

mend the bridging of these rivers, and have given instructions for taking correct sections of the rivers, for the purpose of forming an estimate of the cost of each. The progress of both formation and metalling on this road has been arrested by wet weather; the work will be proceeded with when it becomes more favourable.

Coast line. Before it was decided to adopt the inland line as far as Waitotara, two bridges had been built over the Kai-iwi and the Okehu, respectively 66½ feet and 46 feet long, and 12 feet wide; total, 112½ feet of bridge. By adopting the old coast line as a district road, these bridges might be utilized, with advantage to the settlers in the neighbourhood.

A great improvement could be effected at the Wanganui end of this road, by avoiding that portion which lies amongst the sand hills (689 chains), and adopting a new line by way of Kaikokopu Valley, where good hard ground and abundance of metal could be obtained to form a substantial and durable road. To accomplish this through the sand would scarcely be possible, even at a very great cost. A special report has been made on this by Mr. Hales, and the two lines are shown on the plan attached to this report.

WEST COAST ROAD, CARLYLE (PATEA), TO WAI-ITI—about 125 Miles.

(O. CARRINGTON in charge.)

Wai-iti is situated about twenty-seven miles north of New Plymouth, and is the site of a camp occupied by a party of Armed Constabulary. Proceeding from this southwards to Urenui River, four miles, the road has been improved from time to time by the Constabulary. Between the Mimi and Urenui, seven and three-quarter miles, the road was originally formed by the Constabulary and Natives, but no work has been done during the past year.

At Urenui it is proposed to erect a dray bridge near the present ferry, and the Constabulary have already cut about 18,000 feet of timber (rimu) for this purpose (out of 36,000 required), and are preparing the approaches on the southern side by side-cutting round a hill.

Urenui to Waitara, ten miles, over which little or nothing has been done by the local authorities. A small bridge, 20 feet span, has been built over the Waiau, and 15 chains of road repaired by the Constabulary.

Over the Waitara River a new bridge has been erected by the Provincial authorities, consisting of two spans of 100 feet each, and two of 50 feet, total 300 feet, and a considerable portion of the road to New Plymouth, a distance of ten miles, has been metalled.

From New Plymouth to Hangatahau, seventeen miles, under the same authority, the road has been metalled as far as Allen's Hill, five and a half miles; from thence to Oakura, three and a quarter miles, the road will need a considerable outlay to render it serviceable, probably not less than £2,000, including metalling. The embankments at the Tapuae Bridge are failing, and it is proposed to substitute for the earthwork two additional spans at each end of the bridge. The timber for this alteration is cut and delivered. The inland line from Oakura to Hangatahau Bridge, eight miles, has only been partly formed, and will require considerable expenditure to complete it, including the erection of a bridge over the Kaihihi, which is considered as a necessary work. At present the coast road between those places is used for coach traffic.

Between Hangatahau and Waiweranui, four and a half miles, the road has been formed for three and a quarter miles, as far as Wairongomai, between which and Waiweranui no work has yet been done. The remaining work, including two bridges, is estimated to cost £480.

The coast road from Oakura to Waiweranui has been repaired and considerably improved, the steep cuttings reduced materially, culverts repaired, and about 25 chains gravelled, at a cost of £123 19s. These works have been carried as far as Kaihihi; and they will, it is expected, be advanced as far as Hangatahau during the month of June.

Waiweranui to Umuroa, twenty-three miles, on which no work, for Native reasons, has yet been undertaken, the beach line being still the only one available, and it is almost impassable during wet weather.

Umuroa to Waingongoro.—Twenty-six miles. Great difficulty has been experienced on this section in connection with Native labour, which is applied, although under contract, in the most disadvantageous way: the oldest men and the youngest boys, as well as the able-bodied men, all assisting, and expecting an equal share of the payment. It is proposed, and the proposal is worthy of consideration, that only strong able men should be employed by day work on important works under careful supervision, and that, to content the others, small contracts might be let out to them as at present, to be carried out in their own peculiar fashion. It has been found necessary, in connection with some kinds of work—culverts, small bridges, and gravelling—to employ European labour, to which the Natives do not object; and it seems to have had a beneficial effect on them, as they appear now inclined to encourage the system themselves, with the view of being employed by the Europeans.

On this section one truss bridge has been erected over the Waingongoro River, 81½ feet long; 24 substantial stone culverts, 17 wood culverts, together 866 feet long; and 172 chains of formation, with ditching; besides 299 chains of road cleared only. In progress are seven truss bridges and one plain bridge, 122 chains of forming, and 20 chains of gravelling; and tenders have been accepted for the erection of four other bridges, all of which will be built over rivers which in time of flood are quite impassable.

Waingongoro to Carlyle.—Twenty-one and a half miles. The work on this section executed during the last year is as follows:—Road formed and gravelled, 156 chains; formed only, 940 chains. Bridges erected over the Tongahoe and Manawapou respectively 89 feet and 74 feet long (the main spans trussed 60 feet and 50); 65 culverts of wood, ranging from 1 foot to 8 feet wide, with an aggregate length of 2,170 feet. Of road formation, 95 chains are in progress.

On the line of road described above, a considerable length of formation has been ready for some time to receive the gravel; but since the wet weather has set in it has been deemed advisable to defer this operation, not only on account of the expense attending it in winter weather, but because it is better