

TARANAKI (MOUNT EGMONT).

Mount Egmont is a scenic resort which deserves a considerable amount of attention. The mountain is one of the grandest pleasure-grounds in the colony, unique in its configuration and surroundings, situated as it is in the midst of a beautiful and thriving district; but it suffers at present from lack of adequate means of access and of proper accommodation for visitors. A few weeks' stay at a comfortable mountain-house high on the slopes of Taranaki, in a crisp, pure atmosphere, would be a splendid tonic for many an invalid. The existing alpine accommodation on Taranaki is of a very primitive description, and the roads through the bush from the radius line and up the mountain-side are in very bad order. The Egmont Domain Board and its various sub-committees have done exceedingly good work with the small amounts of Government money placed at their disposal, and those gentlemen who have patriotically endeavoured to arouse public interest in this pleasure and health resort and to provide facilities of travel for visitors deserve great credit for their unselfish efforts. In order, however, that the roads may be put in fit condition further grants are necessary.

Recently, at the invitation of the Egmont Domain Board, I visited the mountain, accompanied by the Department's photographer, and traversed the various roads leading to the mountain-houses—Dawson's Falls, North Egmont, and Stratford. These shelters were largely used by visitors during the past season, but the necessity of taking blankets and food from the nearest township deters many from ascending the mountain. During the season 1,082 persons visited the North Egmont house, 1,084 made use of the South Egmont house (Dawson's Falls), and 200 visited the western shelter (Stratford house).

In order that the vehicle-roads may be extended to the mountain-houses I would suggest that the following grants-in-aid be made by the Government: For extension and improvement of the roads to Dawson's Falls and Egmont houses, £400 each; for the Stratford Road, £200. The first two routes I consider of greater importance at present than the Stratford Road, as the Dawson's Falls and Egmont houses are larger and situated in less exposed localities. If these grants were repeated next year the two roads could be completed to their respective termini, and in 1905 a grant might be made to complete the Stratford Road. The next step I would suggest is that the three houses be connected by a good road, so that a through trip may be made from Hawera to New Plymouth, or *vice versa*, along the mountain-side. This roading system might be extended to the construction of a vehicle-road right round the mountain at an elevation of, say, 4,000 ft., but the nature of the country may possibly present serious obstacles to such an undertaking.

Another important question for the consideration of the Government is the pressing need of a good house of accommodation on Mount Egmont. A comfortable house of about twenty rooms, similar to the Government buildings at Waimangu and Waikaremoana, where people could make a prolonged stay in the summer months without having to "rough it," would undoubtedly attract a great many visitors. I am satisfied that such an establishment if properly managed would well repay the Government. As to the location of the house, the various committees and sub-committees in the district are quite prepared to subordinate local considerations to the general good, and to leave the selection of a suitable site in the hands of the Government. Should the Government decide to establish an up-to-date accommodation-house, I am prepared to recommend a site.

TE PUIA (EAST COAST).

The Department's Inspector has visited Te Puia Springs and reported thereon. The present great difficulty of access makes the utility of these springs purely local. A vehicle-road is now being made from Gisborne. When it is completed I would recommend the erection of suitable bath-buildings. In the meantime arrangements are being made for the necessary fencing, &c.

MORERE SPRINGS RESERVE.

The tracks to the springs have been improved, and a line cleared preparatory to the fencing of the reserve in order to prevent the trespass of cattle, which are destroying the bush.

I hope to be able at an early date to arrange for the erection of a small bath to meet present requirements.

A bush-fire spread from adjoining land into the reserve last January, and some damage was done. The fire, however, by prompt action was kept in check.

LAKE WAIKAREMOANA.

The Government accommodation-house, containing fifteen rooms, erected on the shores of Waikaremoana was opened for guests in February last. It has been well and comfortably furnished, and now that first-class accommodation is available many holiday-makers should find their way to this exceptionally beautiful lake, considered by many to be the loveliest in New Zealand. The receipts for accommodation at Lake House for the months of February and March amounted to £66 12s. 6d.

An oil-launch for the use of excursionists is being built, and will be placed on the lake before the opening of next season. The launch is 35 ft. in length over all, with a beam of 7 ft. 6 in. and a depth of 3 ft. 6 in. It is fitted with an oil-engine of 10-horse power, and it has been named the "Kohurangi." Rowing-boats are also being provided for visitors, and horses and vehicles are available. In conjunction with the accommodation-house, suitable stables and a cow-shed have been erected.

A jetty for the oil-launch is required at Waikaremoana; a boat-shed is needed at Lake Waikare-iti; and a rest-house at Wairauoana for fishermen and other visitors.

On the recommendation of this Department the forests around the lake have been proclaimed a preserve for both native and imported game, and the caretaker of Lake House is being appointed an honorary Ranger to see that the law is given effect to.