

SEVENTY-MILE BUSH ROAD.

Through the Seventy-Mile Bush, between the Ruataniwha Plains and the Manawatu Gorge, a road has been cleared one chain wide, and stumped half a chain, the distance being thirty-seven miles and a half. Other works, such as culverts, drains, and bridges, have been executed so as to open the road for horse and packing traffic. Immigrants shortly expected to arrive will be settled along this road, and will be employed in its formation and completion as a dray road.

The same kind of work is now being carried on between the Manawatu Gorge and Masterton, about sixty miles along or near the proposed Railway Line, part of the work being done by Natives, part by contract after public tender, and part by Scandinavian immigrants; the line will soon be cleared throughout, after which the process of formation, either as a road or tramway, as may be decided, will be commenced.

MANAWATU DISTRICT.

Here the main line of road from Foxton to Palmerston, and thence to the Manawatu Gorge, has been formed and opened for traffic, the full distance being 38 miles. Considerable settlement is already taking place along this road, and this will doubtless increase on the completion of the tramway, which is being constructed along the lower portion of this line from Foxton to Palmerston, of a total length of about 25 miles. Four miles have been completed for traffic for some time, and the rest of the work is being rapidly proceeded with; it may be expected to be finished in November next, and cannot fail to advance what is already a growingly prosperous district.

WEST COAST ROADS.

A considerable amount of work has been done on the West Coast of the North Island. Between Wanganui and Patea, about 22 miles of road have been formed and metalled, $4\frac{1}{2}$ formed only, and 3 more are in progress; besides which, three large bridges have been built over the Puketotara, Kai-Iwi, and Okehu. This portion of the main line of road is now in good order for travelling, and the ensuing summer will, it is hoped, see all other improvements now in progress completed satisfactorily.

From Patea northwards to New Plymouth and Waiiti, work has been steadily progressing in various parts of the line, comprising a large amount of forming, many substantial culverts of wood and stone, besides three substantial bridges over the Tongahoe, Manawapou, and Waingongoro Rivers. The length of road formed on this line amounts to about 54 miles, of which a very small portion has been metalled, and about 5 miles are now in progress. Contracts for metalling will be let as the season advances, and meanwhile efforts are being made to find supplies of gravel at convenient distances. There are now in course of construction twelve large bridges over the worst rivers, with some of which good progress has been made, and the rest will be completed during the early summer. On the portion of this line from Umuroa to Waiweranui, about twenty miles, the resident Natives have hitherto objected to road works. I am glad to be able to state, that these prejudices, however, are gradually giving way before the steady perseverance of those intrusted with the execution of the work.

SUMMARY.

To summarise the total result of the expenditure on Roads in the North Island in the past year and previously, shows a total of dray roads opened of about 361 miles, and of those in progress (some of them well advanced) of about 60 miles, while of those already opened a length of about 31 miles has been metalled. Horse roads of a total length of 189 miles have been opened, and a further length of 131 miles is in progress. A total expenditure on these works to the end of June, 1872, has been made of £121,868 2s. 9d.

This, divided by the number of miles of dray and horse roads actually opened (550), would give a cost of about £221 for every mile of road finished; and