

*Whakarewarewa Reserve.*

The thermal action on this reserve maintains its activity and continues to attract very large numbers of visitors. A pavilion to afford shelter to visitors has been erected on the reserve. It has been constructed with raupo and Maori carvings in order that its appearance should be in keeping with the surroundings. A shelter lookout has also been erected for the caretaker. I am of the opinion that the time has arrived when the Government should make a charge for admission to Whakarewarewa to provide sufficient revenue to cover the cost of maintenance of the reserve. A nominal charge of 6d. per head should meet the case, and I think that no one could reasonably object to pay such a very small sum. For the proper protection of the "sight" it is necessary to keep a caretaker, while a considerable outlay is also to be met for the purpose of keeping the footways in order. I see no reason why visitors should not contribute towards the upkeep of these facilities.

*Model Pa.*

Good progress has been made towards the erection of a Maori pa in the Geyser Valley. The pa has been modelled as far as possible on the lines of an old fighting-pa, and is placed on the site of the historic pa of the Tuhourangi. The earthworks and ditches have been completed and the carved posts of the double palisading erected. The carvings have been splendidly executed by the Natives of the district. Already the works have excited much interest amongst visitors, and it is quite apparent that when completed it will be a great attraction to the district, and, more than that, it will in no great while repay the Government the cost of erection.

*Round Trip: Tarawera, Rotomahana, and Waimangu.*

This trip has financially more than realised expectations. The number of passengers carried by the Department over Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana numbered 3,073, representing fares amounting to £1,794 17s. 6d. The traffic has now increased to such large dimensions that it is impossible to adequately cope with it by means of rowing-boats. A contract has therefore been let for two oil-launches, 40 ft. in length and 8 ft. beam, fitted with 15-horse power Gardiner engines. These launches will shortly be completed and placed on the lakes. When running the Department will be in a position to carry upwards of 120 passengers per day over these lakes, and also to open up new sights in the district which are at present inaccessible. In order to properly control the traffic over these lakes it has been found necessary to make reserves for internal communication on the lands giving access to the landings.

*Waimangu Geyser.*

The great geyser maintains its wonderful activity. It is rapidly becoming to this colony what Niagara is to America—its great and foremost national attraction. Many worldwide travellers class it as the world's greatest natural wonder, others as second only to the great Niagara. The one thing certain is that it only requires to be brought under notice of sightseers abroad to bring many hundreds of them to this colony.

A lamentable disaster occurred on the occasion of a notable shot in September last, four lives being lost owing to the unfortunate victims approaching too closely the crater of the geyser. The Department's guides were held to be in no way to blame, it being shown that every precaution for the safety of the visitors was taken, warnings having been duly given. In order to prevent a recurrence, an area round the geyser has been fenced with barbed wire, and the guides have been appointed special constables to enable them to the more authoritatively enforce their warnings.

*Waimangu Accommodation-house.*

This house is situated within a short distance of the geyser, a good view of which is obtained from the verandah. It was opened in October, and the result has more than exceeded anticipations. So great has been the demand for accommodation that the Rotunda has on several occasions had to be utilised for the purpose, as many as twelve beds being occupied in addition to the full house. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Allen, of Wellington, were placed in charge, and their conduct of the house has been satisfactory.

The number of visitors for the six months was 1,266, and the receipts £929 6s. 6d.

Further improvements, such as the erection of a rotunda and bath-houses, have been effected during the year, and the house has been connected by telephone with Rotorua and Waiotapu. The bedroom accommodation at this house is very inadequate, visitors having been turned away daily during the whole of last season. Another twelve to twenty bedrooms and a smoking-room are very urgently required. Even these additions would only temporarily meet requirements if the traffic continues to increase at the present rate.

A new road from Waimangu to Waiotapu now being formed will shorten the distance between these two places from nine to five miles.

*Waiotapu.*

This reserve has had the usual attention. All the paths have been kept in good order. The native trees planted some time ago are making good progress.

*ORAKEIKORAKO.*

A portion of the interesting thermal district of Orakeikorako, on the Waikato River, between Taupo and Atiamuri, is already owned by the Government. Representations have now been made with a view to acquiring an additional 95 acres in this locality, and it is suggested that the land required should be taken under the Scenery Preservation Act. The roads to this resort have been very much improved.