

was later supported in this attitude by the Minister of Railways on the two chief grounds that the Department was not represented on the Board, and that the surcharge would have the effect of diminishing the patronage of the excursions.

*Use of Park.*—There is no doubt whatever that the facilities provided by the park for sport, picnicking, and holiday-making have never before been so greatly utilized. The weekly excursions organized by the Railways Department carried an average of six hundred passengers, and, on one day, 1,400 were carried. Altogether, it is stated 7,162 people visited the park in this way. The Christchurch Ski Club had a successful year, although there was the poorest fall of snow for many years. It is probably true to say that the activities of the club were largely responsible for the number of visitors to the park. The membership of the club increased very considerably, and there are even better prospects for the next season. The club has done a large amount of observation and exploration work with a view to determining the best grounds for sports. Permission has been obtained from the Board to use the Hills Peak ground, and it is the club's intention to clear this area. The club members have worked very amicably with the Board, and have displayed every desire to render every possible assistance. At present negotiations are in train for the erection of a mountain hut by the Board for the use of the club and the public. The club has made an open offer in this connection of monetary assistance and voluntary labour.

The number of casual visitors to the park has also much increased. Without doubt, when the necessary amenities for visitors are provided by the Board, there will be a still greater influx. Mountain-climbing has been much indulged in, with the result that there are but few peaks unconquered. Fortunately, there have been no serious accidents to mar the year's record.

*Works and Grounds.*—The following report is submitted by Dr. William McKay, Chairman of the Grounds Committee: The Grounds Committee have much pleasure in reporting that during the past year the park has increased much in public favour. As was anticipated, this park is becoming renowned as the only one of its kind in the Dominion that can be visited and enjoyed by day excursionists from the centres of population. Realizing this fact, the committee have advocated a policy of, first of all, providing facilities which can be enjoyed by the multitude, and with this end in view have carried out improvements to existing tracks and have formed new ones. These have been so graded and cleaned that even moderate walkers will find them easy, and will be able to reach the various points of vantage.

The Bealey Glacier Track, being always a popular one, received particular attention, as a result of which it is now in excellent order. Avalanche Peak affords splendid and extensive views of the surrounding country, and as the ascent is commenced quite close to the Arthur Pass Railway-station, a considerable amount of care has been taken in grading and forming the track. This climb should soon become one of the favourite excursions of visitors to the park, as even the first few hundred feet opens up views of a series of excellent waterfalls.

On the Westland side a first-class track has been laid down from the main highway to the saddle on Kelly's Range, at a height of over 4,000 ft. This is a key position to much magnificent open mountain country, and will soon establish itself as a popular tramp, both for mountaineers and the general public.

Negotiations with the Railways Department resulted in the Board securing the suspension bridge leading over the River Bealey to the Punch Bowl, and also the lease of the land in the vicinity. This being a favourite spot with holiday-makers, and there being very fine camping and picnicking grounds on the other side, the Board instructed our committee to have the bridge repaired. This was carried out very satisfactorily by the ranger, the steel ropes being tightened up and hardwood planking laid down. Unfortunately, the heavy floods in January undermined one of the anchors, so that the bridge carried away. We are pleased to report, however, that most of the material has been salvaged. Whether this bridge should be rebuilt, and, if so, in what locality, will be a subject for discussion by the Board.

Other matters attended to have been the providing of open-air fireplaces, erecting of sign-posts and guiding-flags on the various tracks. Warning notices and copies of by-laws have also been placed in conspicuous positions.

The question of erecting a suitable shelter at the settlement received attention, various designs being dealt with, but before one had been adopted it was learned that there was a probability of securing the disused school building at a favourable price. After examining this building and noting what repairs would be necessary, the committee resolved that it would recommend to the Board its purchase on certain terms.

The Christchurch Ski Club, having approached the Board on several occasions with a view of obtaining assistance in the erection of a mountain hut on the Blimit Range, your committee carefully examined the possibility of forming a horse-track up this mountain, so as to facilitate transport of the required material. It soon became obvious, however, that on account of the nature of the country, the cost of such a work would be prohibitive. Even a graded 2 ft. track would be beyond the present means of the Board.

The Canterbury Automobile Association have promised to co-operate with the Board in the selection of a suitable site for a motor camping-ground within the park. The unfavourable weather conditions have prevented the carrying-out of the necessary preliminaries, but it is hoped that before next summer something definite will be accomplished.

We wish to place on record our appreciation of the valuable services rendered gratuitously by Mr. James McKay, surveyor, who made several trips to the park and spared no pains in examining and discussing the various matters submitted to him. We also cordially commend the work done by our Ranger, Mr. C. E. Warden, who has always shown enthusiasm in his duties and loyalty to the interests of the Board.