

Unprecedented rains during February caused damage to the upper portion of the new road from Milford to Homer Tunnel. An inspection was made by members of the Main Highways Board of avalanche damage at Homer portal. Instructions were issued to proceed with access bridges, and it is understood that the work will commence after the winter.

Launch excursions on Milford Sound proved popular, the regular day cruise especially. A short launch excursion has also been operated to Stirling Falls and is increasing in popularity as an "after-dinner cruise."

Distinguished visitors during the year included the Minister of France, M. Armand Gazel and Mme Gazel. H.M.S. "Newfoundland" cruised into Milford Sound during October.

General maintenance work has received attention, and included the repair and reconditioning of launch and dinghies, and the overhaul by the Public Works Department of the lighting-plant.

Cascade Creek Camp.—This camp was reopened on 17th December. A fair number of guests was accommodated during the season, and the establishment proved popular under efficient management. The camp was closed for the "off season" on 25th April.

Chateau Tongariro.—During the year this hotel was handed back to the Department by the Mental Hospitals Department. The activity at Mount Ruapehu resulted in considerable damage to installations, principally in connection with the hydro-electric plant, owing to the abrasive qualities of the volcanic ash, and to the water-supply system. The matter of locating alternative sources of water was investigated during the year, and a report from the Public Works Department is awaited.

Although considerable renovation and reconditioning will be necessary before the hotel is again opened to accommodate visitors, the hut service has been maintained, and over the Easter period and for some weeks subsequently the Whakapapa Huts were fully booked.

Owing to the falls of new snow, winter sports activities at this resort were not seriously handicapped.

Stewart Island.—The Department continued to subsidize the improved shipping service to this resort. No finality was reached with regard to the question of a suitable site for the erection of an hotel, but the matter will receive further attention when materials, labour, and funds have been made available.

(iii) MISCELLANEOUS

(a) *Little Barrier Island*

The caretaker reports that bird-life on the island appears to be in a thriving condition. Quite a large number of kiwis has been seen during the year. It is noted that the annual hatchings have been very good, and a large number of the young of all species has been seen.

During the period from November to early March there was a severe dry spell, and it was necessary to haul water for domestic purposes and to place suitable receptacles containing water in positions accessible to the birds. The suggestion has been made that a suitable bird-bath be built, and this matter is under attention.

A new well was sunk and water obtained at 12 ft. The two tracks to the centre of the island have been maintained, as also has the track over the Shag Cliffs.