

that the book will be widely circulated. The various chapters deal with the topography, geology, botany, alpine and volcanic features, history, and Maori folk-lore. It will be profusely illustrated, and will contain maps showing the boundaries of the park and the summits of the mountains.

Milling Operations.—As desired by the Board, the Prisons Department decided to discontinue work at Waikune, and sawmilling operations, including logging, actually ceased early in September, 1926. The question of arriving at a settlement as to the amount to be paid to the Board in respect of timber cut is now being discussed with the Controller-General of Prisons.

Heather.—A considerable amount of criticism has appeared in the press from time to time in regard to the question of eradication of the heather now growing in the park, and it is fitting that some reference to the matter should be made in this report. The total area of the park is 149,470 acres. The patches of heather are scattered chiefly on the northern side, and occupy but an infinitesimal portion of the total acreage. It must be clearly understood that the bulk of the seed was planted many years before the present Board was established upon the passing of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922. With the object of controlling the introduction of exotic animals and plants into the park the Board, at a meeting on the 19th November, 1924, passed the following resolution: "That no birds or animals be introduced into the park, or trees or plants planted, or seeds thereof sown, without a resolution of the Board authorizing the same from time to time." At the February meeting in 1925 the matter was again discussed, and the following motion was carried: "That this Board is of the opinion that the heather now growing in the National Park should be eradicated." In December, 1926, the matter was again under discussion, and the following motion was carried unanimously: "The Board, being of opinion that it is impossible to eradicate the heather save at a cost beyond the means of the Board, resolves that no further heather-seed be planted, and that steps be taken to prevent the further spreading of the heather now growing in the park. The Board confirms its policy of opposition to the planting in the park of anything (except under domestication) not indigenous to the park, and that the previous resolution to eradicate the heather is thus automatically rescinded, together with the permission granted to plant Mount Cook lilies." Following on the last resolution a committee was set up to demarcate the boundaries of some of the patches with the object of carrying out a series of observations as to whether the plant was spreading to any appreciable extent. The interim report of the committee is attached hereto, and contains some instructive information on the subject. Much of the criticism which has been levelled at the Board in this connection is based on an imperfect knowledge of the true position, and can serve no other purpose than to convey the false impression that the whole area of the park is a blazing mass of heather choking out all native plant-life. This, as will be seen by the report of the sub-committee, is contrary to fact.

Establishment of Botanical Garden.—The Board has under consideration in connection with the projected development works at Whakapapa the question of establishing a botanical garden for native trees and plants. This question has been the subject of correspondence with the Wanganui Scenery Preservation and Beautifying Society, and recently Messrs. Duncan and Davies, of New Plymouth, very kindly offered to assist the Board in this connection. The establishment of such a garden would add a feature of considerable interest and value to the park. Provision will be made for such garden when designing the general lay-out of future buildings.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Mr. John Cullen, I.S.O., Warden of the park, reports as follows:—

"I paid six visits to the park during the year just ended, and visited the Whakapapa and Mangatepopo huts as opportunities offered. There have been no violent outbursts of Ngauruhoe since May, 1926, and the Red Crater, which was very active, has shown no signs of activity since then. Ketetahi has, however, been very active, giving off immense columns of steam, which at times are very black and ascend to a great height. I had the track from the main road opposite Sir James Gunson's camp staked up to a point near the Mangatepopo huts: this will enable visitors to now go there without the risk of losing the track when it is covered with snow. When doing this work we were able to bring a Ford lorry within a mile of the huts."

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The following notes furnished by the various clubs are of interest:—

Tararua Tramping Club.—About twenty members of the club visited the park in the early part of September, 1926. The weather during the early part of the stay was of the best, but for the last few days conditions were somewhat unpleasant. The new kitchen and dining-room proved a great boon, and has done a great deal towards making the catering arrangements for large parties a less arduous matter for those in charge. The usual winter sports were indulged in, a feature of the stay being the Tararua Club's first winter-sports meeting. The shield for the Tramping Club skiing championship was won by our hon. chief guide, Les. B. Cross. Parties of club members also visited the park during the Christmas and Easter holidays, the Easter party paying more particular attention to Tongariro and Ngauruhoe, and establishing their base camp at the beautifully situated Waihohonu Hut. Accommodation has again been booked for this year's winter-sports season, when we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with Whakapapa, and our friend the ranger, Mr. Cowling, who is always ready to advise and assist.

Tongariro National Park Sports Club.—Several small parties consisting of members of the club visited the park during the year, but there was no combined effort to organize members to go there in a body.

Ruapehu Ski Club.—As requested by your letter, I have pleasure in forwarding the following particulars of the club's annual winter meeting. On this occasion there was a maximum attendance