

*Tarawera Hot Springs.*

Considerable improvements have been effected at these springs by the erection of a new bath-house containing one large concrete bath 8 ft. by 6 ft., and two ordinary enamelled baths, together with showers and necessary equipment. The waters at these springs are saline, and contain a small amount of iodine, thus proving of value for medicinal purposes; and with the advent of the above-mentioned improvements it is considered that the baths will be in greater demand by residents of Hawke's Bay. They will also add to the popularity of the overland trip, Napier to Taupo and Rotorua. The road from the Tarawera Hotel to the bath-house has been improved, and a track constructed from the main road to the Waipunga Falls situate in the vicinity. The total expenditure amounted to £325 0s. 5d. As it was anticipated that the receipts would not warrant the appointment of a permanent official, the bath-house has been leased on a year-to-year tenure to the proprietor of the Tarawera Hotel, subject to his keeping it in good order and making the charge for each bath taken a sum not exceeding 6d., including use of towel.

*Morere Hot Springs.*

The Department's proportion of the bath receipts from the springs amounted to £70 13s. 3d., being an increase of £20 6s. over the previous year.

*Hanmer Hot Springs.*

The total receipts from all sources at this resort for 1907-8 were £2,175 14s. 3d., as against £1,981 14s. 1d. for the previous year, being an increase of £194 0s. 2d. This year the Spa has been largely patronised by local visitors, the number of oversea tourists being very small. The year just ended shows a decrease in the number of baths taken, but, notwithstanding this, an increase of £29 16s. 5d. in value is shown. The accommodation-house receipts show an increase of £102 4s. 7d., being a considerable improvement on the last two years. The tea-house this season has proved to be a very popular attraction, there having been a daily attendance all the year round including Sundays of 25-25 visitors, and an increase of £43 10s. 6d. is shown over last year's figures. There has been a falling-off in the revenue from games, the heat prevailing during the exceptionally dry season making visitors disinclined for exertion. Notwithstanding the dry weather, the grounds have been kept in excellent order. Some very material improvements and extensions have been made in the Spa grounds, which greatly add to their attractiveness.

The planted area has been greatly increased by the formation of a new park. In this about five hundred assorted trees have been planted in clumps and belts, and an avenue of oaks and ash-trees 300 yards long has been formed from the north entrance of the grounds to the creek. The trees planted last year at Conical Hill suffered severely from the drought, and it has been found necessary to plant five hundred more. The waterfall at Dog Creek has been fenced in, paths formed, and 1,000 assorted trees planted.

*Pukaki House.*

Owing to the heavy wet weather cutting up the roads so that the motor-cars were unable to get through, the tourist traffic fell off considerably in the months of February and March. The receipts for 1907-8 amounted to £625 14s. 10d., as against £653 1s. 4d. for 1906-7, a decrease of £27 6s. 6d., and the number of visitors fell from 761 to 690. The receipts on account of board and lodging show a decrease on last year's figures, doubtless due to the inauguration of the motor-car service between Fairlie and the Hermitage enabling tourists to travel through to the Hermitage in one day instead of staying overnight at Pukaki.

*Mount Cook Hermitage.*

There was a slight decrease in revenue during the year at this resort, as compared with last season's receipts. The month of March, which is usually one of the busiest and most paying periods, turned out wet, and the creeks were in high flood, so that coaches were unable to get through. As a consequence, a considerable number of intending visitors could not reach the Hermitage, and were compelled to return from Fairlie and Lake Pukaki. The total receipts amounted to £1,405 12s. 6d., as against £1,516 8s. 4d. for 1906-7. The number of visitors totalled 261, and eighty-two of these were from oversea.

The winter at Mount Cook was a mild one, little snow falling until the spring, which was an exceptionally cold and wet season. The Hermitage itself stood the heavy spring gales as well as could be expected of such an old structure, but a number of repairs were found necessary.

Plans and specifications are in course of preparation by the Public Works Department for a new house, to be built of local stone and concrete, which will be in keeping with the surroundings, and give the required accommodation, which is lacking in the old building, and which the traffic to this resort demands.

It is with regret that I have to refer to what is I believe the first fatal accident which has occurred in the vicinity of Mount Cook since the Department assumed control of the Hermitage. On the 29th December last Porter Napier was returning from the Ball Hut with horses, and, it is surmised, fell from his horse and was drowned in the Hooker River. His hat was found below the ford, but, although thorough search was made for the body, it was not recovered.

The chamois appear to be thriving exceedingly well in their new home. They were seen several times during the winter and once in the summer, one with young at foot.