progress their advent to the Park is not imminent.

Unemployment Camp.—This ran a period of nineteen weeks in the autumn and in the spring. While the camp entailed considerable administrative work and was not free from labour difficulties, it did useful work. Prolonged bad weather was the most detrimental feature both to the progress of the work and the discipline of the men. The net cost of the camp was £82 11s., which sum was well within the allotment approved by the Board. The work accomplished is reported on elsewhere.

Thanks are extended to Messrs. Carroll (Stationmaster) and Brannigan for work done and promised in maintaining the Station rock gardens; to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Scott for gratuitous services in clearing tracks; to our honorary rangers for their help during the year; to the public press for much valuable publicity and encouragement; to the Railways Department and its officers for many courtesies extended in connection with the unemployed camp; to Dr. William McKay (Chairman) and Mr. S. C. A. Darby (member) of the Grounds Committee for consistent effort in the Board's behalf, in which they have directed the bulk of the work carried out.

General.—Steady progress is being made with the Waimakariri Bridge. Its completion ought to result in very much greater use of the Park. No serious accident marred the