

Elsewhere most of the votes were expended under the immediate supervision of departmental officers. This has been found on the whole to give greater satisfaction to the public.

In the Taranaki, Wellington, and the Hawke's Bay Districts there has been a very large extent of road constructed, mainly to give access to lands already disposed of. These are essential to the success of settlement in this forest-clad and generally uneven country.

In Nelson a beginning has been made in the construction of a new road, which will lead from the present terminus of the railway out of the Motupiko, up the Wangapeka River, and down the Karamea and Little Wanganui to the West Coast. In this country good gold has been found, but the cost of carrying provisions to it has almost barred its profitable working.

The Government has been obliged to take over the charge of the maintenance of the main mail road in the Buller Valley to Westport, and in the Inangahua Valley to Reefton, connecting with the railway there. The main road from Kumara southward has been resumed for maintenance, and considerable improvements have been made on it, and on the road *via* the Bealey to Springfield.

In Canterbury, on the Cheviot Estate, the road-works have been almost completed, there remaining only a few miles of gravelling to be done, and it is expected the new county will take over the rest of the work, aided by a contribution from a vote or from the Estate Account.

In Otago the Catlin's-Waikawa Road was completed, and occupation-roads are being pushed forward in the Tautuku Forest, on which a great extent of settlement is taking place, requiring the construction of many roads to give reasonable access. These roads advance much more slowly than the wishes of the settlers require, but on the whole a full share of attention has been given to their wants. At the present time forty-one men are employed in this forest from Catlin's to Waikawa.

In Southland the opening of the Waikawa district has been begun on the coast, south of the river, and the main road from Fortrose to Waikawa is being gradually metalled. Some works have been undertaken in Seaward Bush, and on both banks of the Waiau, especially on the right bank, roads have been made to most of the lands disposed of a few years ago.

There is still much to be done to meet the wants of settlers, but this must proceed gradually day by day. During the past year the expenditure on road-works have exceeded £16,000 per month, and at the present time it is not less than £20,000 per month.

The chief road-works in new country now in hand are: The road from Dargaville to Hokianga, on which 16 men are employed, and of which 7 miles yet remain to construct; the road from Stratford to the railway at Porotaoroa *via* Ohura, on which 75 men are engaged, and 65 miles yet are unfinished; the road from Awakino to Te Kuiti, on which 22 men are employed, and of which 30 miles are yet to be constructed. In connection with the Awakino-Te Kuiti road, a road is being constructed from Urenui, in Taranaki, up the valley of the Mimi River, across the Tongaporutu to Mokau and Awakino; and as the Mokau and Awakino are accessible by small vessels, the settlement of this part of the West Coast will receive a great impetus.

In Wellington, in the Waimaimo country, roads are being constructed to render available that extensive district, and the Awarua country to the eastward is being rapidly opened up. The district on both sides of the Puketoi, eastward of Pahiatua, is being gradually settled upon, and the settlers are employed intermittently on the formation of roads and tracks. The main road from Alfredton towards Weber is being pushed forward at both ends, 137 men being employed on it at present.

In Otago and Southland there are about two hundred and six men employed, chiefly on the Maerewhenua Estate, and in the Waikawa, Seaward, and Longwood districts, and shortly some works will have to be done to make the recently-acquired Merrivale Estate accessible to small holders.

CO-OPERATIVE CONTRACT WORKS.

The number of co-operative contracts completed has been 1,555, the average number of men employed on every contract was about four; and the average wage earned per day was 6s. 6½d., with a maximum of 12s. 6d., and a minimum of 2s. 2d.

The work executed was the formation of about 175 miles of dray-road, and the metalling of 12 miles of the same, the construction of 222 miles of horse-road, including the felling and clearing of 333 miles of road through forest, besides the construction of 16,720 lineal feet of culverts, 1,993 feet of bridges, and 22½ miles of drains.

The working of the system is fully exemplified in the report of the supervising officers given in Appendix.

On the 30th April, the department was required to increase the number of men employed, and to do this it was necessary to reduce the working-time by one-sixth. It was also decided to give employment to new settlers intermittently—that is to say, young unmarried men were employed on Government works for one-eighth of their time, married men who were not resident were employed one-half of their time, and resident married settlers were employed two-thirds of their time; the rest of the time these settlers were required to work on their own lands in felling bush and otherwise bringing their sections into cultivation. As the existing contracts work out the system is being applied gradually. It is not practicable to carry it out strictly, for there are men who are unable to earn more than a living, working full time; and there are men who come to the works in debt. Such cases are dealt with on their merits, some discretion being given to the supervising officers.

DEPARTMENTAL AND GENERAL.

No changes have taken place during the year which call for remark; the work has gone on smoothly and well, and much has been accomplished in the way of survey, roading, and settling people on the land, besides other innumerable duties, which the Lands and Survey Department performs. Much of this work is shown in the accompanying tables, but the operations in connection