

LUXURY ON A SMALL INCOMK.

Anyone would prefer a seat in the hall of a luxurious hotel in cold weather to sitting on a bench in a public square. A great many persons who ought to be doing the latter do the former all the year round. This is not true of England, but of the United States, where men consider hotels as public property.

A business man will walk into an hotel and take a seat in the hall with as much ease as if he were a guest at the hotel. He will not even patronise the bar, or buy a cigar for the good of the house if he can obtain what he needs more cheaply anywhere else.

The halls of the big hotels in New York are regular market places. Business men make appointments there as being convenient for meeting friends.

The secret of the extraordinary popularity of hotel life in the States lies in the possibility of people who are not well off and without any social standing meeting on a more or less equal footing with those whose positions they envy.

If they had homes of their own, it could only be in some deserted suburb. The people they associate with

PROMINENT AUCKLAND BOWLERS.



MR W. GORRIE.

[See Bowling Column.]



MR J. M. LENNOX.

to dress nicely, and to loiter about in the hotel hall, and dance in the evening. They cannot understand anyone wanting to explore the neighbourhood.

The completeness of one of these big "loading grounds" is really astounding. From the terrace outside you go into the sun gardens and palm gardens. On to these open, perhaps, half-a-dozen drawing-rooms, the red, and blue, and the white, and so on, quite in the manner of Buckingham Palace. The dining-halls and ball-rooms have to be palatial with so many guests to patronise them. There are bowling-alleys, billiard-rooms, children's play-rooms — everything that one could very well think of combining under one roof.

There is, too, the best of food to be had in quantities that would alarm the person of ordinary appetite, and also the best wine. But the visitor is never expected, even at the biggest hotels, to spend anything on wine.

There is really nothing they need spend money on beside their board and lodging. About the most expensive thing they can do is to hire a carriage for an afternoon's drive.

The change of people is continuous, the coming and going so constant, that it is not remarked at all if your stock of dresses or suits is small. Everything is in your favour. All you have to do is to behave well, and you can go on for the rest of your lives living in palaces, better off in many ways than kings and queens.



Feehey, photo.

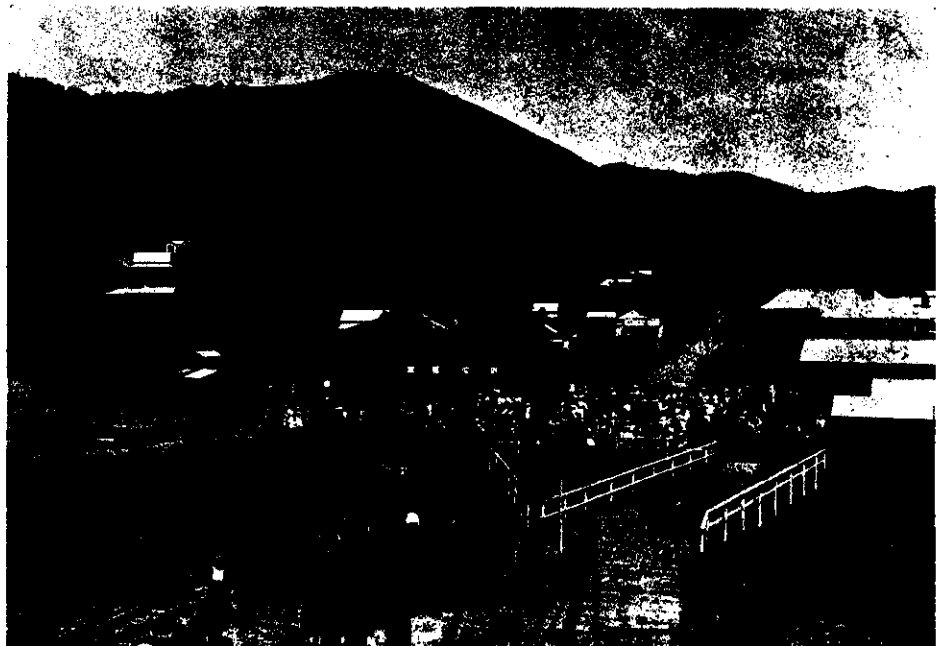
OPENING OF VICTORIA BOWLING CLUB, WELLINGTON.

would be people not at all different from themselves, and for that reason not very interesting. To entertain in a way which would attract any of the glittering upper circle would be entirely out of the question, but at a hotel no entertaining is necessary. To dress fairly well, to behave decently, to show a little skill in securing introductions at the right moment. That is everything.

I believe this has a good deal to do with the numbers of queer people you meet in American hotels, largely composed of ancient mothers and one or two attractive daughters. Instead of in their native obscurity they are able to live in astounding luxury. There is nothing in the world, even when you include the palaces of royalty and millionaires' mansions, much more luxurious than the modern American hotel.

The most astounding feature is their size. At some little country resort, with no greater attractions than a couple of small lakes and a pine forest, you will find not one hotel the size of the Savoy, Metropole, or Cecil in London, but two or three. During a great part of the year these will be closed; but during the height of the season you cannot be sure of getting a room in any of them unless you make arrangements for it in advance. One Florida hotel has a main corridor a quarter of a mile in length. Altogether the building will accommodate about 3000 guests.

That is the American idea of real happiness. Bring as many people as possible together; they are not particular about any attractions outside the hotel. All you can do at half the great pleasure resorts in America is



EXCURSION TRIP BY S.S. WESTRALIA FROM WELLINGTON TO PICTON ON PRINCE OF WALES' BIRTHDAY. ARRIVAL AT PICTON.