

Outside lawns and flower-plots continued fresh and attractive as the result of careful attention, and have responded well to warm summer rains.

Huts and Tracks.—Routeburn Track and huts are in good order. The suspension bridge over the Routeburn River at the bus terminus was renewed and now provides safe access to the bush. A commodious shelter hut has been erected at the terminus by the bus-proprietor.

Elfin Bay—Howden track is stated to be in good order until the bush is entered at Lake McKellar, about 2 miles from Howden Hut. This 2 miles of track is muddy and there are several big trees down. Trees are also reported to be down over the track between Howden and Routeburn before reaching Lake McKenzie, and a foot-bridge across a stream near the lake is necessary.

The tracks to Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill are in good condition and have been popular routes. It is regretted to report vandalism at the Ben Lomond Hut—this has suffered at the hands of irresponsible parties who have used several of the barge-boards of the shelter for fuel.

Tourist Traffic.—The Honorary Tourist Agent reports the busiest year on record and attributes the increase in the volume of work to returned members of the Services travelling on leave with their next-of-kin.

All accommodation has been taxed beyond capacity, and hundreds of applicants have been disappointed. Most of the guest houses have experienced staff difficulties, and in a number of instances were obliged to cancel reservations already made. The accommodation thus lost could not, in most cases, be booked elsewhere.

Transport services on all routes were fully patronized, and improvements in the Queenstown—Gore Railway Bus Service have evoked favourable comment.

III. PASSENGER-BOOKING ACTIVITIES

The sales turnover for internal travel for the year under review is an index to the volume and importance of the work performed by the various Bureaux and Booking-agencies of the Department. Total sales amounted to the record figure of £841,724, which exceeds the sales made during the preceding year by £221,993.

The trend of sales since 1938–39 has been substantially upwards and is attributed to various factors, chief among which is the greater use of the public transport services and the restricted employment of private motor-vehicles. The absence of regular overseas transport facilities, excepting airways services (where essentiality of journey must be established before bookings can be arranged) has induced the average New Zealand traveller, who in normal times would proceed abroad, to explore the holiday resources of his own country. A large proportion of the ex-members of the Forces has completed their booking arrangements through the offices of the New Zealand Government Travel Service, and the present increase is in large measure due to this additional and unusual business.

During the year week-end excursions, special day trips, group and party tours were operated by several Bureaux with uniformly satisfactory results. In the case of certain offices, types of excursions have established a standard, and popular support stimulated by the enthusiasm of satisfied visitors has made week-end or other excursions to resorts a regular feature throughout the year.

The increasing volume of business being dealt with by this Department's Travel Service emphasizes popular support of the booking system. The touring public has continued wholeheartedly to avail itself of the service offered.