

coming year. In addition to the above surveys, short visits were made by the Director to a number of localities where it was desired that preliminary investigations should be made. The annual report, now in the press, will contain reports of these investigations, together with a preliminary report on a portion of the Taranaki Oilfield. Several bulletins written by officers of the Geological Survey Branch of the Department have been forwarded to the Printing Office for publication.

During the next field season it is intended to inaugurate a detailed survey of the Reefton Goldfield. After the work in the Tairua-Waihi Subdivision has been brought to a conclusion it is proposed to extend the Geological Survey southwards into the Te Aroha and adjoining districts. A reconnaissance of the little-known Lake Hauroto district, in south-western Otago, supposed to contain various minerals of economic value, will probably be undertaken, if opportunity permits, during the coming season.

PROSPECTING.

During the year subsidies amounting to £4,936 were granted to mining associations and prospectors in different parts of the Dominion. Prospecting operations were carried on energetically on all our mining fields, extending from Coromandel to Preservation Inlet. Considerable assistance was granted to parties of miners on all our goldfields for sinking prospecting-shafts and driving tunnels in localities recommended by the Inspectors of Mines, and the Geological Survey Branch of the Mines Department; and many of those assisted prospecting operations are at present in progress.

The three diamond drills, and the Keystone placer drill, owned by the Department, have been kept fully employed during the year, and there are numerous applications at present booked for the use of these drills. The Keystone drill was kept constantly in use on the Otago Goldfield during the whole period since its arrival in the country, and the applications for it have become so numerous that it has been decided to import another drill of the same description. This machine is now under order, and should arrive in the Dominion within a few months.

For most of the period two of the diamond drills were kept in use in the Waihi district; one is now in use at the Seddonville Colliery, and another in Southland, and the third will be in use shortly.

Early in the year details were arranged with the mining companies at the Thames by which an agreement was completed under which these companies contribute £12,000 and the Government £5,000 to the cost of driving a prospecting-tunnel at the 1,000 ft. level from the Queen of Beauty shaft for a distance of about 2,700 ft. to the Kuranui-Caledonian shaft, near the opposite side of the principal part of the old workings on the Thames Goldfield, and at a depth of about 250 ft. below the old workings. Subsidiary drives will extend from the main tunnel to the properties held by the companies interested. Besides prospecting the Thames field at the 1,000 ft. level, this undertaking will have the great advantage of draining the whole goldfield. This work is now commenced, and sanguine hopes of successful results are entertained by all who are familiar with the previous and present conditions on the Thames Goldfield.

ROADS AND TRACKS ON GOLDFIELDS.

Under this heading most valuable assistance to the extent of £40,830 has been granted for the construction of roads and tracks in the mining districts throughout the Dominion from North Cape to Stewart Island. Roads and tracks into the rugged ranges and gullies, where a great portion of our mining operations are located, are the most important assistance that can be rendered to our mining industry, not only to facilitate the economical development of mines in full or partial operation, but also to enable the prospector and the pioneer miner to penetrate further into the interior of our unexplored or partially explored mineral areas, and to permit of provisions and mining plant being brought into what has hitherto been in many instances almost inaccessible, if not impenetrable, country.