

For some time it has been the aim of the Department to provide the opportunity to our own New Zealand folk to view these marvels placed by nature so close at hand, and this season rail excursions were run in conjunction with the Railway Department. These Sunday trips were availed of by 1,509 visitors, and it is anticipated that next season they will prove even more successful. The largest party came from Ohakune, consisting of 550 trippers, on the 13th February, and this day stands as a record in that almost seven hundred visitors inspected all three caves.

Mr. N. Cole, contractor for the proposed additions to the hostel, commenced operations on the 25th March last, and it is anticipated that a portion of the new building will be ready for occupation before the commencement of the next tourist season. When erected there will be no finer or more up-to-date hostelry in New Zealand than the new hostel. The rule at present is that a visitor inspects the three caves series and then moves on so that further tourists may be accommodated. This is rendered necessary by the limited accommodation. But Waitomo's future will be quite different. The new hostel will provide the Department with facilities to develop the many-sided scenic attractiveness of this tourist *incognita* outback, including historic Kawhia Harbour, the Te Anga Natural Bridge, and the Marakopa Falls. Undoubtedly there is a wonderful future for Waitomo.

TE AROHA.

The revenue shows a slight increase of some £50, and this would have been larger but for the bad weather experienced during the greater part of the season.

Bath buildings and drinking-fountains: The working of the various baths has been satisfactory and the usual maintenance carried out. Early in the year the painting and repairing of the Cadman Bath-house was completed. The drinking-fountains have been kept in good repair, and have been freely patronized. The mineral-water supply has been equal to the demand and has given no trouble. One hundred and thirty-eight cans of No. 15 spring water have been forwarded to Rotorua during the year, as compared with 196 cans sent last year.

The gardens have been kept up to their usual good standard. The asphalt tennis-courts and the worst portions of the paths were repaired during the year. The grounds staff have had a very strenuous time during the past year.

Library and reading-room: New books to the number of 164 have been added to the library during the year, and this institution is well patronized. The reading-room is very popular, and is kept well supplied with newspapers.

NELSON AND WESTLAND.

The Greymouth office has fairly maintained the returns of last year, and is well supported by the residents of the West Coast. The Department has no directly maintained institution on the Coast, but has done all in its power to foster the tourist traffic there and to place its attractions before overseas and local holiday-makers. The traffic has been very heavy, and the Department's bookings through the various motor companies to the Franz Joseph Glacier and other resorts well up to standard. When the new accommodation-house at the Fox Glacier is erected and properly advertised there will be a big accretion of traffic in that direction.

THE HERMITAGE.

The hostel has been conducted by the lessees to the satisfaction of the Department during the year, and it is understood that the place has been well patronized during the year.

The following is a list of the high climbs done in the season:—

Date.	Party and Guide.	Climb and Height.	Route.
1926.			
Oct. 14	Mr. A. Hogue; Guide V. Williams	The Twins, Novara Peak; 7,542 ft.	From Ball Hut across Tasman Glacier, up main ridge to summit; descent by same route.
Oct. 21	Mr. A. Hogue; Guide V. Williams	Lean Peak; 8,000 ft. ..	From Hooker Hut via Copeland Pass to summit; descent by same route.
Dec. 17	Messrs. H. E. L. Porter and M. Kurz	Mount Sealey; 8,651 ft. ..	From Mueller Hut through Sladden Saddle to summit; descent to hut.
Dec. 22	Messrs. H. E. L. Porter and M. Kurz	Footstool; 9,073 ft. ..	From Sefton bivouac to main ridge, thence rock-face to summit; descent by same route.
Dec. 28	Messrs. R. Syme and J. Allan.	The Twins; 8,030 ft. ..	From Ball Hut across Tasman Glacier, up main ridge to summit; descent by same route.
Dec. 30	Messrs. R. Syme, G. Mace, and J. Allan	Mount De la Beche; 10,058 ft.	From De la Beche bivouac up Rudolph Glacier to Graham's Saddle, across south-west face, up south-east ridge to summit; descent by same route.
1927.			
Jan. 4	Prof. and Mrs. Algic ..	Mount Kinsey; 6,750 ft.	From Hooker Hut to summit; descent down east side to Blue Lake Flat.
Jan. 5	Messrs. J. Pope and R. E. L. Aubin; Guide C. Williams	Lean Peak; 8,000 ft. ..	From Hooker Hut by Copeland ridge, following main divide to summit; descent by same route.
Jan. 5	Messrs. R. Syme, G. Mace, and J. Allan	Mount Elie de Beaumont; 10,200 ft.	From Malte Brun Hut by Lendenfeld Glacier and east face and south-east <i>arête</i> ; descent by same route.