

Field Inspections.—During the past year I have made seven visits to the field surveyors in their camps. I have also made nineteen other visits of inspection as follows: To nursery-sites, 2; scenic reserves, 4; forest, cemetery, and other reserves, 4; lands applied for, 3; school-site, 1; Seddon water-supply, 2; and road survey, 1. I also paid a visit to Kaikoura, where a meeting of the Land Board was held, and a ballot also; and, as a member of the Rivers Commission, I visited Bartlett's Creek, with a view to its being made a channel for the deposit of tailings. In addition Mr. F. E. Greenfield, of the office staff, inspected the field-work of five Land Transfer surveys near Blenheim.

Proposed Operations for 1902-3.—The completion of the triangulation that Mr. Buckeridge is now engaged on will occupy one surveyor for the whole of next season; and it is important that it should be finished without delay, as a good many advance stations have been erected. I anticipate that with work now on hand, and what may reasonably be expected to come in, Mr. Gillies and Mr. McFarland will have ample work to keep them going for the whole of the season. Mr. Maitland has work on hand now that will take him till the end of June, or perhaps July. It is probable that other work will turn up to keep him employed during the rest of the season. Mr. A. Simpson will be kept busy during the season with work in the Sounds, or near thereto. Mr. T. W. Hughes has still some field-work to do near Kaikoura; and with your approval I should like him to carry out a standard traverse over the flat suburban districts round Kaikoura. There are also the standard surveys of Blenheim, Picton, and Havelock, which are urgently required, and which should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Office-work.—Mr. Armstrong, Chief Draughtsman, reports as follows: During the last three years a continuous effort has been made to complete the publication of all district lithographs. Up to date nineteen districts have been completed, seven of them during this year. The publication of these maps was more urgently needed than any others, and the lack of them caused a considerable amount of extra office-work. Completed maps of the Sounds and Kaikoura Counties have been compiled from these lithographs, and in many other ways they have considerably facilitated the work of the office. Besides the above, there are thirteen other districts, but eight of these comprise old magnetic surveys, lithographs of which are published, and only five of them include modern surveys to necessitate republication. I hope to have these maps published during next year. Good progress was made in the compilation of block sheets, but there are yet arrears to be overtaken in this work, and also in the compilation of Land Transfer and secondary-record maps. An effort will be made next year to overtake these arrears; but I would like to point out that there is no room left in our strong-room for any more record-maps; it is now filled to its utmost limit—in fact, inconveniently crowded with books and maps—and until extra accommodation is provided any new record-maps that are made will be unprotected from fire. That the office-work in all branches is steadily increasing is evidenced by the fact that during the last three years the number of settlers on our books has increased from 429 to 724. All leases of Crown lands and certificates of title for the Land Transfer Department have, however, been promptly issued and registered, and all the current clerical work has been kept up to date.

WESTLAND.

Topographical Survey.—Under this heading is 79,800 acres of new country, which was fixed by Messrs. Smyth, Wilson, and Brook, and serves to fill up certain gaps in the district maps we hope to send forward for publication at an early date. Mr. Explorer Douglas has also exploited the block between the Poerua and Wataroa Rivers, holding the features with compass and aneroid, and producing a map replete with the fullest information alike valuable to the lumberer, miner, settler, and scientist.

Rural and Suburban.—An area of 10,109 acres, consisting of sixty-five sections, has been finished during the year at a mean cost of 1.9s. per acre, a somewhat heavy average due to the wet season, rough wooded country, and the scattered nature of the allotments. These surveys were executed by Messrs. Wilson, Brook, Muir, Ledger, and the late Mr. Smyth, and are in every way most faithfully and skilfully executed.

Gold-mining Survey.—During the year 990 acres (fifty-three special claims) have been surveyed by Messrs. Macfarlane, Young, Newton, and Houston, contract surveyors, who were nominated and paid by the applicants.

Road Survey.—Mr. Wilson completed two proposed deviations of the Ross Road at Rimu and 2 miles of detailed survey of a proposed roadway through the swamp at the Poerua Settlement. The late Mr. Smyth finished 5 miles of road survey at south end of Lake Brunner, and 1½ miles of a deviation of the main Christchurch Road at Blake River. The continuously-flooded state of most of these localities greatly enhanced the cost and hindered the progress of the work.

Other Work.—In Mr. Wilson's case, this is made up of inspection, plans, tracings, &c., of protection-works at Waitaha and Poerua Rivers; of proposed Township of Paroa; of bridge contract at Dobson; and of timber areas at Coal Creek in connection with the State coal-mine. The two other items represent 7 miles of standard traverse by the late Mr. Smyth.

Office-work.—Consequent on the rush of work induced by the change of district and the opening of the land previously locked up in the Midland Railway Reservation, with the necessary check and record of mining-claim plans and the preparation of various maps, &c., for the Roads Department, we have only been able to keep somewhat abreast of these demands. Our other draughting has meanwhile remained in abeyance.

Work Proposed for Next Year.—Mr. Wilson will undertake sectional surveys on the Upper Teramakau Valley, in the Kokotahi and Waimea Districts. Mr. Muir will attend to survey of selections in the Grey Valley, at Lake Brunner and adjoining Kumara. In the far south there is ample work for a third surveyor also. This scheme will require modification unless a Road