

The roads constructed during the year were nearly all in forest country, where the work is much more costly than in open land. The country also, as a rule, was broken and remote from supplies, which adds to the cost and arduousness of the work. During the year about fifteen hundred selections of country land took place, all involving more or less road-making to give the holders access.

The appropriations proposed for the current year are as under:—

Roads, Departmental	...	...	...	...	...	18,775
Roads generally	...	...	...	...	...	391,718
Maintenance of main roads	...	...	...	...	...	28,000
Tourist roads	...	...	...	...	...	25,476
Government Loans to Local Bodies Account	...	...	...	...	...	35,000
Total	...	...	...	...	...	<u>£498,969</u>

ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS (MINES DEPARTMENT).

The vote last year under this head amounted to £36,900. The expenditure was £26,112, with contingent liabilities at the end of the year of £32,163.

The sum proposed to be authorised for the current year is £78,512, on account of which a vote of £50,000 is proposed.

DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDFIELDS AND MINING.

The gold-mining industry maintains its position. Although the yield for the year 1904 shows a slight decrease compared with the preceding twelve months, which was the highest for thirty-three years, the falling-off was very slight.

For the year 1904 there was exported from the colony 520,320 oz. of gold, value £1,987,501, and for the previous year 533,314 oz., value £2,037,831.

For the first time in the history of the colony the export of silver, which is a by-product principally from the gold-mines in the Ohinemuri district, reached a total of upwards of a million ounces, whilst the excess in value was £21,378 compared with the value of the production for the preceding twelve months.

There is no reason to suppose that the mining industry, which is being vigorously prosecuted all over the colony, will not keep up to the standard attained during recent years.

The amount expended last financial year on works for the development of the goldfields was £6,258, while the liabilities at the close of the year amounted to £1,795. It is proposed to take a vote of £30,000 for the current year.

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

The expenditure last year amounted to £17,108, the drainage-works at Rotorua absorbing £5,445. The works carried out at Hanmer included a new swimming-bath, erection of a tea-house, and additions to the spa, &c. The enlargement of Pukaki Accommodation-house was completed in time for the opening of last season. Oil-launches for Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana were purchased, and have proved a means of successfully and profitably increasing traffic.

The estimates now submitted make provision for commencing the new bath-buildings at Rotorua, tenders for which have been invited, and an amount on account of a new water-supply at the same place. Items are also included for the acquisition of steamers and an accommodation-house at Lake Te Anau, increased hut accommodation on the Te Anau-Milford Track, and for additions to Glade House. Provision is also made for a water-supply at Hanmer and drainage-improvement at Te Aroha.

The gross authorization asked for is £28,153, on account of which a vote of £26,000 is proposed.

TELEGRAPH-EXTENSION.

The total amount expended during the year out of the vote for telegraph-extension was £79,298.

There were fifty-two new lines and extensions undertaken, on which were opened fifty-seven new offices.