

in each district, to the extent of the funds, grants are available covering the entire cost of a group-travel tour for mothers of ten or more children. Already many such mothers have enjoyed this unexpected boon. The change, the rest, the companionship of other women, and the warm hospitality of the places visited have brought new life to them.

Country Women.—Many Group Travel tours for country women have been successfully conducted as the opportunity of transport offered. Organizers have been at work contacting the various women's organizations, and there are many requests for more tours, all of which will be provided as soon as practicable. The Group Travel Association and the Tourist and Railways Departments are making provision for all estimated demands in this direction, and the Department of Internal Affairs will continue to organize adequate recreation for such occasions as required.

Industrial Workers.—Much has also been done for industrial workers; it is in this field that the greatest development is still required. Week-end recreation trips have been organized for munition workers and staffs of other essential industries. In some instances assistance has been given with the establishment and organizing of holiday camps for war workers.

In this the Department has had the full co-operation of the employers, who in some cases have paid the costs of the camps or tours or subsidized them. In all cases the employers have expressed their satisfaction with the results and have asked that further activities be arranged. They realize that young people in industry must be provided with easy access to refreshing travel to offset the monotony of their occupations. The services of Physical Welfare Officers are now available throughout the Dominion to organize this recreation and to pass the organized parties on to the travel interests for transportation and accommodation.

Mountain Tracks

One of the greatest demands in recreation in recent years has been for quiet pathways into the country where people can rest from the noise and bustle of the modern city. All through the world—in England, on the Continent of Europe, and in America—this movement was growing by leaps and bounds before the war. If its growth was not so noticeable in New Zealand it was only because of the country's great wealth of unbroken mountain country and the unlimited opportunities available. Nevertheless, by the summer of 1938-39 the existing mountain tracks were showing signs of overcrowding. In 1939-40, the first year of the war, the Department had some difficulty in arranging hut accommodation for the hundreds of young New-Zealanders who wished to take to the mountain trail for their holidays. With the end of the war and paid holidays for workers, those hundreds will become thousands. At present there is no possibility of meeting that demand on the national system of mountain tracks.

Even before the war the Department of Internal Affairs had taken steps to improve the position. There were, of course, existing tracks, some maintained by the Government and some by tramping clubs. There were one or two conducted walks, such as the Milford Walk, but these were of the more expensive kind and not easy to reach from the larger cities. This was in no sense a reflection on the agencies which conduct such tours, because their aim was a high standard of meals and accommodation, mainly for tourists. But the Department of Internal Affairs has a duty to provide recreation for New Zealand people on the lower levels of income, people who would be pleased with a less luxurious and much less expensive track system that young workers could afford.

Tramping Clubs.—The tramping clubs provided opportunities for trips of a more ambitious, more arduous kind requiring the carrying of heavy packs in long journeys over difficult country. This was rather arduous for most people and proved very dangerous when attempted by inexperienced parties, with consequent loss of life in some cases. It was necessary to reduce the cost while easing the degree of exertion and increasing the comfort.

Proposed Mountain Track Systems.—It is proposed:—

- (1) To make easy, well-defined tracks in interesting but safe country:
- (2) To build accommodation huts at places, not too far apart, so that the tracks will be accessible to most people:
- (3) To build slightly more elaborate huts giving reasonable comfort in all weathers, and to maintain them in good order:
- (4) To organize the mountain track system so that whole families, including the mothers, can go out for an ideal holiday at suitable cost and in reasonable comfort:
- (5) To publish a reliable guide booklet to each track, including route notes, maps with full recreation legend, photographs, and notes on mountain flowers, trees, birds, geology, animals, insects, weather, and history of the locality, including the story of its pioneer exploration.

Such work will need the full co-operation of State Departments, the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (including the New Zealand Alpine Club), the Royal Society of New Zealand, and other organizations.

Tracks completed.—The work completed since the passing of the Act in 1937 is a good beginning. One new track system, Harper Pass, has been completed; five huts have been built. Another in the Tararua was well advanced when war forced the suspension of track-making.

The Harper Pass Track runs through the heart of the Southern Alps from the Hurunui River in North Canterbury, via Lakes Taylor and Sumner, to Harper's Pass, which was one of the original passes from Canterbury to the West Coast; it continues down the Taramakau River Valley to Aickens, on the Greymouth-Christchurch Railway. The scenery in this area is famed for its beauty and grandeur. This track has been completed and is in use.