

"No effort on our part to popularize our booking system has been spared, and though our actual takings in cash are a little less than our last year's figures they really do not indicate the volume of work which has passed through our hands, respective figures being—1925–26, £970 17s. 8d.; 1926–27, £935 8s. Our work in this connection, however, is reflected in the returns of the District Agents in New Zealand, to whom we pass prospective bookings unprocurable at this end.

"Besides our tourist work we have, of course, been engaged in the performance of important duties incidental to the various Departments of State. Trade matters have been given the closest attention, and reports, both to the Industries and Commerce and Customs Department, necessitating exhaustive inquiry, have been furnished. Every effort has been made to foster and increase trade between the Commonwealth and the Dominion, and with this in view a new range of our products was obtained for exhibition at these offices. Four glass cases were built in which to display them, and you will be glad to know that they make a very attractive showing. It only remains now for the Department to send us a swordfish and some alpine equipment to put the finishing touches on things.

"Quite a number of emigrants have passed through our hands during the year, and every care has been taken to see that only those of a desirable type were issued certificates. Other Departments making full use of our services have been the Public Works and Agriculture—the former with reference to their hydro-electric schemes, and the latter on matters affecting potatoes, butter, &c. In conclusion, you will be glad to know that the facilities provided by the New Zealand Government are being more and more extensively taken advantage of by all members of the community as well as visiting New-Zealanders.

Satisfactory reports have also been received from Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, and South Africa. It is regretted that during the season Mr. D. T. Lawes, who did good service for years for the Department in Adelaide, died. Mr. V. H. Ryan, Director of the South Australia Intelligence and Tourist Bureau, is carrying out his work for New Zealand.

LITTLE BARRIER.

The caretaker (Mr. NELSON) reports as follows for the year ending 31st March, 1927:—

"In submitting my report to you I beg to state that much of my time has been occupied travelling in the forest. I have travelled extensively into the interior of the island, going over much new ground, especially in the north-westerly direction. One thing which strikes me most in that particular direction is the largely increasing numbers of native birds. In some parts, amongst the giant kauri-trees, the miro, and others, there were hundreds of nearly every species of native birds. It was delightful just to rest and listen to their charming melodies. The bellbirds and tuis were everywhere, and vied with each other which would sing the sweetest. The native pigeons were seen in hundreds on the trees feeding and flying overhead. The stitchbirds I was very pleased to see in goodly numbers—some of them came right down and close to me; and the native robin also was numerous in that particular spot, coming close to me and picking the crumbs from the ground. I was pleased to observe a plentiful supply of food for the birds. I may mention here that I have seen more bush-wrens this last twelve months than in any former year. We have had many of the bellbirds and tuis down near the house and the garden, feeding on the fruit. Many have and are still feeding on the figs, which are later this season, and have been a very large crop. Very few of the blackbirds are to be seen, and not any starlings or wax-eyes, as in former years.

"I have been travelling round the coast in either direction for a considerable distance, and once about half-way round. I have also been taken round the island on two occasions by the mail-carrier's boat, keeping close in to the beach. Everything seemed safe and clear, and no signs of any one landing on the island.

"A large number of rats have been destroyed by the use of the rat-trap. Only two wild cats have been seen during the whole year. I have never seen any evidence of cats during my travels in the bush: This is proof that they are decreasing. In former years I have killed as many as three in one week.

"There were a great many storms during the past year, and it has been very wet. In some parts of the forest many trees have fallen, and most of the tracks in some parts are entirely closed. I have been employed during the summer months in repairing the track leading to the summit of the highest mountain.

"In my travels I noticed a good many of the little grey petrels lying dead, a few being partly eaten. They are few in number compared to former years. These live in the most dense parts of the bush near the high mountains, and fly to and from the sea. I believe they are not destroyed by the wild cats, but are killed in stormy weather, as they dive down amongst the branches of the trees to find their nests.

"I found a young brown kiwi one day on the beach and took it home and tried to feed it, but it died next day. A few days afterwards I saw two fine North Island kiwis feeding in the garden near the house. On the 1st July, when going out with my lantern, I saw the white albino kiwi, after a lapse of five years.

"During the year I have been sometimes employed destroying noxious weeds and doing some repairs to the house."

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