NEW ZEALAND NOTES.

THE 1929–30 season at the Hermitage rivalled its predecessor, both in the scarcity of good climbing days and in the inadequacy of the guiding staff to satisfy the demands of visiting climbers. Despite these drawbacks several ascents were made of the favourite peaks. MT. HAMILTON was climbed five times, ELIE DE BEAUMONT and the MINARETS twice, and ascents were also made of MALTE BRUN, FOOTSTOOL, STURDEE, ANZACS and HOCHSTETTER DOME. The low peak of MT. COOK was conquered in February by Miss Familton with Williams and Alack. The high peak fell only once, to Messrs. Parker and Shand with Williams and Bowie on March 14. A courageous attempt in January by Messrs. Hall with Hilgendorf was repulsed by the vile condition of the summit rocks 800 ft. from the top. The first ascent of GLACIER PEAK from the E. was made by Mr. Porter and Williams on December 21, twenty-three years after the only previous ascent from the W. by Canon H. E. Newton, Dr. Teichelmann and Alec Graham.

The material for the new Malte Brun hut, which was deposited last winter by the Byrd Expedition dogs half-way up the Tasman Glacier, is now being sledged up by man-power to the edge of the moraine below the site, whence it will be ' winched ' up the last 400 ft. The motor road to the Ball hut is nearing completion.

There has been increased activity in other regions, notably round Arthur's Pass, where the recently completed Carrington hut attracts the youth of Christchurch, and still more in the mountains of Otago. MT. ASPIRING, despite its inaccessibility, was climbed three times in one season ; its previous history relates only three ascents in twenty years. This is a district of immense possibilities with many lovely virgin peaks and passes, which in the next few years will be wooed and won by the keen mountaineers of this province.

Mr. Harper writes :

' I am having another " go " at the Alpine guide question to try and get the Government to bring in regulations requiring some test of qualification and to institute licences for guides. The men themselves want it, and as I am backed by the majority, if not every climber of repute, I think this time we may bring it to a head. I have got the two Grahams, our best guides, on my side, so we ought to win.

' For years past I have advocated a large National Park covering our main Western Alpine country. Many years ago all the district round the Tasman was set aside as a National Park under the Tourist Department. They leased it to one of the hotel companies, which has a monopoly and controls all huts, and its tariff is so high that the average poor man cannot go in—for the company objects to his going in and camping.

'On the western side, however, we have had reserves made under a different department, and these are now a real National Park in which we can camp, or, if we like, can work it from hotels just outside the reserve. The result is that on the west we have practically secured 187,620 acres, an area of some 30 miles north to south, and covering the country from the base of the ranges back to the Divide.

'Further north there is a large area reserved at Arthur's Pass, the headwaters of the Waimakariri River, containing a big group of secondary snow peaks and several sizeable ice fields. Between this and the big southern reserve is a stretch of some 60–70 miles of snow ranges and several very fine glaciers at the heads of the Rakaia, Wanganui, Wataroa and other rivers; and my object now is to continue to "peg away" until I can get the whole into one National Park. But we have done pretty well in getting this last block, 125,000 acres, reserved in South Westland, and must let it rest at that for a time.

'Our Central Alps reserve now takes in Godley and Classen Glaciers (Tekapo River), all those round Mt. Cook and the corresponding Western district, making in all practically one block of 341,430 acres, which includes no less than nineteen large glaciers and sixteen peaks over 10,000 ft., and probably upwards of a hundred and fifty good peaks above the snow-line in addition.

'As Amery in his Canadian paper in the last "A.J." referred to our New Zealand policy of making reserves, you may think it worth while extracting a "Note" from the above for the next.'

ACCIDENTS IN 1930.

FOLLOWING a summer almost unprecedented as regards bad weather —there were but a few fine days at the end of August and beginning of September—the list of accidents is again terribly high. More than 120 persons are reported as having perished during the summer and autumn. But in the frequented resorts the weather, bad or indifferent, has little effect in preventing numbers of inexperienced or irresponsible persons from starting on expeditions. Many appear to enjoy climbing in rain or snow, although sooner or later liable to pay the extreme penalty. So numerous were the accidents that reports appear in the press of meetings of the Continental Clubs to consider preventive steps, while their official journals publish leading and extremely pessimistic articles.

The Eastern Alps, as usual, have provided the greater number of catastrophes, many of which have been due to exposure. When such accidents occur, as, for instance, in the Wilder Kaiser, of 7000 ft. and under, where a party of four persons is stated to have perished in one day from cold, it does not require a vivid imagination to picture the kind of weather prevailing when a start was made.