

altitude, with its bracing and health-giving surroundings, coupled with the dry porous nature of the ground (light layer of soil resting on a scoria-gravel bed), have proved remarkably beneficial to all classes of the community.

The East Committee labours under the disadvantage of having their house more exposed than the others, and consequently only the hardy and more robust seem to favour this route, the main visitors from Stratford and its surroundings seldom reaching the plateau where the house is situated. They drive to the end of the Pembroke Road, leave their horses and vehicles there, stroll up the bush track until reaching a convenient picnicing-ground, and possibly afterwards penetrate another mile or two into the reserve, but the pleasures of a day in the bush appear to suffice the generality of visitors, who numbered 350. Receipts for the past season, including a Government subsidy, were £70 13s. 1d., and expenditure £68 4s. 8d.

Assisted by a Government subsidy, subscriptions from the Road Board and the general public, the energetic West Committee have done a good year's work, the effects of which will be more noticeable as time goes on. A house has been built, 32 ft. by 14 ft., consisting of a general room, and two sleeping-rooms, each containing twelve bunks; but about thirty-five persons could be accommodated if required. Tables and forms and a few utensils have been provided, but as the building has only lately been completed the formal opening will be made next season. A horse-track on a fairly easy grade has been completed, so that goods can be packed right up to the house. Although without a house to rest or sleep in at the end of a trip, two hundred visitors ascended the mountain *via* Rahotu by this route during the season. The receipts, £90, including a grant, will be quite exhausted by this initial expenditure.

The South House again had a very successful season, as its record of 1,084 visitors will show. The large number of visitors who make the mountain trip their great yearly outing tends to show the interest taken by the local residents. The comfortable house, together with lovely scenery to be found without much exertion in the immediate neighbourhood, has doubtless a great deal to do with this. No details of expenditure, &c., have been received from the South Committee.

During the year, under the Act of 1901, the Board leased for a term of twenty-one years the portion of open land in the reserve near Ahuahū, mostly to the owners of adjoining lands, who under the conditions of lease must fence, maintain, and keep the same in good order and repair. Only a sketch survey has been made, however, and the Board unfortunately has no funds at present for the final survey.

The year as a whole has been well ahead of its predecessors as regards the visitors and interest taken in Mount Egmont, although the season has been one of the shortest and wettest on record.

Having so often pointed out the great necessity there is for a centrally situated house or hotel where ordinary comforts may be obtained at moderate rates, together with a carriage-road thereto, I do not think that on this occasion I need refer to it beyond saying that, considering its proximity to the great tourist highways of the colony by sea and land, there is no place of its interest and character in the colony that can be visited with less inconvenience to the traveller and at less expense or loss of time than this beautiful and easily climbed mountain. I trust the need for such accommodation will not be overlooked now that Mr. Donne, the head of the Tourist Department, has visited it (although under unfavourable conditions as regards the weather) and has had pointed out to him what is to be seen there and in the other historic portions of Taranaki, where the ancient battle-fields and the ruins of Native strongholds now remain as the only evidence of the eventful struggle which took place between Briton and Maori for supremacy in this district.

During the year the Roads Department have expended £79 19s. 1d. on 1 mile 26 chains of bridle-road constructed, 2 miles 40 chains of bridle-road repaired, 10 chains of road widened; £47 on 4 miles of bridle-road repaired. On Dawson's Falls road there are 25 chains of dray-road in hand.

JAMES MACKENZIE,

Commissioner of Crown Lands

and Chairman, Egmont National Park Domain Board.

APPENDIX VII.

MAGNETIC OBSERVATORY AND MAGNETIC SURVEY.

By C. COLERIDGE FARR, D.Sc.

DURING the past year the work of the Observatory has been carried on satisfactorily and without interruption, though during a portion of it, in consequence of being without assistance, much responsibility, as well as much arduous work, devolved upon myself. The year has probably been a more active one all over the world than any which has preceded it. In view of the departure of the expeditions to the south, an international programme was drawn up, to which reference was made in last year's report, and we had also in the Observatory special arrangements to be carried out in conjunction with the British expedition. The performance of our part of the arrangements involved, besides the more ordinary work of a magnetic observatory, a continuous attendance on the instruments from about 9 a.m. on the 1st and 15th of every month till after 12 noon on the 2nd and 16th, periods of twenty-seven hours about once a fortnight, during which the instruments required unremitting attention. During the earlier part of the year, with Mr. Skey's always cordial help, this task was managed with some comfort, but on the resumption of the magnetic survey by him in September some months elapsed before I could procure assistance, and during that time the whole of the work fell upon me. I am glad to say, however, that our part in these