

(b) TRACKS AND HUTS

Repair gangs were actively engaged on the walking routes at the head of Lake Wakatipu, and by the close of the period had almost completed the reconditioning of the track from the Divide to Howden Hut, thence to Lake Mackenzie. Bad weather prevented the repair of Howden Hut, but the work will be undertaken next season. When the track is completed to Lake Mackenzie, material will be packed through for the erection of a hut at that point.

The tracks to Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill were maintained in tramping order. Ben Lomond Hut received attention, and notices have been placed there warning vandals and indicating the approved source of camp firewood.

Motor services operating from Kinloch and Glenorchy to Routeburn and Paradise respectively have again given good service to numbers of tourists. Both routes are in good repair. The bridge across the Rees River was put in order and vehicles may now proceed beyond Paradise to the Dart Valley.

(c) SKI-ING

Coronet Peak was again a popular rendezvous for snow-sportsmen. Conditions were not favourable until late in the season and competitors in the New Zealand Ski Championships, 1948, were obliged to climb higher to suitable snowfields. This deterred many spectators. Access was improved by moving the ski tows directly under Coronet Peak, with a motor road to the lower tow. Certain advantages have resulted and it will now be practicable for ski-ing to continue into mid-October and perhaps later.

(d) ACCOMMODATION

The Honorary Tourist Agent reports that Queenstown experienced the busiest tourist season for many years and that there was a marked increase in the numbers of New Zealand and overseas visitors and it was impossible to satisfy the demand for accommodation. At this otherwise excellent resort, accommodation for visitors calls for a realistic policy on the part of local interests, and any concerted move with the object of improving the position should be encouraged. The Department has given consideration to the building of an hotel at Queenstown, but if local interests will provide what is necessary there may be no need for a Government institution.

(e) GENERAL

Passenger services to Queenstown provided adequate transport facilities for many visitors and the voyage to the head of the lake and the motor side-trips from Glenorchy and Kinloch were extremely popular.

The Department prepared a commentary descriptive of the main trip on Lake Wakatipu. This was recorded by the National Broadcasting Service and is used on the vessel's public-address system.

(vi) LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND

The Caretaker reports that bird-life on the sanctuary continues to thrive. There is a marked increase in kingfishers. It is interesting to note that the short-tailed bat, hitherto thought to be extinct on the island, has been rediscovered. Several were observed early in 1949, but the roosting-place of the colony has not yet been located.

Numbers of animal pests have been destroyed.

A permanent water-supply is being connected to the Caretaker's residence.

Tracks have been kept clear and the usual patrols of the island were undertaken.