

The Ranger reports that there is very considerable regeneration in these parts of the reserve where the goats have been almost exterminated. The farmers of Taranaki are beginning to realize the serious effect of the goats on the young growth, and it would be a great help if the Government would legislate against the keeping of goats within a three- or four-mile radius of the reserve. The Park Board has seen the destructive effect of the goats in the native bush, and cannot stress too strongly the necessity for their extermination not only in Taranaki, but in all parts of New Zealand. With the extermination of the goat, erosion will be definitely checked.

The Board is of opinion that the opossum does some damage to the young growth in the forest, and on that account applied to the Minister to have the trapping season for Egmont extended from two to three months. This was approved, and so far the trappers, in spite of the bad weather conditions, report excellent results. If the bush is to be saved, the number of opossums must definitely be kept in check.

It is satisfactory to note that the Ranger reports a very real increase in the bird-life on the mountain. A strict watch has been kept on poachers, and with the help of many public-spirited settlers surrounding the mountain this evil has been checked.

So far no progress has been made as to the upkeep of the roads within the reserve. It would be a great help to the Park Board if the Highways Board could take over the liability on the roads to the North House and so end what appears to be a deadlock. If the tolls could be taken off the three roads to the various hostels there would be a great increase in the number of visitors to the reserve.

Finance is a serious problem so far as the upkeep of the reserve is concerned. Apart from the maintenance of the roads, the most pressing need of the Board is the appointment of a young expert forester who could grow up with the Board. Then, the completion of the ring fences round the reserve is a work that should be pressed on. In many cases settlers are helping, and the Board's thanks are due to these settlers, who appreciate the great value of the mountain to Taranaki.

During the year, with the help of the Government subsidy, the thinning-out of the *Pinus* plantation of 300 acres has been continued. This work should be completed early in 1940.

In conclusion, the Board wishes to express its thanks to the Minister in Charge, the Hon. Mr. Langstone, and to Cabinet for the interest and financial help that it has secured during the year.

To the Hon. Mr. Langstone the Board expresses special thanks for his very great interest not only in the Egmont Park, but in the many reserves throughout New Zealand under his charge.

To the Chairman and Committee in charge of the three hostels on the mountain the Board owes its thanks for another excellent year's work. In spite of, at times, the difficulties of finance, the standard of upkeep of the hostels has been more than maintained.

To the local bodies surrounding the mountain thanks are due for their generous and very welcome annual votes. Also, the very practical help of the various alpine clubs must not be forgotten. These clubs are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the six mountain huts on the higher levels, which are of such value to climbers. The formation of a junior alpine club in connection with the New Plymouth Boys' High School adds also to the interest in our mountain.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

Financial.—The Government has again granted the Board financial assistance, this year to the extent of £350 for general administration and for park-improvement purposes. This assistance is greatly appreciated, particularly as the Government during the life of the Board has given generous grants from time to time, and these have materially helped the Board in its progress with work in the park. The Board is also grateful to the Christchurch City Council for a donation of £50 to the funds and to those other local bodies which have made donations during the period.

This year the Board canvassed the various local bodies for donations, and, although the result of this appeal is not yet finalized, at this stage it can be said that the response has not reached expectations and has been really disappointing. The Board therefore appreciates the efforts of the few local bodies which have shown their interest in and appreciation of the Board's work by monetary assistance.

Personnel.—A number of changes have been made in the membership of the Board during this period. As indicated in the last annual report, Mr. Beanland did not contest the Mayoral election, and his place on the Board has been taken by Mr. R. M. MacFarlane, who was elected Mayor of Christchurch. Mr. E. S. Brittenden resigned from the Board on his retirement from the New Zealand Railways, and his seat has been taken by Mr. W. Rodgers, who has succeeded Mr. Brittenden as District Traffic Manager. Mr. F. S. Foster has succeeded Mr. Darby as Conservator of Forests at Hokitika and has taken Mr. Darby's place on the Board. The Board has also suffered the loss of one of its foundation members through the regrettable death of Dr. E. Teichelmann.

Meetings.—The Board held three meetings during the year in April, September, and January, and in addition several meetings of the various committees were also convened.