

WESTLAND DISTRICT.

Westport-Reefton Road.—The bridge over the Inangahua River near its junction with the Buller was practically completed and open for traffic in February, but some small additional works have yet to be done. The approach at the western end is through very loose materials, in which slips may be expected for some time to come.

A few minor improvements have just been put in hand on the portion of the road between Inangahua Junction and Westport.

Greymouth-Okarito Road.—The contract for the erection of a bridge over Donnelly's Creek, entered into just before the beginning of the year, was finished in October. This completes the bridging of all rivers and principal streams between Reefton and Ross.

Roads for Mines Department.—The construction of a bridle-track from Mokihinui Township to Halcyon Reefs is nearly completed. It passes over somewhat rough country, but the gradients are easy, so it can afterwards be widened into a dray-road if necessary. A reconnaissance survey of a continuation of the track to Karamea has been made and reported on.

The widening of the bridle-track from Cobden to Seventeen-Mile Beach into a dray-road has just been commenced.

Surveys are in progress for a bridle-track between Lyell and Mokihinui, and for the road between Brighton and Seventeen-Mile Beach.

CHRISTCHURCH-HOKITIKA ROAD.

Although of the ordinary character, the repairs and maintenance of this road have been somewhat heavier than usual, the result of frequent floods. The cylinders for the Taipo Bridge are expected from England shortly, and the contract for the supply of timber is nearly finished. Plans have been prepared for a bridge over the Smooth Wainihinihi. It has one span of 80 feet.

CANTERBURY DISTRICT.

Kaikoura-Waiau Road.—The metalling of the Wandell section was finished in August, and the formation of the Charwell section in December.

Waiau Bridge.—After considerable delay through financial difficulties met with by the original contractor, the bridge was completed and opened for traffic on the 16th October, 1883.

Rakaia Gorge Flood-channel Bridge.—The first contractors having failed to proceed with the work, it was re-let in October last. The concrete piers are nearly finished, and some of the timber has been delivered; but the erection of the superstructure has not yet commenced.

OTAGO DISTRICT.

Haast Pass Track.—This is the only work directly under the department in this district on which anything has been done during the year. A small road party has been out since February, clearing obstructions, improving the gradients at steep places, and making deviations where river encroachments are taking place.

Grants under Roads and Bridges Construction Act.—A considerable amount of extra labour has been thrown on the Department in Dunedin through these works. About £48,000 has been granted to the ten counties and one Road Board within the Dunedin District, and up to this date progress certificates to about £24,000 have been passed.

SOUTHLAND DISTRICT.

Crown Lands Roads.—The following roads under this head have been in progress in the Southland District during the year: At Wilson's crossing, Tomogolak Creek, Ototara Bush, bush land Makarewa and Port William to Half-moon Bay. Out of £4,234 authorized for these works, about £3,400 has been expended to date.

Grants under Roads and Bridges Construction Act.—As in the case of Otago, a considerable amount of work is thrown on the Department in Southland in consequence of these grants. £27,000 has been granted to the two counties in the district, and certificates passed to date for about £13,000.

WATER-RACES.

Argyle Race.—The improvements in progress at the end of last year have been completed. They consist of enlarging the race, and raising the dam at the headworks.

Waimea-Kumara Races.—The construction of the dam near the Loop-line Road was finished in October. Although of considerable extent and difficulty it was satisfactorily carried out by the contractor.

Mikonui Race.—The two contracts for small tunnels on the Donnelly Creek division, that were in progress at the end of last year, have since been completed.

Two sections of the long tunnel have been contracted for—one, 50 chains in length, at the Ross end, and another, 35 chains long, at the Totara end. They are both making satisfactory progress, but the ground is by no means favourable. It is hard to excavate, but softens on exposure to the air; consequently a considerable amount of expensive timbering is required.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

The most important works under this head are the Fernhill Branch Railway and the Forest Hill Tramway. The Fernhill Railway is finished and in constant use carrying coal, the purpose for which it was made.

The first section, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, of the Forest Hill Tramway is being worked by the Southland County. A contract for the second section, 5 miles long, was entered into in November. The work is progressing slowly, the weather being unfavourable.