

The same result has occurred on the large water-race at Naseby, which is being supervised by the Provincial Government of Otago, and the sum of £10,000 is required to complete it satisfactorily.

It would appear that, with all the precautions which have been taken to obtain reliable data previously to the commencement of these four great works, we have met with the same unsatisfactory results as have occurred in respect to similar undertakings in other parts of the world, and more particularly in India, California, and the adjoining Colony of Victoria.

Fortunately for us the works we have entered upon are not on such a large scale as in those cases to which I have referred, and the water-races we have undertaken will, if the House votes the necessary funds, be completed, and within a few months be made remunerative. But I am ready to admit that the late Government, of which I was a member, made a grave error in yielding to the pressure which was brought to bear upon it, and entering upon the construction of these races without more reliable data.

The surveys were made by men who were considered thoroughly capable of executing the work properly; and in such rough country as these races traverse, it is impossible to check them without great delay and large expenditure.

A new survey has been made, with great care, of the Miconui Race, Westland, but I have not yet received the detailed estimates. At a later period of the Session, I hope to be able to lay a report on this race on the Table of the House.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

A reference to the Colonial Architect's Report will show that a very large number of public buildings of various descriptions have been erected under the direction of that officer, but the high prices of labour and material of all descriptions have compelled the Government to hold over all those which the requirements of the public service permitted.

COAL EXPLORATION.

During the past year the topographical survey of the Buller Coal Field has been proceeded with as rapidly as possible, and the plotting of all coal outcrops has been going on contemporaneously with it. The survey of the tract of country between the Ngakawau and Mount Rochfort, and bounded on the East by the Mount William Range and the Cascade break, and on the West by the sea face, has been completed.

The explorations which have been carried on up to this time on the Buller Coal Field have developed to a considerable extent the known quantity of coal which exists.

A rough estimate of the quantity in the area yet surveyed gives as much as 140,000,000 tons of coal. This occurs over the greater part in seams of from 20 ft. and upwards, attaining at one point a thickness of 53 ft. These seams require to be worked in a special manner, and to insure the maximum yield of coal it would be necessary for the mines to be worked subject to inspection.

The work done by parties to whom prospecting licenses have been granted has been very small, but the coal field cannot be opened up until the line is extended as far as the Ngakawau, to which point the trams for working the higher levels will have to be taken.

The brown coal of the Kupakupa mine on the Waikato is still being steadily worked, the seam holding about 18 feet in thickness.

At Raglan the coal formation again appears, and there is little doubt that coal will be struck at a comparatively small depth in this neighbourhood. If the magnetic sands of the district could be utilized at the same time, impetus would be given to the place, which it sadly requires.

Near the Miranda Redoubt coal also occurs, varying from 16 feet to 18 feet in thickness, and is of the same quality as that at Kupakupa. It is an outlier of the Waikato coal, and could communication be established with the Frith of Thames, it might be worked to advantage for the supply of that place.

A band of clay ironstone about 3 feet thick, and returning 39·56 per cent. of metallic iron, also occurs here overlying the coal. It is of a good useful quality