

EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

The members of the Egmont National Park Board can look back upon the year ended 31st March, 1937, with considerable satisfaction. In the absence of any fixed revenue or endowments the Board is dependent upon the Government of the day for finance, and it can be said with gratitude that the present Government has been generous.

Goats.—At the beginning of the year the Government made £500, which had been promised by the previous Government, available for the destruction of goats. The Ranger since has been steadily killing goats in the more sunny parts of the reserve where they herd. Of late, too, he has been able to work in much more satisfactorily with the farmers whose properties adjoin the Reserve. There are now few who refuse permission to the Ranger to hunt and kill goats on their properties. If the keeping of goats within a mile or two of the Park boundaries were made illegal, it would be a very great help towards their final extinction.

In May last year the Board appointed its first permanent Ranger, Mr. P. De Launay, but unfortunately Mr. De Launay met with an accident during his first week and had to give up, and Mr. N. Gibson was appointed in his stead. It has been a distinct advantage having a Ranger who is directly responsible to the Board. In addition to the destruction of goats, the Ranger has had the supervision of the opossum-trapping, the prevention of the trespassing of cattle in the Reserve, and the protection of its bird-life and fauna. The control of 79,227 acres is a heavy job for one man. The Board looks forward to the time when, with more permanent revenue, it will be able to appoint a forest expert able to devote all his time to the development of the afforestation side of the work.

There is now a move by the Board in conjunction with the Taranaki Education Board's agricultural experts to interest the schools surrounding the mountain in the raising and cultivation of native trees. This should serve to create a very real interest in our forests.

Local Committees.—The Board is very much indebted to the members of the North, East, South, and West Committees who have devoted so much time to the upkeep of the hostels and tracks in their areas. With the improved times, the hostels have been much better patronized, and satisfactory financial results have been reported in the case of the three main hostels.

Alpine Clubs.—Here again the Board has been fortunate in the success of the Alpine Clubs and in the enthusiasm shown by the ever-increasing numbers of members. Mount Egmont, with the development of the technique of ski-ing, is fast gaining a reputation as one of the finest grounds in New Zealand for this sport, thus bringing visitors, not only to Taranaki, but also to the other fine ski-ing grounds in New Zealand.

Recently a new Alpine Club, with headquarters at Okato, known as the Bells Falls Alpine Club, has been formed. The Board will gladly give this club every encouragement.

Afforestation.—The *Pinus* plantation of 300 acres continues to make very satisfactory growth. During the year Mr. D. McPherson, Director of Forests, inspected the plantation, and, in a comprehensive report, recommended that thinning, lopping off the lower branches, and cutting-out of dead and badly grown trees should not be delayed. This work the Board will have done with the help of unemployed labour during this spring. If properly cared for these plantations, handy to the main road and close to New Plymouth, should be a valuable asset to the Board in the years to come.

Main Highways and Finance.—During the year efforts have been continued towards the taking-over by the Highways Board of the roads in the Reserve leading to the three hostels. This is closely wrapped up with the finance of the Board, and the financial support due to the Board by the local bodies surrounding the Egmont Park. It is to be hoped that some settlement, satisfactory to all, may be reached.

It is pleasant to report that since the end of the year the three Taranaki Power Boards have contributed their quota for the upkeep of the Reserve. This is the first occasion upon which the Power Boards have been asked to contribute, and their prompt response is most gratifying.

In conclusion, we can report an increasing public spirit and interest in the Reserve. More and more it is realized how much this wonderful National Park means not only to the young people interested in alpine sports, but also to the residents of Taranaki, who are so dependent upon Egmont for their never-failing water-supplies.

To the Hon. Mr. Langstone, Minister for Lands and Survey, under whose control our Reserve is vested, and to the Hon. Mr. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, we owe a special debt for their continued interest and help in our work.

ARTHUR PASS NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch, Chairman.)

I have the honour to submit for adoption and presentation to the Hon. the Minister of Lands a report on the Board's affairs for the seventh complete year since the Board was instituted.

In reports of recent years we have deplored the lack of funds which had seriously hampered the Board and stultified much of its endeavour to exercise its proper functions. However, it is a matter for gratification that our financial worries appear to have been removed, because the Government has granted during this year the considerable sum of £1,100, and there is reason to believe that, when our requirements merit further assistance, it will be forthcoming.

In May last the Hon. the Minister of Lands (Hon. F. Langstone) received a deputation from the Board under the leadership of Dr. William McKay, and heard an appeal for a monetary grant. The outcome was a payment of £500 in September and a further £600 in March. In conversation with representatives of the Board in March when intimation of the second grant was given, Mr. Langstone