

MANAGER, MILFORD HOTEL.

The Manager reports that the Milford Track has been fairly well patronized during the past season, considering the adverse conditions caused through the war, also taking into consideration the Centennial attractions in Wellington and other centres.

During the Christmas and New Year holidays the accommodation both at the huts and Hotel Milford was fully occupied.

The weather has been most unfavourable during the whole season; very heavy rain has been experienced, and delays on the track were caused through floods.

The Milford Track has suffered severely on account of the continual heavy rain, several bad washouts and slips were experienced, the surface of the track being washed away in a number of places.

Milford Sound—Te Anau Road.—This road is now available for over nine miles.

Air Travel.—Captain Mercer, Air Travel (N.Z.), Ltd., arrived at Milford Sound on the 16th July, 1939, from Franz Josef Glacier and made a successful landing on the beach at Deep Water Basin. Whilst he was here he examined the beach in prospect of a regular landing, and considered this could be done at very little outlay.

Shipping.—On account of the war the only ships to call here were the G.s.s. "Matai" (two trips from Bluff), m.v. "Ranui" from Bluff, and m.v. "Gael" from Bruce Bay.

THE MANAGER, THE CHATEAU TONGARIRO.

The Manager reports that for the first time in several years there was a falling off in revenue, although this amounted to less than 6 per cent. Expenses have been reduced in proportion to the reduction in revenue.

Buildings and Plant.—General maintenance-work on all buildings and plant has been carried out. Additions to the Salt Hut and ski room on Ruapehu are almost completed.

Roads, Tracks, Mountain Huts, &c.—The road up Ruapehu is nearing completion, and now goes past the Salt Hut.

The road below the Chateau is in course of reconstruction and will eventually be bituminized. The various walks, mountain tracks, &c., surrounding the Chateau have received attention, but it has been an abnormally wet summer.

The improvements to the Salt Hut and ski room on Ruapehu will provide very welcome extra accommodation for the public during the coming ski-ing season. The Mangatepopo and Waihohunu huts have been inspected and are in reasonably good repair, and compare very favourably with huts used for similar purposes in any part of the Dominion.

Cartage and Transport.—The above service has been well maintained during the year. The policy of the staff doing the carting of supplies, &c., has again proved a wise one, and has resulted in considerable saving of expense.

Golf-course.—The golf-course maintains its popularity, and the healthy state of the grass is very favourably commented on. The course is a great attraction, and undoubtedly is the means of keeping people here during the summer months.

Ski-ing.—Last ski-ing season again proved a good one, and the New Zealand championships, which are held on Ruapehu every second year, were run very successfully, to the satisfaction of the New Zealand Ski Council. It was a wonderful snow year, there being as much as 16 ft. of snow on Upper Scoria Flat, whereas there is usually round about 6 ft. The record patronage of last year was again maintained this year for the winter months, the three months—July to September—of each year bringing in £15,000-odd in revenue. On many occasions all available accommodation was taken and numbers had to be turned away. The usual climbs of all three mountains have been undertaken during the year, and a satisfactory guiding service has been maintained.

Postal Branch.—This branch has been kept busy handling all lines of Post Office work. This branch was recently inspected by a Post and Telegraph Inspector, and a very satisfactory report was given by this officer. The installation of a new line to Ohakune has relieved congestion considerably in telephone and telegraph work.

Staff.—The staffing of the Chateau still remains a major problem, for obvious reasons. Every endeavour is made to keep staff happy and contented, and all sporting facilities such as golf, tennis, ski-ing, &c., are allowed free of charge, provided the guest who pays has first preference in these various forms of sport.

CARETAKER, MORERE HOT SPRINGS.

The Caretaker states that the year generally has been fair, although slightly down in revenue. To offset this the expenditure was not as great as the previous year, when there was considerable flood damage to meet.

The buildings, pipe-lines, and bridges are all in a well-preserved condition.

THE CARETAKER, LITTLE BARRIER BIRD SANCTUARY.

The Caretaker reports that little of extraneous interest has occurred. Due possibly to reduced shipping services, few seabirds killed by refuse oil have been washed up. Kakas, kiwis, and native pigeons appear to be on the increase.