

subject will be submitted by Mr. Bold. One culvert has been put in 16 feet long $\times$ 10 feet $\times$ 4½ feet; one culvert, 30 feet long $\times$ 2 feet.

Gisborne to Ormond.—Twelve miles. This has also been handed over to the Road Board, and search has been made for gravel to be used on the road, on which a report will be sent. The road runs through a valuable and well-peopled district, which could well afford to be rated for metalling.

Schedule of works during year (by Armed Constabulary):—Two culverts, 8 feet $\times$ 4 feet, 80 feet; drains 89 chains, average section 2.75 square feet; road formed 20 feet wide 36 chains; earthwork 375 cubic yards.

Bridle Road, Wairoa to Poverty Bay (via Mahia and Sea Beach).—On the section between Wairoa and Maraetaha, fifty-eight miles, the line has been kept in repair and cleared of timber by Natives under contract; and contracts have been let for the erection of a horse-bridge at Waimauna Creek, and the maintenance of a ferry-boat at Nuhaka. A piece of road three miles long has been laid off to avoid the dangerous bluff at Ureti near Waikokopu. This will be opened at the same time as the intended erection of the telegraph line.

Bridle Road, Gisborne to Hicks Bay.—One hundred and twelve miles. On this road about sixteen miles of track have been formed, and the work which has been done along the coast has much facilitated the communications between the different settlements. It is, however, now obvious that the coast line does not present the best route for a permanent or main road, but that an inland line would be better in every way. This would follow one of the feeders of the Uawa River (Tolago Bay River), thence inland to Tokomaru to a small branch of the Waiapu River. A sketch and description of this route will shortly be forwarded.

Schedule of works during year, viz.,—Bush clearing 180 square chains; ditto 30 feet wide 6 chains; drains 8.12 chains 67 cubic yards; culverts sixty-five, in all 525 feet; earthwork 26,931 cubic yards; road formed 18 miles 77 chains.

Sledge Road, Te Awanui to Te Horo.—Three miles. This was reported at first as being a suitable line for a dray road, but has since been found to be impracticable for that purpose, and a sledge road has been substituted, and is now being made, but very slowly, as the Natives here are very dilatory.

MANAWATU DISTRICT.

(J. T. STEWART in charge.)

Main Road, Foxton to Eastern Part of Manawatu Gorge, at Site of Bridge.—Thirty-eight and a half miles. This was described as being passable for dray traffic in last year's report, and all details of work were given, since which various improvements have been effected. Within the Gorge itself many of the projecting rocky points have been cut off to improve the curves, and other portions widened, sometimes by cutting away the bank and sometimes by adding substantial wooden platforms on the outer edge; so that this part of the road is now good for dray or coach traffic, and is so used. The softer parts have been metalled, and the deep through cutting forming the approach to the bridge has been finished. It is about 5 chains long and from 20 to 30 feet deep, passing through earth, boulder gravel, and small portions of rock.

The Gorge Bridge, designed for road and railway traffic, is now under construction by contract by Mr. H. McNeil, and is progressing favourably. The two main piers of rubble masonry in cement are nearly built to their full height, and the smaller piers are also nearly completed. Nearly all the timber work has been got out, and a large quantity brought to the site. The ironwork has arrived from England, and is now being landed in Wellington.

The two ferries across the Manawatu—one in the Gorge and one immediately below, have been maintained in good working order during the year.

On that portion of the road between the Gorge and Palmerston, the gravelling contracts, which were laid aside last year on account of the wet season, have all been completed.

The widening of the road alongside of the tramway between Palmerston and the Oroua Bridge, for a distance of four and a half miles, which remained at the time of last year's report, has been undertaken and is now nearly completed, and the road from end to end is in fair working order.

Tramway, Foxton to Palmerston.—At the time of last year's report this work was still in the hands of the contractor, and was handed over by him as complete on 20th September, 1873. After that date it was worked for general traffic up to 16th May, 1874, when the working, having been advertised for public tender, was let by contract to Mr. T. U. Cook, of Foxton. The system of working is this, viz., the payment of certain dues to the General Government on the quantity of materials passing over the line or landed at the wharf, the contractor finding motive power and being responsible for the repair of all rolling stock and stations, &c., and the Government being responsible for the maintenance of the tramway in good working order, except when the damage is due to the carelessness of the contractor or his men. The wear of the line has been satisfactory, and the wooden rails continue in fair condition with a moderate amount of repair. On the thirteen miles nearest to Foxton scarcely any rails have been renewed; on the next eleven and three-quarter miles to Palmerston, about one mile and a half have been replaced in all, and about 20 chains in another part of the line. Many of the old rails are used again for repairs, being cut into shorter lengths, and the rest are used for platforms, crossings, fencing, wharf planking, and sundry other uses, to all of which they were well adapted, being sound heart wood—matai and totara. The heavy repairs on that part of the line between Palmerston and the Oroua were due to the fact that all the gravel necessary for the laying of the tramway was brought over the line by the contractors. The wear and tear under ordinary traffic will be very much less.

Goods sheds have been erected at Foxton and Palmerston, and close-covered night-sheds also been erected at both places, where loaded trucks may stand in safety until starting or unloading.

The Tramway Wharf at Foxton was completed in September, 1873, and is found convenient for vessels; but it is almost certain that as the traffic increases the head of the wharf will require lengthening to accommodate more than one vessel at a time.

An additional siding has been found necessary in the Tramway Station at Foxton, and is now