

It is important that when travellers have been induced to visit this country that there is some organization to assist them in making their travel arrangements and to help them, where necessary, so that at the conclusion of their stay they may leave this country well satisfied not only with our scenic attractions, but also with their reception and the assistance rendered to them during their stay here.

The Government Tourist Bureau Travel Service fulfils this function admirably, and the staff in their dealings with overseas visitors recognize that a satisfied tourist is one of the best advertisements for New Zealand.

The Bureau Service enables travel agencies overseas to sell New Zealand tours with confidence in the knowledge that their clients will be met on arrival and all their requirements carefully attended to.

A very valuable connection with many of the leading travel agencies throughout the world has been built up, and as these agencies play a most important part in directing travel to various countries, particularly in America, the connection is a valuable one.

This branch not only caters for the visitor from overseas, but also takes an active part in developing travel within the Dominion by working in close touch with travel interests in the promotion of group tours, excursion trips, &c.

The facilities provided by the service for carefree travel are, of course, available to our own people, and every effort is made to encourage New-Zealanders to see their own country. Whilst large numbers of New-Zealanders already use the Department's free service there is room for a big development in the recognition by our people of the valuable help that the New Zealand Government Tourist Bureaux can render.

(b) Shipping and Cruises.

It is pleasing to record that the volume of travel to the South Island tourist resorts increased appreciably during the year. The fact that the new steamer "Awatea" made frequent trips from Australia to Wellington, coupled with the efforts made by the staff of the Department's branches in Australia to popularize travel in the South Island, contributed largely to this state of affairs.

The s.s. "Marama" made eight direct trips from Melbourne to Bluff, and, generally speaking, satisfactory bookings were obtained for all sailings.

The excellent appointments and speed of the new steamer, the "Awatea," were favourably commented on by travellers, and the Union Steam Ship Co., Ltd., are to be congratulated on the initiative shown in providing such a fine ship for the Tasman service.

During the year six cruising liners from Australia visited Auckland and Wellington, and two cruises were made direct from Sydney to Milford Sound. All cruises were well patronized, and this method of travel is becoming increasingly popular.

It is interesting to record that many of the cruise passengers enjoyed their somewhat brief visit to such an extent that they expressed the intention that they proposed to visit New Zealand again in the near future and spend a real holiday in this country.

The popularity of these cruises would appear to indicate that there is a possibility that a decided stimulus would be given to travel from Australia to New Zealand during the winter months if it were possible for shipping companies to introduce excursion fares during that period of the year.

The inauguration during the year of direct shipping services from Japan and the Netherlands, East Indies and Malaya open up additional direct prospective fields from which tourists may be expected.

During the year the Department received much assistance from travel interests throughout the Dominion, and the spirit of co-operation shown was greatly appreciated.

(c) Transport and Accommodation.

Attention has been directed in this report to the rapid manner in which the tourist industry is developing in this country, and the time is now opportune to give consideration to the problem as to whether we are in a position at the present time to cater satisfactorily for any further material increase in the number of tourists visiting this country.

Dealing with the transport side of the industry, it is felt that there need not be any uneasiness in respect of this section as the facilities for the conveyance of passengers can be developed as the demand for such facilities grows.

This satisfactory state of affairs is, however, not so in respect of the accommodation at present available in New Zealand to meet the demands of overseas visitors, and the travelling public of this Dominion.

At certain periods of the year under review great difficulty was experienced by the Department in arranging accommodation of a reasonable standard for overseas travellers, and in the event of any large increase in the number of arrivals next year the situation will be extremely difficult to cope with.

A shortage in accommodation is very inconvenient, and it is most discouraging to find that it is sometimes necessary for tourists to curtail their visit to this country on that account. Whilst quite a number of hotel-proprietors have enlarged their accommodation and on modern lines it is hoped that many more will endeavour to meet the situation by making extensions to their premises prior to the commencement of next season.

(d) Air Services.

The popularity of travel by air services in New Zealand is rapidly increasing, and there are promising indications of direct air services from the United Kingdom and the United States of America to this Dominion during the next year. Should services such as these be established, New Zealand will be in close touch, from the point of view of time, with largely populated countries whence we may expect many tourists.