

LAKE HOUSE, WAIKAREMOANA.

The season has shown a marked improvement in every way on the preceding one, both as regards the number of visitors to the hostel, and the returns for the period. There was good demand for accommodation, even in slack periods, while the busy ones were rushed. These include Christmas week and Easter.

In regard to the working of the hostel itself, everything worked out quite satisfactorily, except for the shortage of staff, which was particularly felt during the rush periods. The renovating of the hostel at the beginning of the season was much appreciated by visitors, tending to make their stay much more comfortable. The launch and boats, after being thoroughly overhauled and renovated at the beginning of this season, were well patronized by visitors, many pleasing comments being passed regarding their excellent condition. The launch has been running regularly during the whole of the season, and has amply proved the wisdom of installing a new engine. The tracks of the different side trips, particularly the Waikare-iti one, were much availed of.

HERMITAGE.

The Hermitage was leased from the 1st October last to the Mount Cook Motor Company (Limited). Tenders were invited for the lease, and the company was the only tenderer. The term of the lease is for five years, and the annual rental £200. The company, owning the motor-cars, are in a position to run cheap excursions, and also to lower the tariff when considered desirable, which could not be done by the Department. It is intended to keep the establishment open during the winter months, and this experiment will be watched with interest. Ample provision has been made in the lease for the protection of the Government's interests, and for inspection by the Department at any time. A record of high ascents will also be kept by the company and embodied in the records of this Department.

TE ANAU—MILFORD TRACK.

A good season was experienced on this track, over three hundred visitors arrived at Glade House, and nearly all did the walk to Milford and back. Ten visitors crossed over the track from Queenstown to Te Anau. The Milford Track and the huts were maintained in first-class order throughout the season, and no complaints of any kind were received from visitors. The steamer on Lake Te Anau was leased to Mr. Govan, of Te Anau, and his service was excellent. The drawback of this trip has been the bad state of the road leading to Te Anau, and it is hoped that this will be much improved by next season. Good work was done on the Grave-Talbot Track by the Otago University students.

OVERSEAS AGENCIES.

The agencies in Australia—Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide—were busy during the year, and the Agents all report an increase in the inquiries and visitors to New Zealand. The expenditure at Sydney and Melbourne was as follows:—

	Sydney.	Melbourne.
	£	£
Rent	561	408
Salaries and wages	858	964
Miscellaneous	168	85
	<u>£1,587</u>	<u>£1,457</u>

REPORT OF THE RESIDENT OFFICER, ROTORUA.

As regards works undertaken, there is nothing unusual to report. Owing to the shortage of funds, arising from causes fully dealt with in previous reports, only ordinary maintenance-work was carried on throughout the year.

From an administrative point of view the year has been an eventful one, inasmuch as control of the town has now passed from this Department to a local body. In September, 1922, the Rotorua Borough Act, 1922, was passed, and became operative as from the 1st January, 1923. The first election was held on the 27th February, and the first meeting of the Council took place on the 7th March, 1923. In the interval between the passing of the Act and the election of the Council this Department continued to exercise all powers and functions with respect to the borough.

The levy on the Town Account made by the Waikato Hospital and Charitable Aid Board for the current year was £258 18s. 6d., as compared with £338 2s. of the previous year. To meet this a rate of $\frac{1}{8}$ d. in the pound was levied on the capital value.

The levy for fire-prevention purposes made by the Fire Board was £645 5s. 4d., as compared with £687 8s. of the previous year. This was met by a rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on the value of buildings within the town area. The Library rate was $\frac{1}{10}$ d. in the pound.

One hundred and twenty-six building permits were issued during the year for new buildings, and alterations to existing ones. The total value of the building operations was £40,572.

The rateable (capital) value of the town is £625,644.