

Plans are in hand for the erection of staff cottages and a social hall to provide better amenities for employees.

Field trials, based on the Hermitage, were conducted in the central portion of the Southern Alps in connection with special radiophone *emergency* equipment. The results obtained by experts of the Dominion Physical Laboratory exceeded expectations, and the manufacture of sets for installation in this area and in other mountain localities throughout New Zealand will be put in hand. It is hoped that the sets can be installed during the next climbing season.

A preliminary survey has been made for the establishment of the first of a series of "alpine gardens" in the vicinity of the Hermitage Hotel and of Ball Hut. The plants will be representative of the whole of the vegetation of the district, and it is expected that the immediate surroundings of both places mentioned will be beautified permanently and naturally. Long-term policy envisages gradual restoration to various parts of the whole area of plants and trees native to the locality.

*Lake Te Anau.—Te Anau Hotel:* This hotel also experienced an increase in revenue over the previous year. Maintenance work was carried out, but there were no major alterations or additions.

On many occasions the hotel was fully booked, the peak periods being the months of January, February, and March.

Twenty-five personally-conducted party tours included Te Anau in their itineraries. A twelve-seater bus was stationed at Te Anau during the busy season by the New Zealand Railways Road Services for excursions to Eglinton Valley. These trips, and also those operated by the proprietors of the launch "Quinton McKinnon" on Lake Te Anau, were freely availed of by guests and visitors.

The m.v. "Tawera" recommenced its time-table between Te Anau and Glade House and operated over a period of about four weeks.

Here, as at other departmental hotels, great difficulty was experienced in securing suitable hotel staff.

*Eglinton Valley.—Cascade Creek Camp:* This camp was reopened during the season and again proved popular and was well patronized by visitors.

*Fiordland.—Glade House and the Te Anau—Milford Track:* Late in August opportunity was taken to prepare the Te Anau—Milford Track for seasonal tourist traffic, after being closed for over six years. The damage by avalanches, the broken bridges, grounded telephone lines, and the trimming-back of undergrowth made it impossible to reopen the "World's Wonder Walk" until 1st March, when 66 persons made the overland journey from the head of Lake Te Anau. The initial party to undertake the trip consisted of His Excellency the Governor-General and Lady Freyberg, accompanied by members of their staff. Very few of the travellers made the return trip over the track, the majority preferring to break new ground by returning via the Homer Tunnel.

The track will reopen in December, 1947.

*Fiordland.—The Hotel Milford:* Although the 1946–47 season constituted a record, it represents but a small proportion only of the numbers that would have passed through Milford had the road from Homer Tunnel to Milford Sound been put in order for traffic.

Launch excursions on Milford Sound by the "Donald Sutherland" have proved exceptionally popular. Many visitors made the return walking journey from Milford Sound to the Sutherland Falls and McKinnon Pass in preference to undertaking the complete overland trip to the head of Lake Te Anau. Popular short excursions were trips to Lake Ada and the Giants Gate Falls.