

The great drawback to this pleasure resort is the present difficulty of access. The steamer service from Napier to Wairoa is very erratic, owing to the difficult bar to be crossed at the river-mouth at Wairoa, and the coach journey from Napier is somewhat tedious, as it takes two days, and the roads are rough. I would recommend that the Napier-Wairoa Road be put into good order at the earliest possible date. In order to render Waikaremoana accessible from the Rotorua side, the road from Ruatahuna through the Urewera Country requires to be completed. At present the road has penetrated that fine scenic district as far as Ruatahuna, the section over the Huiairau Range and down to the lake-shores being the uncompleted gap. When this vehicle-road is finished coaches will probably be able to make the through trip from Rotorua to the lake in two days, traversing *en route* some very effective mountain and forest scenery.

MARUA.

These springs are situated about forty-five miles from Reefton and 180 miles from Nelson. The estimated cost of making a road from Reefton is £10,000, and from Nelson £13,000. I cannot at present recommend anything like such a large expenditure in connection with these springs.

SOUTH ISLAND TOURS: MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS—WESTLAND, TO THE GLACIERS, ETC.

In March I made an extended tour of the northern and West Coast districts of the South Island, travelling over the main routes of traffic.

I proceeded first to Picton and Queen Charlotte Sound, crossing thence to Pelorus Sound *via* Torea Portage. To my regret I found that much of the beauty of these sounds has been marred by the destruction of forests along the shores, and I would urge that residents and local bodies as well as the Government should endeavour to prevent as far as possible any further destruction of the beautiful bush adjacent to the sounds in places where land is of no value for settlement purposes.

The coach drive from Havelock to Nelson through the celebrated Rai Valley has been robbed of much of its interest by the burning of the bush. Allowance must, of course, be made for the advance of settlement in a new country, but in some of these districts the land is so poor that the only growth it will produce is birch forest.

I visited the Nelson district, and went from there through the Buller Gorge to Westport, Reefton, Greymouth, and Hokitika. I then travelled down the West Coast to the Okarito district and the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. The various tracks communicating with these sights were inspected, and arrangements made for improving the shelter-huts at the glaciers. The question of making a track up the Gallery Mountain, above Waiho, from the foot of the Franz Josef Glacier, was gone into, and inquiries made as to the practicability of opening up this route so as to enable visitors to cross the main range of the Southern Alps to the eastern side *via* Graham's Saddle. This would afford a route to the upper end of the great Tasman Glacier, and climbers would be able to cross between Waiho and the Malto Brun hut in two days. The Franz Josef Glacier is easily accessible; visitors may ride right up to its terminal face. The great charm of this glacier and the Fox is that they descend below the line of forest and ferns to within a few hundred feet of sea-level. It is of importance that the fine forest land should be preserved untouched, especially in the vicinity of the track leading from the Waiho accommodation-house to the foot of the Franz Josef Glacier. From the Waiho to the Fox Glacier is a ride of almost nineteen miles through some of the loveliest bush country in the Island. The track was found in good condition for horse traffic. The immediate approach to the glacier from the Cook Valley is through a most beautiful bit of woodland, to which the same remark as that made concerning the Waiho bush will apply. It should be jealously preserved as one of the finest things of this fine region.

The possibilities of the West Coast as a tourist route of marvellous value are enhanced by the fact that it can be traversed on the through trip to and from the Mount Cook Hermitage by way of Fitzgerald's Pass. This route, from the Fox Glacier, takes the traveller along the Copland River, thence up to the summit of Fitzgerald's Pass (7,180 ft.), and down the Hooker Glacier to the Hermitage. The route conducts the traveller into the grandest of alpine scenery, and that it presents no special difficulties is shown by the fact that last April a party including three ladies, in charge of the Government guides, accomplished the trip from Mount Cook Hermitage to the West Coast. Again, those extending their journey further south than the Fox Glacier and the Copland River may cross the dividing-range by the Haast Pass to Lake Wanaka. Due attention will be paid to the development of these routes, with a view to obviating the necessity of the tourist retracing his course after travelling down the West Coast from Hokitika.

The Westland lakes, which are a prominent feature in the scenic attraction of that region, are now easy of access, and in summer attract many visitors. The river route to Lake Mahinapua from Hokitika is, however, rendered awkward at low water by a shoal extending for some little distance, which frequently impedes navigation. To obviate this the construction of a lock is necessary. A small jetty is required at the principal landing-place on the lake.

The Westland forests are probably the finest in New Zealand, and the West Coast is certain to become one of the grandest tourist routes in the colony. But the peculiar character of the rivers south of Ross—torrential, and running in many channels over wide and shifting beds of shingle—presents great difficulties to either bridging or maintaining punt ferries, consequently the traveller has to ford the rivers, either on horseback or in a trap; the two deeper ones (the Wanganui and Whataroa) have to be crossed in rowing-boats. This makes the trip a somewhat rough one at present.

To develop this route in a satisfactory manner, acceptable to visitors from outside New Zealand, would involve an enormous expenditure. In the meantime the more adventurous, and those prepared to submit to a certain amount of discomfort, will find this district a splendid holiday ground.

HANMER HOT SPRINGS.

This resort maintains its popularity. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald, who were in charge of the