

ANNUAL REPORT.

GENERAL SURVEY.

DURING the past year there has been a considerable increase in public interest and comment in regard to the development of tourist traffic to this Dominion, and it is evident from much of this comment that the organization and activities of the Department are very imperfectly understood by many who have recently taken a new or renewed interest in the "tourist industry" of New Zealand.

In consequence it appears desirable to include in this report some comments of a general character which may serve towards a better understanding of the functions of the Department and of its relative position in the national effort towards developing and serving tourist traffic.

The functions of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts and Publicity fall under three main headings :—

- (a) Publicity, particularly overseas.
- (b) The giving of travel information and the selling (both overseas and in New Zealand) of travel within the Dominion and the reservation of accommodation by various means of transport and in hotels, &c.
- (c) The provision and maintenance of tourist facilities and health resorts within the Dominion.

The following is submitted as a review of each of the above-mentioned functions, though it is not suggested that they are by any means entirely independent questions :—

(a) *Publicity.*

Within the financial allocation of the Department as a whole there is provided out of State funds a sum of money designed for the production and distribution of publicity for the attractions and resources of the Dominion, particularly from the tourist point of view.

In the years immediately preceding the amalgamation of the Publicity Office and the Tourist Department an expenditure of approximately £40,000 per annum was allowed to the Publicity Office. Since that time the sum has been reduced, until at present there is allowed for all purposes of overseas publicity, including, to some extent, questions of trade publicity, the sum of approximately £18,000 only. When consideration is given to the very wide field which is open to exploitation it will be readily realized that it is impossible for the publicity to be intensive, and, in fact, in many regions the publicity cannot be anything more than of the scantiest character. Means have yet to be found by which effective extensive or continuous publicity can be secured without the expenditure of appreciable sums of money.

All the recognized publicity methods have been adopted in carrying out this work and all classes of publicity material have been produced and distributed, often in conjunction and co-operation with other interests and with a continuous consideration of the best possible means and the most likely areas from which results can be expected. The expert advice and assistance of persons and bodies outside the Department have been sought and been availed of, and, while many opportunities for publicity have necessarily been passed over on the score of expense, it can be shown that the quality of the material used, the direction in which the effort has been expended, and the co-operation with other interests have been such as to give grounds for no serious criticism. It will be allowed that in the production and distribution of publicity it is impossible in many cases to check up as to the results achieved and as to whether or not the best possible methods have been followed. It can be claimed only that the Department has endeavoured to apply the funds available to it with an intelligent consideration of all the circumstances.

In so far as Australia is now, and probably for some time at least must continue to be, our best tourist market, it has been thought wise to ensure that a substantial proportion of our publicity expenditure should be concentrated upon that territory. This should not be interpreted as meaning, however, that other regions have been entirely neglected; but the limitations of finance have necessarily meant that, more particularly in regions other than the Commonwealth, our publicity coverage has not been by any means taken to the maximum point justified by potential traffic.

(b) *Sales and Booking Organization.*

A policy has definitely been adopted which is based upon the belief that the best results cannot be obtained unless publicity work is backed by an efficient sales organization. For that reason every endeavour has been made to ensure that the interest aroused and inquiries resulting from publicity may be translated into actual business through the existence of representation abroad, either through departmental officers stationed in overseas countries or through the Department's agency arrangements with private interests engaging in the sale of travel. Wherever the extent of the business offering or the existence of other governmental work has justified, departmental officers are stationed so that they may follow up any inquiries by personal contact, give details of itineraries, costs, &c., and in some cases engage in the actual selling of tours to and through the Dominion.

In Australia, for example, officers are stationed at Melbourne and Sydney, where a considerable tourist traffic arises, and where, in addition, a considerable volume of work for other Government Departments has to be transacted. The officers selected for those locations are qualified officers of