

Good steamers now run on Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, and the track from Te Anau to Milford Sound has been so far advanced that it may be completed this season, and good accommodation is provided wherever it is required.

The necessity for Government aid in the maintenance of the main roads in thinly peopled districts still exists, and it is also evident that many of the main roads which are not strictly arterial, especially those in the bush districts, must be greatly assisted if they are to continue fit to carry the traffic which must pass over them in order to provide for the needs of settlement.

For the present year the demands of settlement require a greater sum than even last year. Including the vote for Roads on Goldfields, an amount of nearly £500,000 will be required for new works, and to meet present engagements.

The works contemplated embrace, first, the maintenance of the main lines of road throughout the two Islands. This alone will require £100,000, for such roads must be maintained. They are from the far North at Awanui, by Kaeo, Kawakawa, Whangarei, and Waiwera, to Auckland; the road from Rotorua, Whakatane, and Opotiki to Gisborne; the road through Te Kuiti and Awakino to New Plymouth; from Tauranga *via* Rotorua and Taupo to Napier; from Taupo to Hunterville; from Waiouru to Pipiriki; from Gisborne *via* Wairoa to Napier; from Dannevirke *via* Weber, Pongaroa, and Alfredton to Eketahuna; from Pongaroa to Pahiatua; from Masterton to the East Coast; from Feilding *via* Rangiwahia to Mangaweka.

In the Middle Island assistance must be given to maintain the main roads from Nelson to Blenheim, Blenheim *via* Kaikoura to Culverden, Blenheim *via* Awatere and Hanmer to Culverden, Nelson *via* Belgrove to Westport, Westport to Reefton, Hokitika to Christchurch, and Hokitika *via* Haast to Wanaka. Also the roads through Tautuku from Owaka *via* Waikawa to Fortrose; through Seaward Forest; from Orepuki westward as far as settlement goes, and northward up the Waiau to Lake Te Anau; from Te Anau to Lumsden; from Queenstown to Wanaka, and from Wanaka *via* Hawea and Lindis and Pukaki to Mount Cook; and from Pukaki to Fairlie.

All these are roads near to which there is no railway. The settlement roads to be provided for are, as will be seen by the estimates, numerous, and in every instance necessary.

There are many local roads which greatly require assistance. These are partially provided for on the estimates. In the southern part of Auckland many new settlers immediately require means of access to their lands, principally between Kawhia and Te Kuiti, in that part of what is known as the King-country.

New settlement in Taranaki demands more and better roads, especially in the east.

In Wellington the Awarua, Waimarino, and Rangiwahia country on the west, and the Pahiatua and Puketoi country on the east, are all pressing for an outlet for their produce; while the older-settled districts on the East Coast insist on their roads also being improved.

In Nelson and Westland the determination of the Midland Railway contract restores to settlement thousands of acres of fairly good land, much of which will be at once settled on, and the settlers will require roads.

In Otago and Southland much has yet to be done to make fit for traffic the many roads in the humid forest country on the coast and the interior roads in older-settled districts, some of which must be further assisted.

ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS.—MINES DEPARTMENT.

The vote last year under this head amounted to £72,700, the expenditure being £48,039, with liabilities at the end of the year amounting to £46,821.

The sum proposed to be authorised for the current year is £107,262, on account of which a vote of £80,000 is asked for.