

In Marlborough, the most important work in hand has been the construction of the road south from Kaikoura, towards the Conway River, about thirteen miles and a half of dray-road having been completed. It is anticipated that this road, besides giving access to the lands recently selected south of Kaikoura, will eventually form a main line connecting Kaikoura with Cheviot, and will probably take a good deal of the traffic that at present passes by the Kaikoura-Waiiau Road, the grades being much better.

In Nelson and Westland the main road, Belgrove to Reefton and Westport, has been maintained, and numerous bridges repaired and renewed. A large bridge over the Buller, from designs by Mr. Hay, of the Public Works Department, is contracted for, and two other bridges over dangerous streams are in course of erection. This road suffered very much in the floods of March, 1897, and the necessary repairs have cost a considerable sum. The main south road in Westland has also been extended southward, so as to open up some country for settlement.

On the Hokitika-Christchurch Road the floods before referred to did great damage, which has been put right during the year; but a succession of floods caused considerable additional damage, necessitating constant attention to keep the road open, a work which is very necessary, as this is the only overland means of communication between Canterbury and Westland. Expensive deviations will still have to be made in consequence of the destruction caused by these floods.

In Canterbury the road from Pukaki to Mount Cook has been much improved, and travelling rendered easier for the numerous tourists that now visit the "Hermitage." In the neighbourhood of Mount Cook several tracks have been made, and a hut built on the Malte Brun Range, at about 5,500 ft. above sea-level, all of which works aid materially in allowing visitors to see the magnificent mountain and glacier scenery in the neighbourhood.

In Otago, besides numerous extensions of district roads, the main line from Catlin's to Waipawa has been improved and repaired. This is an important road, as it leads through districts lately settled; and, although metalling will be expensive, it must be done in order to carry the produce of the district to the railway and a market.

The Waiiau River to Preservation Sound Track has been in hand during the past year, in Southland, and over forty miles of 10 ft. track is now available for foot traffic; it leads through much broken country, but will be a boon to the miners at Preservation Sound when finished. Works have also been going on at Milford Sound in continuing the widening of the road to give access to the Sutherland Falls, but much remains to be done before this road is available for wheeled traffic.

The following return shows the number of co-operative labourers employed by the department, and it gives the average for each district for the month and the year:—

District.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Aver.
Auckland ..	521	437	376	367	333	352	353	407	399	283	301	305	370
Hawke's Bay	57	62	60	91	143	144	107	104	110	110	110	126	102
Taranaki ..	260	273	281	287	285	268	226	238	238	189	161	192	241
Wellington	537	554	530	506	522	512	499	579	487	445	451	480	508
Marlborough	..	31	57	73	110	123	110	91	66	38	63	67	69
Nelson ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	21	34	25	18	16	26	12
Westland ..	44	82	69	58	36	38	39	34	30	22	19	26	41
Canterbury	..	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	16	30	25	10	7
Otago ..	99	90	105	159	167	140	89	101	114	74	85	117	112
Southland ..	47	57	61	80	88	93	60	23	18	37	54	67	57
	1,565	1,586	1,539	1,622	1,687	1,670	1,504	1,611	1,503	1,246	1,285	1,416	1,519

Average for the year, 1,519.

HEAD OFFICE.

MAPS, ETC.

Mr. F. W. FLANAGAN, Chief Draughtsman, reports:—

During the year ending the 31st March, 1898, the current duties of the office have been carried out satisfactorily, while the out-turn of departmental and extra-departmental work has been greater than in any previous year. The requisitions of other departments are increasing, and from their nature will probably become permanent work for the lithographic branch, and in a lesser degree for the draughtsmen, whose services are frequently required revising and drawing. All extra-departmental requests have, however, been complied with without delaying the departmental work proper.

Of the mile-to-the-inch series of maps of survey districts the following have been finally completed and published, viz.: Mount Cerberus, Kopuaranga, Tararua, Aohanga, Waimea, Motueka, Ngakawau, Totaranui, and Aorere (all drawn in the district survey offices), and Waikouaiti, Rock and Pillar, Strath Taieri, Toetoes, and Totara (drawn in the Head Office). The last-mentioned map was reproduced on the 40-chain scale.

Of new editions of mile-to-the-inch maps containing corrections and additions, the following have been published, viz.: Survey Districts of Egmont, Ngaire, Mabel, Invercargill, Oteramika, and Centre Hill.

Maps of the Survey Districts of Waipori, Southbridge, Ellesmere, Cobden, French Pass, Benger, Mokihinui, Pakawau, Maungatapu, Ngakawau, and Kaiteriteri have been put to stone, and will be published shortly. Mile-to-the-inch maps of the survey districts extending north from Palmerston in the Wellington Land District, and between the Rangitata and Waitaki Rivers in Canterbury, are frequently inquired for. Data for the compilation of these maps should be supplied as soon as possible.