

The work of the different bureaux has been heavy, and the amount of tours booked has totalled £73,597, an increase of £4,915 over the previous year, and the amount of commission actually earned has been £3,747, an increase of £278. A number of important tours were organized by and carried out by the bureaux of the Department, including visiting tennis and football teams, the American scientists, and others. The American professors were greatly pleased with the manner in which their varied tour was arranged, and the head of the party, Professor Nutting, stated that he knew of no other country in which the visitor was so well cared for in this respect.

In connection with the booking business, I would draw your attention to a complaint frequently made from the Otago and Southland Districts, that visitors are advised not to visit the South, but to confine their attentions to Rotorua. Various statements of this nature have appeared in the Press, and have been mentioned by different tourist leagues. In every case coming under my notice I have asked the sponsor of the paragraph to give specific details of any instance where a Government Tourist Agent has given such advice, but in no case have they attempted to justify the statement, which is definitely contradicted by every Tourist Agent in New Zealand. As a matter of fact, each Agent vies with the other in endeavouring to show a bigger business than his brother Agent, and obviously there is nothing to be gained by the Auckland Agent sending people to Rotorua in preference to the South. Every person sent to the South enables him to show a substantial commission to the credit of the office, while those going to Rotorua only are of no use in this respect, as we get no commission from the Railway Department on a mere booking to Rotorua—in fact, we cannot issue a ticket there unless in combination with another trip. It is by the commission earned on the tickets issued that the agencies are judged. These statements have also been made in regard to bookings to the West Coast and South Westland, and on investigation I found that practically our heaviest bookings were for people leaving Wellington or Christchurch and doing the Buller, Otira, and Franz Josef trips.

STATEMENT SHOWING FINANCIAL POSITION AT MAIN RESORTS.

Resort.	Year 1922-23.				Year 1921-22.			
	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Excess of Expenditure over Receipts.	Excess of Receipts over Expenditure.	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Excess of Expenditure over Receipts.	Excess of Receipts over Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Te Aroha	1,489	3,106	1,617	..	1,947	4,354	2,407	..
Rotorua	22,876	28,463	5,587	..	25,746	37,420	11,674	..
Rotorua Acclimatization District ..	1,677	1,060	..	617	1,307	1,177	..	130
Waitomo Caves	6,143	3,983	..	2,160	6,909	4,929	..	1,980
Lake House, Waikaremoana ..	1,240	1,732	492	..	936	2,275	1,339	..
Queenstown	217	747	530	..	257	821	564	..
Glade House and Te Anau—Milford Track	1,467	1,940	473	..	1,994	2,900	906	..

Return of Receipts.

The following table shows the receipts of the Department from all sources from 1916-17 :—

	1916-17.	1917-18.	1918-19.	1919-20.	1920-21.	1921-22.	1922-23.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts	33,137	32,935	33,689	42,218	51,038	50,822	40,246

Return of Expenditure.

The following is a comparison of the expenditure for the past six years :—

	1917-18.	1918-19.	1919-20.	1920-21.	1921-22.	1922-23.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Consolidated Fund	48,732	53,656	68,858	93,720	86,944	59,647
Public Works Fund	967	1,620	6,194	19,041	17,996	5,435

The following is a summary of the work of the Department at the different resorts under its control :—

ROTORUA.

Revenue.—The general revenue shows an increase of about £200 above the figures of the previous year. The total receipts from passenger bookings for this year are appreciably less. As far as this agency is concerned, a very material factor in the reduction of passenger-booking revenue is the keen competition in the hotels and boardinghouses, which book all their boarders for the various side trips. This practice, of course, deprives the Department of a large amount of business, which would otherwise pass through the agency.