

the range about 600ft. above sea-level. The range is very broken, and the road will be an expensive one to make. It has already been felled $1\frac{1}{2}$ chains wide, and the Constabulary are now making a 6ft. horse-track along the line, about a mile of which is done.

I take the opportunity of expressing my satisfaction at the manner in which the Constabulary road parties have worked, and the assistance that I have received from Captain Messenger in supervising and inspecting contracts. These men get 1s. a day extra, and I think that the following will show that a great advantage is gained by their employment. The amount paid for these working parties is £164 6s. 6d., including cost of tools, &c. My estimate of the value of the various works done by them is £509, showing a saving of nearly £345.

Several more small contracts are let to natives north of Kawau, but they appear to be getting tired of the work, and I anticipate yet having to finish the work nearly if not entirely independent of them.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI-WEST COAST.

DURING the past year over seventy-six miles of roads have been felled 1 chain wide, and cart-way cleared 16ft. wide in the centre of the road, at a cost of £4,697. On these and on some of the roads felled last year the sum of £2,430 has been spent in bridging, culverting, and draining, and generally in making the roads passable for dray traffic. Over a hundred miles of roads have also been sown with grass seed, to prevent the growth of underwood. The total expenditure for the year, including supervision, has been £7,565 6s. 6d., the supervision, including a part of the Inspector's (Ranger's) salary, amounting to only a small fraction over 4 per cent. of the whole. The work has been let in seventy-six contracts, and carried out chiefly by settlers holding lands in the vicinity of the roads felled, thus enabling many to clear the bush and build upon their farms who would without this assistance have probably been unable otherwise to have done so. The roads opened up include those running through the Native lands recently leased by the Public Trustee and lying between the Waingongoro Stream and Opunake; also those opening up Crown land at the back of Waimate, in the Ngairi, Kaupokonui, Oeo, and Opunake Survey Districts; also, the Tariki Road in the Huiroa Survey District, Taranaki Land District, and the Motoroa Road, in the Wairoa and Omahini Survey Districts, near Waverley. A schedule is attached to this report, showing details of cost of the above works. The works now in hand will all be completed within two months' from the present date, and I have as yet received no authority for entering upon any new works. I desire here to draw your attention to the great advantage of felling roads during the early spring, they being thus ready for burning and grassing in the following autumn, thus preventing the growth of underwood and saving future expense to the Road Boards.

The works I beg to recommend for the coming year are—

1. The felling of a small part (a deviation) of the Tariki Road, Huiroa district, and the culverting, bridging, grading, and forming of about five and a half miles of it, from its junction with the Ratapeko Road to the Waitara River. The estimated cost of this work is £1,200. This would complete a fair dray-road from the railway-line at Tariki Road station to the Waitara River, a distance of about twelve miles, suitable for traffic during about eight months in the year.

2. The opening of a road from the Bristol Road, Moa district, crossing the Manganui Stream below its junction with the Maketawa Stream, and joining the Tariki Road at the Mangaone clearing. The estimated cost of felling, clearing, culverting, and bridging the road to this point is about £1,600. These two roads will be required to open up the Crown lands lying between the Inglewood district and the Waitara River in the Ngatimaru district, and would also lead to the Crown lands to the eastward of the Waitara River, in the Ngatimaru country. I beg here to remind you of the great gain which would result not only to the district through which the road would pass, but also to the Government, by not merely opening the above road—from Inglewood to Waitara—in the usual way by felling, culverting, &c., but by also forming and metalling it, previous to offering the Crown lands for sale. The lands in the Waitara, Taramouku, and other valleys which would be opened up by this road are of excellent quality, the soil being a rich, loamy clay. The growth is light bush, scrub, and fern, a large extent being only scrub and fern. This land, if opened up by a metalled road, would probably realize prices approaching the values given in the Waimate district; but with an ordinary bush road the best of the land would in all likelihood be purchased by speculators, to hold until the country was properly opened up by roads, and the balance would be unsaleable, excepting at very low prices. The distance from Inglewood to the Waitara River by the above road would scarcely exceed ten miles, and with a metalled road stock could be driven to New Plymouth and shipped to market cheaper than from Waimate. I would therefore strongly recommend that none of the land in the Ngatimaru district be offered for sale until a metalled road is made to it. The cost of metalling would be more than recouped by the increased selling value of the land.

3. I would recommend that provision be made for opening roads through lands in the Ngatimaru District the surveys of which will, I believe, be commenced in spring. Probably the sum of £1,000 would suffice for the present year.

4. The opening-up by roads of a block of about 7,000 acres of bush land near Inglewood, part of which was known as the Titanic Ironsand Reserve. The front of this land is within two and a half miles of a metalled road—the Junction Road and Mountain Road—and part of it the same distance from the railway-line. The cost of felling, clearing, and culverting the required roads would be about £1,200.

5. The culverting the roads recently felled through Crown lands in the Kaupokonui and Opunake districts. The estimated cost of this work is £2,100.

6. The culverting the roads through Native lands recently leased by the Public Trustee in the Waimate and Opunake districts; estimated cost, £960.