

surveys amount to 125 sections, containing 18,883 acres. The department has assisted the Road Boards in surveys when officers have been working in the locality, but in a district where free selection before survey is in vogue the staff has more than it can do to prevent current applications falling into large arrears.

Gold-mining and Mineral Leases.—The number of these surveys are about the same as last year, being 129, covering 3,848 acres, at an average cost of 9s. 5d. per acre. The bulk of the applications have been in the Reefton and Westport Districts, with a few beach-claims in the Grey, and one or two mineral leases at Collingwood. Although the results from the Owen Goldfield have been disappointing, a hopeful feeling has again arisen owing to prospects of silver ore having been traced for a considerable distance, and about 17 applications for leases are awaiting survey there. Thirty-five applications are in arrear of survey, made chiefly within the last two months.

Town Section Survey.—Mr. Montgomerie has brought 185 sections in the Town of Reefton within standard survey, and the Town of Westport yet requires to be done.

Other Work.—In this is included 43 miles of coast and bay traversed by Mr. Murray in the Pelorus, referred to under topography. The work done for other departments amounts to £32 13s. 11d. refunded, and £86 4s. 5d. for the Property-tax Department.

Office and Land Transfer Work.—In the latter 3 Crown grants and 182 certificates of title, in lieu of Crown grants, have been issued, requiring 546 plans. Also 169 certificates under the Land Transfer Act, with 338 plans; 151 plans examined and passed; 26 plots and registrations, and 9 tracings; 39 certificates of title drafted, to be checked and passed, with 28 still in arrear. In the former, 4 Crown-grant record-maps have been made. A new plan of Town of Nelson in four sheets, on a scale of 2 chains to an inch, has been made to replace the old one in use, it being worn. Three new trig. and 65 new block sheets have been prepared, and 186 surveyors' plans have been checked and recorded on new and old block plans. Plans and schedules of the Property-tax Department posted up. There have been 277 leases and licenses, with 595 plans prepared; and 69 mining leases in duplicate have been checked, and plans and descriptions supplied. There have been 1,900 letters received and answered, and 296 vouchers passed for survey-fees.

Work for the coming Season.—Mr. Murray will have completed in July the work in Pelorus Sounds, and it is proposed he should do the same work over the bays on the west side of Blind Bay, locating and connecting the old section-work, and establishing permanent stations for future reference. Messrs. Smith and Thompson have in hand between three and four months' plotting. They will finish the back triangulation left this season, and mark off boundaries of applications as decided upon by the Land Board. They will also establish a few standard survey stations in the Culverden District for Land Transfer surveys. Mr. Montgomerie has arrears of mining surveys and the current applications to survey in the Reefton District, and Mr. Snodgrass the same in the Westport District. Mr. Bullard goes to the Owen to survey mining applications, after which it is proposed he should proceed to Mr. Snodgrass' assistance. Mr. F. Greenfield will survey applications in the Nelson District, and Mr. T. Sadd, after completing applications at Takaka, will proceed to the Collingwood District, where surveys are falling into arrear, owing to no officer being placed there, the most pressing surveys having been done by an authorised surveyor. Connection of triangulation between Mokihinui and Karamea is partly done, also survey of special-settlement block, Little Wanganui, begun, but held over on account of pressure of current work, should be completed. I may add that very bad weather has prevailed throughout the past season, which, in a mountainous district like Nelson, adds greatly to the cost of work by detention. No less than sixty-five days' loss from this cause occurred on the West Coast.

JOHN S. BROWNING, Chief Surveyor.

WESTLAND.

Major Triangulation.—Under this heading appears an expenditure of £139 8s. 6d. against which there is no acreage placed. It comprises the cost of Mr. Roberts's office-work, calculations and plotting in connection with the triangulation which Mr. Murray completed during the previous year.

Rural and Suburban Surveys amount to little this year. They consisted principally of five-acre suburban sections within the Grey coal reserve and isolated sections scattered through the district.

Town Surveys returned this year comprise the standard and resurvey of the Native portion of Greymouth, and the survey of Dobson, Wallsend, and Brunnerton Townships.

Goldfield Surveys.—In connection with these surveys there has been a very great increase of work, owing partly to the gradual development of the Cedar Creek reefs, but more particularly to the springing up of a new class of mining, that by dredgers. From Greymouth down to Bruce Bay, a stretch of coast-line of nearly a hundred and fifty miles, most of the known auriferous beaches and likewise the beds of a number of our rivers have been taken up in special claims and licensed holdings, with the view of working them by suction- and bucket-dredgers. The pressure from these surveys was very great for a time, and I had therefore to avail myself of the assistance of some of the authorised surveyors.

Arrears.—I much regret that the surveys in arrear at the beginning of the year could not be overtaken. There still remain 175 sections, out of a total of 16,296 acres, to be surveyed, and the number of record-maps still wanting is also very considerable. The current demands upon the decreased staff, especially during the past four months, have kept the officers fully employed, and it will take some time before they will be able to clear off arrears.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.