

ANNUAL REPORT.

It is pleasing to report a record year for travel to this Dominion for the year ending 31st March, 1937, and for the sale of inland tours by the Department.

The number of tourists visiting New Zealand from overseas was 17,297, being an increase of 21 per cent. on the arrivals for last year, and an increase of 80 per cent. on the pre-depression record.

The position is extremely gratifying, and, although it is agreed that the improvement recorded is, in a measure, due to the improved economic conditions throughout the world to-day—the flow of tourists being an accurate barometer to such conditions in the countries that contribute to the movement—still the fact that the number of tourists from overseas during the year under review shows such a material increase over the record year of the pre-depression period indicates that the publicity and sales promotion efforts of the Department during the past few years have been on the right lines.

The number of tourists arriving from abroad are recorded by the Government Statistician, and the following will give information regarding the countries from which New Zealand obtains its tourist revenue, also the countries which have contributed to the increase in the total number recorded :—

	1936-37.	1935-36.
Australia	12,802	10,083
United Kingdom	2,138	1,830
Canada	165	175
Other British colonies	1,138	1,163
United States of America	683	647
Foreign	371	386
	17,297	14,284

These figures are confined to persons classed as tourists, and omit other classes of temporary visitors—i.e., persons visiting New Zealand on business, persons with theatrical or sporting engagements, &c.

From a perusal of the statistics relating to tourists arriving from abroad the opinion may be formed, owing to the relatively small number of tourists who visit New Zealand from the United States of America, that the geographical location of New Zealand is proving a handicap in developing the tourist traffic with that country. That may have been the position several years ago, but now that shipping services operating between the two countries have been vastly improved as regards speed and the appointments of the vessels used, and the probability that a direct air service to New Zealand from America may be commenced next year, the prospects of a development in travel to New Zealand from North America are particularly bright.

Reports from the Department's representatives at Los Angeles and Toronto support this contention.

The funds allocated by the Government for overseas publicity have been increased considerably during the past two years, and the Department is now in a position to arrange a comprehensive advertising campaign in the United States of America and Canada with a view to attracting tourists to this country.

During the year under review an advertising appeal was made to the magazine-reading public of America to visit New Zealand, and this campaign will be continued during the ensuing year. This appeal was supplemented by articles on New Zealand, well illustrated, which appeared in some of the leading American magazines.

This is the first occasion for many years that the Department has had sufficient funds to make a direct appeal to the American public to spend their vacations in this country, and from reports received the result of the campaign to date has been very promising.

The efforts made by this Department to increase New Zealand's share of the world's tourist revenue will be dealt with in a separate portion of this report.

TRAVEL TO AND WITHIN THE DOMINION.
(a) *The Tourist Bureau Travel Service.*

The increase in the number of visitors from abroad and the number of New Zealand residents visiting tourist resorts during the year was reflected in the increased turnover at the Government tourist bureaux.

The Department's travel service is becoming increasingly popular, and many complimentary references have been made during the year by travellers to the up-to-date methods adopted and to the efficiency of the staff dealing with the travelling public.

The total turnover for the year on account of tour sales was £480,788, as compared with £402,147 for the previous year, an increase of approximately 20 per cent.

The branch of the Department's activities which deals with the sale of travel within New Zealand is a most important link in the development of travel to, and within, the Dominion.

In so far as overseas visitors are concerned, the staff of the various tourist bureaux are able to give full and unbiased information regarding the scenic attractions of New Zealand, and in many instances encourage travellers to prolong their stay in New Zealand.