

APPENDIX VI.

NATIONAL PARK, MOUNT EGMONT.

THE management of what is now known as the Egmont National Park was formerly under four district committees, with the Commissioner of Crown Lands a member of each. These committees attended to the local wants falling within their particular sphere. The fees and subscriptions collected, supplemented by Government subsidies, have been expended to the very best advantage in making tracks, providing rough accommodation for visitors, and paddocking accommodation for horses. With the limited means at their disposal, no doubt these committees, who were really the pioneers of the Egmont Domain, have done wonders in the past. The great trouble, however, has been the continued shortness of adequate funds. The individual houses up to now having a purely local interest, as much as possible was spent on each. The tracks have advanced to such a stage, and the time probably has come, when, to cope with present and future requirements, one thoroughly equipped central house, together with a properly constructed carriage-road, is needed in order to attract the general tourist, where all hotel conveniences can be procured, so that invalids and all classes of visitors can be accommodated, and that with a minimum amount of inconvenience and personal discomfort. This would tempt not only the young and robust, but also the class of tourist who will be quite content to get to an elevation of, say, 5,000 ft., breathe the pure invigorating air, enjoy the magnificent view, and roam about at sweet will on the mountain slopes, without ever, perhaps, thinking of going to the summit. People as a rule like to get to the base of their operations with comfort, however much roughing they may feel inclined voluntarily to undertake afterwards.

The question will at once arise, Which is the best road and the best position for such a building? Each of the houses have attractions in themselves, but by having a good walking or bridle track from one to the other much of the difficulty of selection could be overcome. As the main house will be a resort for health purposes, the site should be chosen with the most genial aspect, at the same time offering sufficient inducements for the more hardy travellers making excursions from it. If this view is given effect to much will have to be considered, and the advantages of each centre carefully weighed before a final decision is arrived at. At present I feel that more concentration is necessary for the developing of Mount Egmont as a favourite tourist resort, and that local sentiment will have to give place largely to the advantages gained by attracting visitors from other parts of the colony and the outside world to probably what is the easiest climbed mountain of its altitude in any part of the Southern Hemisphere, and one that can be reached in a few hours from so many of our leading centres of population.

The management of the Park since February, 1901, was by a Board elected by the contiguous local bodies under "The Egmont National Park Act, 1900," with two nominated members by the Government, the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the time being chairman—in all, ten members. Sub-committees are appointed to manage all local matters and carry out improvements, all, however, being subject to the control of the general Board.

Native and imported game is absolutely protected within the domain, as well as the native flora and fauna.

During the past year four meetings of the general Board have taken place, and operations have been confined to the upkeep of roads, buildings, furnishings, &c. The caretakers are recouped by a percentage from fees collected at the different houses.

The road-formation inside of and adjoining the radius-line has been under the supervision of the Road Surveyor, and the following operations have been carried out: Egmont Track—40 chains of bushfelling and clearing in progress and 2 miles of engineering survey, at a cost of £53 7s. (The above is exclusive of work done on Egmont Road under control of local body, the Moa Road Board.) Dawson's Falls Road—1 mile 66 chains of engineering survey, at a cost of £30 7s. 2d. Pembroke Road—14 chains of dray-road construction, 20 ft. culverts, at a cost of £33 11s. Kahui Road—5 acres of bushfelling and 3 miles of bridle-track, at a cost of £22 2s.: total, £139 7s. 2d.

On the improvement of the different houses, which has been carried out solely from the revenue derived from tourists, the following are the principal items: North Egmont house, £52 13s. 3d.; East Egmont house, £117 14s. 5d.: total, £170 7s. 8d.

The visitors to the different houses during the season, which opens about the 21st December and closes about the 21st April, although this season the southern house continued open into May, have been as follows: North (Egmont), 693; east (Stratford), 250; south (Dawson's Falls), 1,080; west (Rahotu, Kahui), 100: total, 2,123.

Receipts from fees, &c., amount to £363 2s. 3d., and expenditure so far as accounts have come in amounts to £361 2s. 3d., leaving at present a credit of £2; but, as there are several outstanding accounts not yet to hand from the southern committee, this credit is approximate only.

It may be mentioned that although there is this approximate credit on the whole domain, one of the local committees has, I understand, liabilities of about £50 over their receipts, and another has probably £20, or £70 in all, which will have to be met in some way during the coming year.

Mount Egmont.

A trip to Mount Egmont is becoming one of the recognised attractions of the colony and outside world. At present four routes are offered to the intending visitor. The first ascent by any one except Maoris was made by Dr. Dieffenbach, the naturalist of the New Zealand Company, and a man named Heberly, as far back as Christmas, 1840. The party took the valley of the Wa