

The weather during December and January was very unfavourable, every second day being wet, which made the Track very heavy going. However, no delays to itineraries were caused.

The "Franconia," 20,000 ton White Star liner, called at Milford Sound on 22nd April, 1938, en route from Sydney to Wellington on a world cruise with a full list of passengers. She spent about an hour in the Sound, coming right up to Bowen Falls and also going into Harrison's Cove. The weather was ideal.

The inter-colonial steamer "Maunganui" made fifteen calls to Milford during the season, landing 170 passengers.

Mr. A. J. Bradshaw, of the Southland Airways, made three successful landings in this district during the past year. He landed twice on the sandspit on Lake Ada, and once on the beach at Deep Water Basin, about one mile from the Hotel. This landing at Deep Water Basin is quite good at low water, weather permitting, and can be used in case of emergency. Quite a number of aeroplanes have flown over the Sound this season, flying as low as 700 ft. to 1,000 ft. This trip is becoming very popular. If a landing-ground were established it might prove an asset to this isolated district.

The formation of the new Milford Te Anau road is available for over seven miles. This has added to the attraction here, and almost all tourists arriving have availed themselves of a trip up the new road and to the Chasm.

The Milford Track has been maintained in good order, despite adverse weather conditions.

The Sounds cruises have been well patronized during the season. Fishing has been good, also some good collections of greenstone have been made. Trout-fishing in the Cleddau River has been very good.

THE MANAGER, THE CHATEAU TONGARIRO.

The Manager reports that the position disclosed is satisfactory, the total revenue for the year being £36,266 15s. 1d., an increase over the total revenue received for last year of £8,413 13s. 4d., easily a record for any one year. All items of revenue show an increase over the previous year, the most outstanding being: Accommodation, £6,426 11s. 9d.; hire of equipment, £882 13s. 6d.; lounge-shop sales, £828 4s. 4d.

The amount taken for hire of equipment and guiding, &c., £2,155 8s. 5d., is very satisfactory. Due credit must be given to Mr. E. Skardarasy, whose work will be mentioned later in this report in this connection.

Buildings. No new buildings, with the exception of a garage to house the new truck, &c., were erected during the year. General maintenance-work on all buildings and plant has been carried out.

Roads, Tracks, Mountain Huts, &c. The walking-tracks, &c., surrounding the Chateau have received the usual attention. The road to the Salt Hut on Scoria Flat should shortly become an accomplished fact, and though the work will not be completed this year the formation now reaches Upper Scoria Flat, and if the climatic conditions are reasonable this portion will be metalled and will be of use for the coming winter traffic. The Maungatepopo and Waihohunu Huts have been inspected several times during the year and are in good repair.

Cartage and Transport. The purchase of a new truck during the year has more than fulfilled hopes. A careful check of all expenses, including depreciation and interest on capital, shows that there has been a saving of at least £300 in cash to the Department, and naturally a much better and increased service has been provided. The wear-and-tear on the truck on these roads will be considerable, but every care is being taken to keep the truck in good repair.

Golf-course. The golf-course is in wonderful condition according to the views expressed by guests. The two to three months' dry spell which was experienced throughout the country parched most courses, but, owing chiefly to the heavy dew experienced at this altitude, the Chateau course has remained beautifully green and a pleasure to play on.

Ski-ing. Ski-ing conditions during the winter were reasonably good and, with the exception of severe blizzard conditions during September, when all roads were blocked on two occasions, the season could be called an excellent one. The sum of £15,948 was taken in revenue during the months of July, August, and September, as against £10,605 for the previous year and £8,408 for the year before. Mention has already been made of Mr. Skardarasy's great assistance in this connection, and it is considered that the Department's action in bringing him out to New Zealand doubly repaid all expenses incurred. The New Zealand championships will be held at the Chateau next year, and one month of the season (August) is already booked to capacity. If the weather conditions are at all favourable the coming season will be at least as good as the last.

Staff. Social amenities which are due to staff living in a special building away from the Chateau itself are provided, including golf, tennis, and free pictures. Tournaments are also arranged for the staff.

THE CARETAKER, LITTLE BARRIER BIRD SANCTUARY.

The Caretaker reports that steady progress has been made with improving the house and surroundings during the year. All work done previously is being maintained, fences kept in repair and noxious weeds eradicated and destroyed. Wild cats have been destroyed. Many hundreds of rats have been trapped. The bellbirds are very numerous everywhere. This is to a great extent due to the killing of vermin and also to the attraction of the birds with milk, porridge, and sugar, also fruit, figs, and flowers and berries. Tracks receive attention. The coast-lines as far as it is possible have been frequently traversed.

The Caretaker advises that no floating refuse oil has been discovered.

CASCADE CREEK CAMP.

This camp has been practically rebuilt and considerably enlarged both as regards sleeping-accommodation and the provision of meal facilities. As a result there has been greatly increased patronage, which can be considered most satisfactory.