

A gratifying feature has been an influx of visitors from Australia, due in a great measure to the adoption of methods for advertising the attractions of Rotorua, the alpine regions, and the Southern Lake districts. The facilities afforded by the booking bureaux in the different centres have been greatly appreciated by the travelling public. The total amount of money taken for tours booked has amounted to £35,477.

Owing to the war, no works of any special importance have been undertaken during the year, but the various resorts have been kept in an up-to-date state of repair, and the results on the whole have been most satisfactory.

MARINE.

The Marine Department has done valuable work during the year for the further protection of shipping and the safety of passengers and crews on vessels that frequent our coasts and harbours. A new lighthouse has been finished at Karori Rock, Cook Strait. Automatic lights at Okuri Point, near the French Pass, and Flat Rock, Hauraki Gulf, are in hand.

The s.s. "Hinemoa" has continued to carry out the duty of tendering the various lighthouses, and has also overhauled and painted coastal buoys and buoys in harbours under the control of this Department.

The training-ship "Amokura" continues to be used for training boys for the sea. She has made two trips to the southern islands, and one to the Kermadecs, to search for castaways, and examine the provision and clothing depots maintained by the Government on those islands for the benefit of shipwrecked persons.

The Department has found no difficulty in keeping up her full complement of sixty boys—indeed, there are a great many boys at present waiting for admission when vacancies arise.

IMMIGRATION.

Since the outbreak of the war the Government has not been accepting the nomination either in New Zealand or in the United Kingdom of immigrants who are eligible for military service, as it was deemed inadvisable to adopt any course of action that might interfere with the requirements of the Imperial military authorities. Domestic servants are still being assisted to the Dominion under the scheme inaugurated in 1913, and persons residing in New Zealand also have the privilege of nominating relatives (other than men eligible for military service) for assisted passages from the United Kingdom.

THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

The moneys of estates in the Public Trust Office are placed mainly in the common fund, where they realize interest at a rate, fixed by Order in Council, not exceeding the statutory limit of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The rates of interest allowed to beneficiaries of estates should be raised. For several reasons it is not practicable to raise the amount fixed by statute, but I propose to have legislation introduced enabling a certain proportion of the surplus profits of the office to be taken and given to beneficiaries in the form of an annual bonus. The Office is making large profits. It should not be a profit-making concern only. Estates under the administration of the office should be entitled to receive a larger portion of the profits earned. The proposed concession, besides benefiting all classes of beneficiaries, will especially materially help those beneficiaries who are affected by increased cost of living due to war-conditions.

I arranged for the Public Trustee to prepare, free of charge, and undertake the custody of the wills of soldiers, and an office was opened at Trentham for that purpose with qualified officials in attendance. Many thousands of soldiers have availed themselves of the privilege, and it is desirable that all soldiers should do so, as the system of making wills in the pay-book has proved unsatisfactory. Previously the wills in many cases were lost or destroyed, and many wills were not clearly drawn. These disadvantages have been completely removed under the new system.