

SOUTHLAND.

Topographical.—The work carried out for the year has been the exploration of the country lying between Lake Manapouri and the West Coast Sounds. This embraces an area of 164,000 acres of hitherto practically unknown country. The report by Mr. Wilmot (which I trust will be published) of the work done by him is exceedingly interesting, and his observations have set at rest many disputed theories in connection with the various routes and rivers between Manapouri and Dusky and Smith's Sounds. The discovery of such a low pass to the latter sound is very satisfactory, and should form another interesting route between the east and west coasts. I attach a copy of Mr. Wilmot's report.*

Rural and Suburban.—The area surveyed for the year was subdivided into 111 sections. The greater part of this has been in bush-country, where the usual difficulties of weather, and consequent broken time, have to be taken into consideration.

Town Section.—95 acres, subdivided into forty allotments, comprise the area dealt with. This being in open country, it has been carried out at a very low rate.

Landless Native Surveys.—Three surveyors have been almost continuously employed on this work. The area actually mapped is 14,834 acres, but in addition to this Mr. Treseder has been engaged for fifteen months roading and cutting boundary-lines of a block of 60,000 acres west of Waiau River. Under the heading of "Roads" will be seen how much has been done in this direction, and, should the subdivisational work be required of small "family" areas, the early completion will necessitate the employment of another surveyor.

Gold-mining Surveys.—These have been carried out by authorised private surveyors under the fee system. 1,155 acres have been surveyed into twenty-four special claims or licensed holdings. The greatest number and most difficult of these have been in Preservation Inlet district, a locality which, I believe, has the greatest rainfall in the colony. It can be readily understood, therefore, the hardship surveyors have to encounter in this bush-clad broken country.

Roads.—The work under this heading should be debited, and will eventually appear, against landless Native surveys, but, as the block in which these have been laid off has not yet been completed, they appear now, and will form part of the subdivisational work when surveys are carried out. The cost has been very considerable, but as against this the country is very broken.

Other Work.—This includes reporting on various matters, cutting landless Native block-lines, which will also again appear as referred to above, and one or two minor matters which do not call for special remark.

Work on Hand, and Future Operations.—The work now in hand comprises 19,230 acres of settlement, and 60,110 of landless Native surveys. In addition, it is anticipated that a considerable area will be acquired under the Land for Settlements Act. This will more than fully employ the limited staff for the ensuing year. I would like to again have the services of Mr. Wilmot, for the completion of the work he has so well begun, in carrying the topography and exploration north and south of what he has already done. In this connection he might also have a party under his control grading a proposed line of track from Spey River to Deep Cove, on Smith Sound. So far Mr. Wilmot's mineral discoveries have been disappointing, but, as the time at his command was limited, I anticipate that a more lengthened season's work may lead to something more practically beneficial to the country. With this object in view, I would ask that Mr. Wilmot's services be placed at the disposal of this office, so that he may commence work early in October.

D. BARRON, Chief Surveyor.

APPENDIX No. 3.—ROADS.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF CHIEF SURVEYORS AND OTHERS ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31st MARCH, 1897.

AUCKLAND.

MAIN ROAD, NORTH SHORE—AWANUI.

In Mongonui County.—About forty miles of the road passes through the Mongonui County—from Awanui to Mongonui. The road has all been formed, and about one-third of it has been metalled, though a considerable portion of the metal has been destroyed owing to the want of repairs. Several of the culverts and bridges are now rotten, and must shortly be replaced. From Mongonui to the Whangaroa boundary the road is only available for horse-traffic; portions have been formed, but are now sadly out of repair. A considerable sum will be required to form this road, and widen the bridges, now only about 6 ft. wide, across the two mouths of the Oruaiti River. This year's grant is being expended in metalling and renewing some bridges and culverts, and in general repairs.

In Whangaroa County.—About twenty-two miles of road passes through the county. From the Mongonui boundary to Kaeo the road has been formed in places, but is not available for wheel-traffic; considerable work has yet to be done in widening-out of the embankments across mangrove

* See Appendix Explorations, No. 11,