

1944

NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS AND PUBLICITY

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE)

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

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS
AND PUBLICITY to HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Wellington, 28th July, 1944.

I HAVE the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts and Publicity for the year ended 31st March, 1944.

W. E. PARRY,

Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts and Publicity.

His Excellency the Governor-General of New Zealand.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS AND PUBLICITY

SIR,—

Wellington, 21st July, 1944.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the organization and work of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, with which is now incorporated the Publicity Department, for the year ended 31st March, 1944.

I have, &c.,

L. J. SCHMITT, General Manager.

The Hon. W. E. Parry, Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts and Publicity.

ANNUAL REPORT

DESPITE the adverse conditions created by the war, travel within the Dominion, as recorded by the Department's booking-offices, was very brisk; in fact, the sales turnover for the year exceeded the pre-war year by £159,690. This increase can be considered very satisfactory, and as a very large proportion of the Department's trained personnel are serving with the Armed Forces, the staff at present employed were at times hard pressed to cope with the business offering, but on the whole were able to deal efficiently with all requests made by the travelling public. Generally speaking, reports from the various tourist resorts throughout the country indicate increased business, but in many cases hotels and guest houses could not cope with the total business offering, and were unable to book accommodation to full capacity owing to the difficulty in securing staff.

The work entailed in arranging tours by the staff of the departmental bureaux was made somewhat difficult owing to the trouble experienced in securing hotel accommodation for travellers at certain places, also owing to sudden alterations in the time-tables of transport services, and this was so particularly in the case of visiting servicemen, who were frequently given leave at short notice, necessitating hurried arrangement of trips.

In a few instances, preliminary arrangements were made for organized party and group-travel tours, but in each case the project had to be abandoned owing to restrictions on travel, either by rail or other forms of transport.

A noticeable feature, and an interesting one so far as post-war travel is concerned, was the apparent popularity of these types of tours, as in each instance where an effort was made to promote such tours the demand always exceeded the facilities available.

Continued service was rendered to all branches of the Armed Forces in making travel arrangements, and any assistance given in this direction was much appreciated by the men concerned.

During a period of the year the staff of the bureaux did good work in the film publicity field, programmes of educational, war propaganda, and scenic films being shown regularly to many different types of audiences.

There was very little movement in travel from overseas, but inquiries from residents of other countries concerning the scenic attractions of New Zealand are gradually increasing as the war situation improves. Whereas the war has practically brought about a cessation of travel from other countries, there is no doubt that the great advance made in

aviation during the past few years must result in such an improvement in international air services that countries like New Zealand, whose tourist traffic has been so adversely affected by time taken in travelling by sea, will be brought within a few days' journey from the American and European continents.

The net expenditure for the year covering the running-costs of all activities of the Department was £122,316, and the revenue earned amounted to £118,336.

PUBLICITY

During the year the Department did not carry out any publicity work for the promotion of travel, but the staff of the Film and Advertising Studios was fully engaged on war-publicity work and the production of photographs and film strips.

The major efforts of the Studios have been confined to the production of information films showing New Zealand's part in the war effort, both in the two theatres of war and on the home front. The "Weekly Review" is now in its 132nd week. In addition to the "Weekly Review," a number of films for special purposes have also been made.

Apart from distribution of the films throughout the theatres in the Dominion, copies are sent regularly to London, Washington, and the Middle East.

A number of British Ministry of Information films have also been printed and distributed through the Dominion.

In the 16 mm. branch the main production has again been on film for Army training, although large numbers of subjects have been produced for use in schools and through non-theatrical channels.

The National Film Library has grown rapidly during the year and now contains over eight hundred films. An arrangement has been made whereby the films that have been purchased for the use of Army Education and Welfare Service will be added to the Library after the war.

The photographic and art branches continue to provide a service to many Government Departments, the principal work being the production of many thousands of photographs depicting New Zealand's war effort on all fronts.

The service whereby the parents and friends of troops in the Pacific can obtain copies of photographs taken there has grown to considerable proportions. Recently up to ten thousand prints a month have been ordered.

The film-strip branch is steadily developing and is being increasingly used for educational and propaganda purposes.

The demands on the Studios for all classes of publicity material are growing so rapidly that it has become apparent that neither the accommodation nor the facilities are adequate to fulfil the demands efficiently. The whole matter is under consideration with a view to presenting comprehensive plans for expansion in order that the Studios will be in a position to meet post-war requirements.

The feature length film, "One Hundred Crowded Years," produced by the Studios to celebrate New Zealand's Centenary, was loaned to the Patriotic Fund Board for distribution through New Zealand for patriotic purposes. Advice has just been received that over £1,200 has been added to the fund.

HOTELS AND TOURIST RESORTS CONTROLLED BY DEPARTMENT

Rotorua.—(a) Electrical System: During the previous year a commencement was made with the reconstruction of the electrical system of Rotorua and the preparatory work for changing the primary voltage to 11,000 volts. During the year under review the activities of the section have been directed to the completion of this work, but difficulties are still being experienced in obtaining materials and supplies, resulting in a proportion of the work being done with reconditioned materials.

To date the change-over of the main system from 6,600 volts to 11,000 volts results in one-third of the load being supplied at 11,000 volts, compared with only a fractional portion at this time last year. Several miles of line have been overhauled and are ready to be livened up at the higher voltage when the main line from Ngongotaha is completed.

Progress with the overhaul and reconstruction of the low-tension reticulation of Rotorua Borough has been slow but steady, attention having been given to those sections in the area north of the railway-line where constant faults were occurring.

In the borough all water-heaters are now controlled by the Standard Telephone system, leaving those outside the borough proper to be controlled when equipment arrives from England. The effect of the control is noticeable on the system peak, and when taken into account with the proportion of the system changed over to 11,000 volts shows a considerable reduction in the system losses, the figure being in the neighbourhood of 14 per cent., against a figure of 28 per cent. prior to the work being undertaken.

Fortunately no heavy storms were experienced during the year, consequently no major interruptions of supply were experienced.

The administration of the Electricity Control Orders issued during the past year by the Electricity Controller has been in the hands of the Department.

(b) Water and Drainage Systems: Sixteen new connections were made to the supply. Our work has been seriously hampered through insufficient supplies of pipe, but it is to be hoped that this situation will ease in the coming year.

About 5 chains of new water-mains were laid to connect the Government housing scheme at Wallace Crescent. More work would have been done in this connection had supplies of cast-iron pipe been available.

A number of blow-outs occurred in the mains during the year, but none of these were very serious.

Six new drainage connections were made to septic tanks and several service drainage connections were renewed. The usual difficulties consequent on sulphur deposits in the main sewage system were attended to.

The usual maintenance work has been carried out on mains, plant, pumps, and reservoir, in addition to work on departmental buildings and gardens. The long dry spell experienced up to February caused considerable anxiety.

Owing to the growth of the borough it is now apparent that steps will have to be taken, as soon as it is possible to do so, to provide an alternative and supplementary water-supply, as the existing service is inadequate, particularly during dry spells. The reservoir provided some years ago improved the supply, but the storage is insufficient over an extended period of dry weather.

It is with great regret that the Department records the death of overseer plumber H. E. Fitzgerald during February last. Mr. Fitzgerald had been with the Department for forty years, and was fully conversant with the Department's activities and its difficulties in so far as they applied to the work of this section. He was an authority on these matters, and his passing is a great loss to the Department.

(c) Baths and Sanatorium: Free treatment to all patients was provided under the social security scheme to the capacity of the accommodation, staff, and facilities available. The staff had a particularly strenuous year. The free service has been extended to include x-ray treatments.

A new boiler-house was erected in concrete to replace the structure destroyed by fire, and a new workshop for the baths mechanic constructed.

The supply of Rachel water to the main building is causing concern. Water is drawn from the spring to supply the main building, and, in addition, it supplies in part the Ward Bath swimming-pool and the Blue Bath. The supply of water from Whakarewarewa has been variable of late, owing to a fall in the level of the lake adjacent to the pool which supplies the water. When this occurs, the Rachel Spring is called upon to supply the whole amount of water for the swimming-pools, in addition to the private baths and douches in all the buildings. When water is being drawn off to this extent it is not possible to keep up an adequate supply for the Aix douches and other treatments in the main buildings or for the warm douches in the Ward Baths, and it will probably be necessary to draw off the supply for the Aix douches, &c., by a separate pipe and pump.

The drop in the level of Lake Roto-a-tamaheke resulted in a serious shortage for a time of hot mineral water for the baths, and in order to remedy this state of affairs a booster pump was installed at the edge of the spring.

In order that information may be accumulated and made available for the proper economic utilization, conservation, and development of the thermal resources of the Dominion, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research appointed an officer at Rotorua during the year for this purpose.

The members of the staff of the massage and physiotherapy section, which is the keystone to the whole establishment, worked extremely well and carried out their duties efficiently. The number of patients admitted to the Sanatorium and the number of out-patients treated is dependent on the number of massage staff available, and cannot be increased greatly unless more staff can be provided. Owing to the war it is impossible to get masseurs, and all masseuses qualifying are taken for general hospitals and for work for the Armed Services. The addition of even one masseur and one masseuse would make a great reduction in the delay in providing treatment for those requiring it.

During the year 14,923 massage and special treatments were given to male patients and 14,056 treatments to female patients. The average daily number of patients at the Sanatorium was 40.

The payment of out-patients' fees and Sanatorium patients' fees from the Social Security Fund has led to a considerable increase in the number of patients in both classes applying for treatment. Up to the present there has been difficulty in adding to the number of treatments given, as the staff have been fully occupied, and the equipment and accommodation at the Bathhouse do not allow of much additional treatment being given. It is hoped to increase this at an early date by installing a new pyretic bath on each side, as this would enable about 20 more patients to be treated daily.

A number of patients at the Returned Services' Hospital attend regularly for swimming-baths, special baths, and pyretics. Members of the Air Force recuperating at their recently-established convalescent depot, after active service, are also attending regularly for baths.

(d) Gardens and Reserves: A good sequence of plants has been raised throughout the year. Owing to war conditions the Department has had to rely chiefly on seed collected from plants by its own staff. The borders, beds, &c., have been maintained as usual. Miss M. L. Darling, of Auckland, kindly donated two trees to the gardens.

Playing areas have been maintained in good order and were patronized to a great extent by the personnel of the R.N.Z.A.F.

The reserves under departmental control have been kept free of noxious weeds and the fences kept in order.

(e) Round Trip: The revenue earned showed an increase on the takings for the previous year.

During the year a large fire occurred at Te Wairoa, but with the assistance of staff from other Departments and the personnel of the Maori Training Unit the Department's buildings were saved, but unfortunately a considerable area of bush was destroyed.

Waitomo.—Business during the year showed a marked improvement, approximately 6,500 people visiting the caves, the majority of whom were residents from the Auckland District and American servicemen.

During the holiday periods there was a heavy demand for accommodation, but owing to the difficulty in obtaining staff it was not possible to accept all bookings.

No major works have been carried out for some years, and practically all maintenance and repair work has been performed by the hotel staff.

Te Aroha.—The revenue for the year showed a slight decrease as compared with the previous year, due to the fact that the military camp at Te Aroha was abandoned prior to the commencement of the period under review. Statistics show that 32,436 baths were taken, as compared with 33,471 for the previous year.

Little Barrier Island.—Reports from the caretaker indicate that native birds have been numerous, bell-birds and parakeets being more plentiful than ever. Buildings were painted and repaired and tracks cleared. During the year the caretaker, Mr. Hardgrave, was called up for military service, and his duties were taken over by Mr. C. F. Parkin.

Morere.—The tracks and grounds in this reserve were maintained in good order, and despite the abnormal rainfall during the year little damage was done to tracks and pipelines.

The caretaker reports that native birds are plentiful, and that active steps were taken to eliminate deer and goats to prevent damage being done to the beautiful bush.

This resort has become very popular with the travelling public and with people who desire a quiet rest amongst ideal surroundings.

Lake House, Waikaremoana.—This hotel, after having been closed for over a year, was reopened from the 1st September and was well patronized by visitors, particularly from the east coast districts.

The hotel was practically fully booked from one week before the Christmas holidays until late in March.

The camp sites and huts provided for visitors who do not wish to stay at the hotel were well occupied, particularly during the summer holiday period.

The weather during the year was abnormally wet and on one occasion 9.2 in. of rain were recorded in twenty-four hours.

Queenstown.—The winter of 1943 was very severe and snow with heavy frosts continued until late October. Trouble was experienced with the heating-system in the propagation house, which resulted in a poor growth of seedlings. This defect in the heating-system is being remedied.

The two bowling-greens and the croquet-lawn were in good playing order throughout the season, and the bare patches which showed up in one of the greens were plugged with Queenstown water-weed.

All lawns and flower-beds were kept in good order, and the climbing roses were much admired by visitors.

The huts and tracks under the control of the Department in and about Lake Wakatipu are in good order and condition. Tramping was very popular during the season, the weather being very favourable.

The tourist business in Queenstown showed an improvement on the past few seasons, and all hotel and boardinghouse accommodation was taxed to capacity during certain periods of the year.

Te Anau Hotel, Te Anau.—Considering the times, the revenue has shown a noteworthy increase as compared with last year. Staffing difficulties militated against an even greater increase. Owing to shortage of man-power a grant made in October last for general renovations has not yet been utilized, nor has it been possible to complete the installation of the stand-by-engine lighting which has been under way for some time.

During the year an inspection of Cascade Creek and Glade House has been made, and stores, buildings, &c., were found in a reasonably satisfactory condition.

Milford Track and Hotel.—The Milford Track was again closed to traffic owing to restrictions on travel and staffing difficulties. An inspection of the Track revealed that very great damage had been done by avalanches and slips, and a considerable amount of labour will be necessary after the war to put it in good order again.

Road-travel restrictions and the suspension of work on the Homer Tunnel have tended to isolate the Hotel Milford, but arrangements were made with the Public Works Department for a limited number of guests to visit the Sounds through the Homer Tunnel.

During the year a number of improvements were made to the grounds, such as the laying-down of lawns and the establishment of a vegetable garden, &c.

The Hermitage, Mount Cook.—The Department resumed control of the Hermitage, Mount Cook, on the 3rd February, 1944, and Mr. N. Wilde was appointed Manager.

Tokaanu Hotel.—The Tokaanu Hotel was purchased by the Government, and the Department took over control on the 1st March, 1944, Mr. J. Scott being appointed Manager.

The Department's officers located at London, Melbourne, Sydney, Washington, and Ottawa have been fully employed on supply work during the year.