

## GROUNDS COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The report of the Grounds Committee, which has been prepared by Dr. Wm. McKay, is as follows :—

“ The park has been visited throughout the year by increasing numbers, especially during holidays and school vacations. Accommodation at these times has been taxed to the utmost, and the services of the Ranger have been much in request by those seeking advice or assistance.

“ As the Board has been from year to year continually adding to the number and length of tracks laid down, a considerable part of the Ranger's time has necessarily been devoted to their maintenance, but the Grounds Committee is pleased to report that opportunity has been found to continue the policy of cutting new tracks and in other ways adding to the amenities of the park. The following are some of the more important improvements carried out :—

“ *Mingha River Track* has been blazed and partly formed towards the headwaters of this stream.

“ *Mount Bealey Track* begins on the south side of Rough Creek within the township and gives easy access to the summit of Mount Bealey. The more seasoned trampers can traverse the ridges to Avalanche Peak so as to descend by Scott's Track. The views offered from these heights are both extensive and arresting.

“ *Rome Ridge Track* leaves the highway to the north of McGrath's Creek, ascending over the ridge, and finally leading down to the upper reaches of the Bealey River.

“ *Upper Bealey Track* is a new means of reaching the Bealey Glacier, the original route having been damaged and partly washed away by floods. The present line lies well above water-level and has already been much used by visitors.

“ *Waimakariri Track*.—Commencing at the southern end of the highway bridge over the Waimakariri River, this track is cut or blazed as far as the Anti-Crow and Carrington huts. Formerly the usual approach to the upper waters of this river was on its north bank, so that a crossing was necessary. The new track will consequently be of service in flood-time, while it will provide the readiest means of access for those approaching by road from the east.

“ *Seats and Fireplaces* have been erected at Daisy Flat, Margaret's Tarn, and opposite Jack's Hut—localities much in favour with the public—so that these new conveniences are much appreciated.

“ The Committee wishes to take this opportunity of complimenting the Canterbury Mountaineering Club on the practical enthusiasm its members continue to display in adding to the tramping facilities within the park. During the year they have taken in hand the following works :—

“ *Anti-Crow Hut*.—This has been completed according to the plans submitted to the Board, and is in every way creditable to the club responsible for its erection.

“ *Edwards River Bivouac* is near the bush-line at the headwaters of this river, and distant some two miles from the Taruahuna Pass. The building, which has accommodation for six persons, has already given good service to many climbing parties.

“ *Carrington Hut*, being in danger of destruction by floods, was dismantled. The intention of the club is to rebuild on a safe terrace about 100 yards further upstream.

“ *River Erosion at Township*.—Since the last annual report the Public Works Department has excavated a new channel for the Bealey River waters, and has constructed several substantial groynes. This work has proved very effective in removing the fears of flood damage which were so strongly entertained by the residents of the township.

“ *Animal Pests*.—In addition to deer and chamois referred to in previous reports, a new pest has been discovered by the Ranger, who has observed many evidences of damage done by opossums to forest vegetation in the western areas of the park. Steps were taken to have licensed trappers operating in these parts, but with what results it is too early to record.

“ *Unauthorized carrying of Firearms*.—The number of unlicensed carriers of firearms within the park boundaries has greatly increased during the past year. The Ranger has been active in the pursuit of such offenders, and it is hoped that a few prosecutions will have the desired effect of enforcing the by-law dealing with this matter. It is needless to stress the fact that unrestricted use of firearms within the park by unauthorized persons constitutes a real danger to the public. Advertisements were inserted in Canterbury and West Coast newspapers warning the public that shooting and the carrying of firearms within the park is strictly prohibited except with the permission of the Board.

“ *Fire Risks*.—Two spells of very dry weather during the summer dried up the scrub in many localities, thereby increasing the danger threatened by bush fires. During these periods extra vigilance was maintained, and no outbreaks have occurred. A fire district has been established taking in the whole of the park area on the Canterbury side of the main divide along with adjacent lands, thus prohibiting and controlling the lighting of fires during the closed season, unless the approval of the State Forest Service is obtained. This should assist in minimizing the fire danger in and adjacent to the park.”

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