

The population of the Dominion by way of immigration, in connection with which the work of the Department plays a large part, shows an increase of 5,730, making a total for the past six years of 57,502, as compared with 11,553 for the previous six years. Although the net increase is considerably less than last year, the increase set out by the Registrar-General for 1907 can hardly be considered as exact, for the reason that a very large number of people who came to the Dominion for the Exhibition left after the close of the period for which statistics are compiled for the year 1906; the actual immigration for the year under review would therefore probably be close on a thousand greater than the figures show by merely deducting arrivals over departures.

The work done by the Department's oversea agencies is, in my opinion, largely contributing to the increasing number of visitors that are coming from the Australian States. Many desirable settlers with quite a considerable amount of capital have been secured by the work of these agents. The number of persons calling at the agencies in Sydney and Melbourne for information concerning the Dominion for the year were respectively 16,738 and 11,982, showing an increase of 3,607 and 6,613 respectively over the previous year.

During the year a part agency has been opened in Vancouver, B.C.; this agency is acting both for the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts and the Department of Industries and Commerce combined.

It is hoped to obtain a large number of settlers of a good class from India. To facilitate this, arrangements have been made with the Imperial Government which are particularly advantageous to the Dominion in this respect. It is the practice of the Imperial Government to pay the passages back to Great Britain to military and civil officers, and men who have served their terms in India, should they desire to return to the Mother-land. Arrangements have now been made with the Imperial Government to give time-expired officers and men the option of a free passage to New Zealand in lieu of returning to Great Britain. Many of these people retire on very comfortable pensions.

In consequence of the passing of "The Rotorua Town Council Act, 1907," the Department assumed control of Rotorua Township in the capacity of a corporate body. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, Mr. Lawrence Birks has been appointed Resident Officer for exercising the necessary immediate control under the supervision of the General Manager of the Department. The work of administration has proceeded smoothly, and in a manner satisfactory to the Government and the residents of the town.

In the administration of the Rotorua Acclimatisation District, which was placed under the Department last year, much good work has been done. The Whakatane and Wairoa (Hawke's Bay) Acclimatisation Districts have also been placed under the control of the Department by request of the Acclimatisation Societies who in the past have been administering these districts. Detailed reports of the work done in connection with acclimatisation will be found in the appendices to this Statement.

During the year under review very considerable improvements have been carried out at many of the tourist resorts. The new water-supply and drainage system have been completed at Rotorua, and the new bath buildings, which will be a great acquisition to the place, are just on the verge of completion. At Hanner Springs the new water-supply has been carried out, and is proving of considerable service to the place.

Owing to the demands of the traffic on Lake Tarawera it has been found necessary to place a very much larger steam-launch on that lake. The launch previously in the service has been transferred to Lake Okataina, in order to open this beautiful lake for the benefit of visitors.

The Rotorua Sanatorium has been considerably enlarged to make provision for the public demands.

The chief improvements contemplated for the present year to meet the growing traffic are the erection of new accommodation-houses at Waitomo Caves and at Te Puia, north of Gisborne. It is also proposed to erect a large building in stone near Mount Cook, in the Southern Alps: a large portion of the old building, known as the "Hermitage," built some twenty years ago, is in a badly decayed condition, and the accommodation provided is much too small for the traffic to this resort. The new building will be in keeping with requirements, and, as it is to be built of stone, it will be a work that will practically stand for all time. In addition to this, it has been found necessary to very largely increase the electric-light works at Rotorua: owing to the very rapid growth of the town the electric-light requirements have far outgrown the capacity of the present works. The time is also not very far distant when it will be found advisable to have electric trams between Rotorua, Ohinemutu, and Whakarewarewa; but this work is not contemplated at present. Having completed the larger works before mentioned, it will be possible this year to greatly reduce the vote required from the Public Works Fund for improvements in connection with the tourist resorts of the Dominion.

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