

North Committee.—Besides carrying out the usual work of maintaining houses, grounds, and road, the committee has improved the tracks, prepared camping-grounds, and metalled and rolled the lower mile of the road in the reserve.

Access to North Mount Egmont is now available by means of an excellent road, and visitors can secure comfortable accommodation at very reasonable charges.

South Committee.—Many improvements have been made by this committee during the year. The Syme Hut, situated on Fantham's Peak, about 6,000 ft. above sea-level, has been completed, and is proving a very popular attraction. The car-parking area has been enlarged, four miles and a half of new tracks have been formed, including a new track to the foot of Fantham's Peak. A ski track has been prepared about one mile above the hostel, and the grazing-paddock cleared of stumps.

East Committee.—This committee has done considerable work in improving the area under its charge. During the year the houses have been renovated and furnished, new tracks have been formed, a car-parking area made, and general improvements to the grounds effected. The road from the reserve to the accommodation-houses has been metalled, and a road formed above the houses to a height of 4,000 ft. This work has been carried out by unemployed men.

West Committee.—Owing to the rather isolated position of its accommodation-house, this committee has been handicapped in many respects, but with the small amount of money available excellent work has been accomplished. The house has been repaired, tracks maintained, one new track formed, and everything done by the committee to cater for the visiting public. The committee has also assisted the Board materially in conserving the forest.

North Egmont Hostelry, Ltd.—This company has done everything possible to maintain an attractive, up-to-date, and comfortable hostel. The tariff has been reduced and tourists are assured of every attention. Outbuildings have been painted and repaired, the inside of the hostel renovated, and grounds improved. As a result of the improvements effected, considerable increase in the number of visitors has resulted.

Alpine Clubs.—During the past year the support received from the three alpine clubs in Taranaki has been of great assistance to the Board.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

This report covers the first complete year of the Board's activities, the Board having been instituted on the 19th September, 1929. The year has been marked by considerable activity and progress, and already much benefit has resulted from the Board's work. There have been four meetings of the full Board, and four committee meetings. The various aspects of the Board's work will be dealt with separately.

Finance.—Finance has presented a considerably greater difficulty than was anticipated at the beginning of the year. The Christchurch City Council promised to give the sum of £500, provided other local bodies between them contributed a like sum. The economic depression through which the country is passing has made that sum difficult of attainment. However, the sum of £315 has been donated by local bodies, both in Canterbury and Westland, and the Christchurch City Council has paid over £350. It is hoped that later on further representations to local bodies will meet with success. The Board is, nevertheless, grateful to those who have contributed. The canvass of the various Councils has had the desirable effect of stimulating interest in the Board's work.

Expenditure has so far been kept to a minimum, as the Board has been carefully considering the best sites for improvements, and what are the most desirable improvements to make.

Township.—During the year the Government transferred to the Board all the Crown land in the Arthur's Pass Township. The area included over one hundred surveyed residential allotments, of which fifty were already leased. The Board decided to grant renewable leases over these holdings for terms of seven years. The lease has been prepared, and is at present awaiting the approval of the Hon. the Minister of Lands. When this has been received, the unoccupied sections will be advertised, and the present occupiers will be given an opportunity of acquiring a lease of their holdings. The Board is thus provided with what may be regarded as an endowment fund which, as a sure source of revenue, will prove very useful in the future.

Extension of Park.—Additions have been made to the park totalling 2,621 acres. Most of the area concerned comprised reserves within the boundary of the park, and were excluded when the park was first constituted. The park boundaries have been thereby considerably simplified.

Deer.—The park has been divided into six deer blocks, all of which have been licensed for stalking at different periods. While this has produced a little revenue, the Board will doubtless evolve a more comprehensive scheme for dealing with the deer menace and, at the same time, make some revenue. The general restrictions have been raised, and therefore the Board is entitled to initiate its own scheme.

Publicity.—The Board is much indebted to the Christchurch and West Coast press for the facilities placed at the Board's disposal for publicity. The newspapers have exhibited a gratifying interest in and support of all the Board's efforts.

Railway Surcharge.—Strong endeavours have been made to obtain from the Railways Department a surcharge on all excursion tickets to the park. The Board has contended that the revenue thus derived would be expended on improvements that would add to the convenience and pleasure of excursionists, and have the result of enhancing the popularity of the park. It was considered reasonable that as the Board was expending moneys on improvements there should be reciprocation on the part of the Railways Department. The Department, however, declined the application, and