

Enterprise of the New Zealand Government.

PROGRESS OF DEPARTMENT OF TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

LESS than six years ago a newly born department of State began its labours in a back room of the New Zealand Parliamentary Buildings, with a staff of three officers. This was the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, established by the New Zealand Government for the purpose of advertising the scenic and thermal wonders of the colony. Probably not even the prescient Minister responsible for its birth had anticipated to the full the remarkable success and phenomenal development of what is now one of the most indispensable of our Government departments. The staff has increased in less than six years from three to one-hundred-and-fifty; and this expansion has been brought about by the multifarious nature of the Department's duties, and by the exceedingly valuable nature of its services to the State. Already it is returning a very large proportion of the annual parliamentary vote. Five years ago the Department's revenue was nil. For one year, 1904-5, the direct receipts from various sources totalled £16,018. Indirectly, however, the solid cash value of the Department to the colony is far greater. The annual expenditure of oversea tourists in New Zealand is estimated at least £300,000.

The initial step in controlling our various resources was commenced in 1901, when the Department took charge of the Government thermal bathing establishments and sanatoria at Rotorua, Te Aroha, and Hanmer. Early in 1902 it was entrusted with the control and up-keep of the Government gardens and parks, drainage, water works, and electric light service at Rotorua, also with the care of the Government "Hermitage" hotel for mountaineers near the foot of Mount Cook, Southern Alps district. Information bureaux were established in the principal cities of the colony, each under the charge of a Government agent. Mr. T. E. Donne, the superintendent, had by this time removed his offices to the present site in Brandon Street, Wellington. Later on in the same

year the Department established boating services for tourists on Lakes Tarawera and Rotamahana, and in the thermal springs district, and opened up that most wonderful of all geysersland excursions, the round trip from Rotorua to the Rotorua thermal zone and the gigantic geyser of Waimangu, and Lake Waikaremoana, the beautiful mountain lake on the southern borders of the Urewera country was made accessible. In the South Island, too, the scope of the Department's tourist business was quickly enlarged. Besides taking charge of the Pukaki hotel, Half Way house, on the route to the alpine "Hermitage," an Accommodation house at the head of Lake Te Anau was acquired, and a large summer traffic, overland through the country lying between that lovely lake and the head of Milford Sound, was speedily worked up, improving the places of stay on route. In 1905 accommodation houses at the beautiful Waitomo caves in the King country were taken over by the Department, and, also, the steamer on lake Manapouri has been placed under its control. Thus, every effort has been made to develop this mountain girt and many islanded sheet of water as a summer health resort. The business side of the Department is a very important one. It by no means interferes with private enterprise but, on the contrary, assists it. It pioneers the country from a

tourist's point of view, opens up new roads, makes new roads and tracks, renders new sights, new wonders accessible to the traveller, and fosters the great deer stalking and trout fishing of the colony. It introduces new game. No part of the colony is neglected—from North Auckland to Stewart Island the range of the Department's activity extends. All the fascinating avenues of travel which New Zealand presents must be thoroughly well advertised both by pen and camera, and this work Mr Donne has superintended with remarkable success. Looking to the more solid conditions of the colony as a place of permanent residence, its excellence of soil and climate, its agricultural, pastoral and mineral resources are by no means lost sight of. The boundless natural advantages of New Zealand for the settler and home-builder are placed in their best light before the people of the older lands. Although the Department's expenditure in this section of its work is still necessarily small, it is doing the utmost possible with the money at its disposal, and doing it so well, that, next to Canada, New Zealand is at this moment by far the best advertised part of the British dominions over the seas.

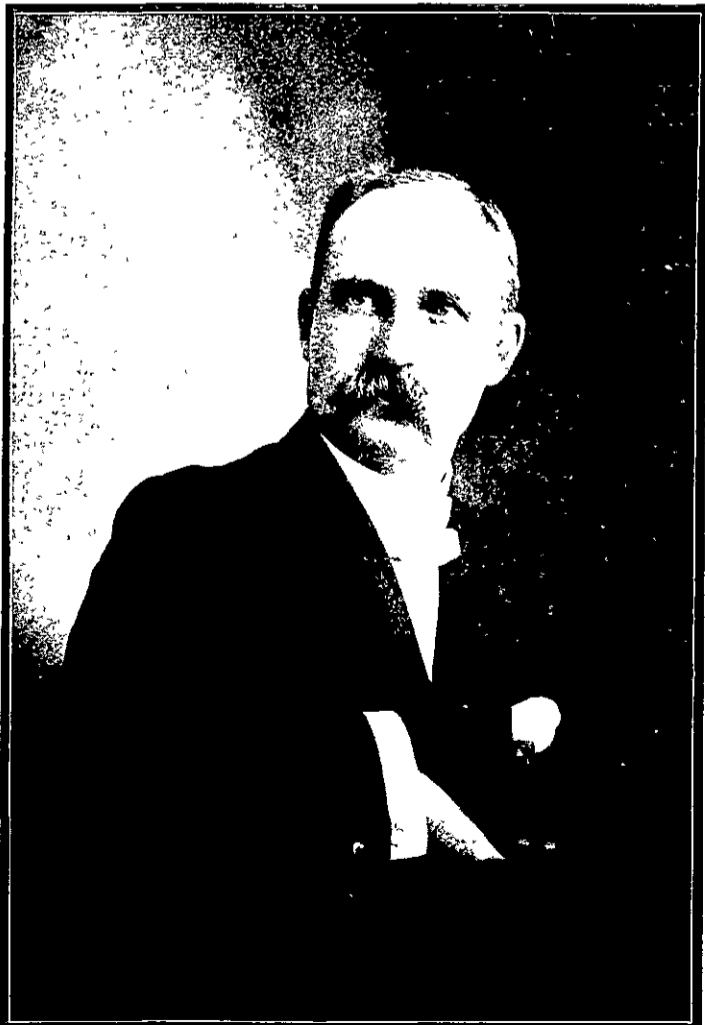
Leather Machine-Belt Making.

Leather machine-belt making at an American factory is a long and interesting process. First, the "butt" of leather is curried—that is, it is thoroughly saturated with water and shaved on the flesh side. It is then scoured to remove dirt that has got into the pores of the leather during the tanning and drying. One kind of scouring machine has a large cylinder upon which the wet butt is clamped, and as the cylinder revolves the water and dirt are pressed out of the hide. The machine then reverses, and on arriving at the starting position the clamps on the butt are released. Another and a better kind of machine consists of a frame work supporting a horizontal beam, upon which is a reciprocating carriage carrying a piece of brass. Under this brass piece, and supported



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on rollers, is a table on which the butt is placed. The butt is kept saturated with water, and the table is turned round and round, while the reciprocating brass rubs the dirt out of the butt, much in the same way that a washer-woman rubs clothes with her knuckles. The butt is then "tempered"—that is, dried out, and it is stuffed with grease to make it pliable. It is then "set out" and rubbed with stones to make it flat, or, as the curriers say, "to get the pattern out of the hide." It is then jacked to close the pores, and make the leather hard and firm. The jack is a machine carrying a reciprocating head of agate, brass, or lignum-vitæ, which rubs against the leather. The leather is then stretched and the grease is "run" off, actually scraped off. The leather is "stripped" to width in a "chopping" machine, which has blades 96 in. long, which cut the leather very rapidly. The pieces are sorted for thickness, and the ends are tapered and cemented. One lap undergoes hydraulic pressure while the next lap is being cemented. When the belts are narrow, a man can make two at a time, side by side. The finishing machine trims the belt to width with round edges, stamps each foot, stamps the trade mark every so many feet, stretches the belt, and winds it in a roll. The roll is then laid on a revolving table and the sides polished with brushes, thus completing the belt.

Sydney inventor Frank Cotton, whose oil-burning furnace excited some attention, has now on hand a patent process for making steel from iron ore in one process.