

pleted and the Tongariro Bridge is finished. Four miles of road-formation have been let to Maori contractors, and tenders have been accepted for a further 7 miles. Tenders are also invited for $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles more. This will complete the most difficult part of the road, the remainder being an open plain. It is expected that the route will be completed for wheeled traffic during next summer.

The Rotoaira to Waimarino and Ohakune to Pipiriki Roads have been improved and maintained, and a quantity of timber has been cut for bridges and culverts. The latter road is now under survey, preparatory to calling for tenders.

The Mangaroa-Stratford Road is surveyed to the extent of 41 miles, and 6 miles of formation are under contract at the Mangaroa end, and 5 miles at the Stratford end. Plans are almost ready for tenders for 11 miles further.

With the view of further opening-up the Waimarino Country by means of the Wanganui River—which is the natural highway to very much of it—our predecessors last year entered into a contract for a weekly steam-service between Wanganui, Pipiriki, and wayside places, for a term of four years, commencing from January next, for a total sum of £2,000, payable in certain proportions each year. Under this contract the mails will be carried free of charge, and passengers and cargo will be carried at reasonable rates. A special steamer for the work is being built by private enterprise in England, under Government supervision, and will arrive shortly.

ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS.

These roads have been constructed partly out of loan and partly from the Consolidated Fund. The expenditure out of loan on works of this nature last year amounted to £12,687, and the liability on works in progress at the end of March last was £9,482. It is intended to ask the House this year for a total appropriation of £30,550 to complete the works now in progress, and for the construction of roads and tracks, and other works in connection with the development of the mineral resources of the colony, and also for granting assistance to local bodies in the construction of roads and minor works on goldfields.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The total appropriation for public buildings and domains last year was £124,136, namely, £67,015 under the Consolidated Fund, and £57,121 under the Public Works Fund, and the expenditure thereunder during the year has amounted to £59,020 and £22,819 respectively, while liabilities existed on the 31st March last to the amounts of £7,753 and £27,082 in addition.

More than half the expenditure under the Consolidated Fund was devoted to school buildings, the remainder having been incurred in enlarging, improving, and keeping in repair the very numerous public buildings throughout the colony.

The principal works in hand during the year chargeable to loan funds have been the new Lunatic Asylum at Porirua, a contract for which was signed on the 7th February last, the contract sum being £17,383, and the new Judicial and Police Buildings at Dunedin, which have just been completed at a total cost of about £6,700.

In addition to these works a new Courthouse has been erected at Kaiapoi, a new Customhouse at Greymouth, further progress has been made with the new prisons at Auckland and Wellington, the Stamp Printing Office at Wellington has been completed, extensive sanitary improvements have been made at the Lunatic Asylum at Auckland, and the Asylum at Sunnyside (Christchurch) has been restored, while several other works of a minor character have also been carried out.

We ask this year for a total appropriation for Public Buildings and Domains of £133,775, of which amount £52,950 is proposed to be charged to the Consolidated Fund, and £80,825 to the Public Works Fund. The details of the proposed appropriations under the Consolidated Fund have been before honourable members for some time; it will, therefore, probably be sufficient to state here that £26,000 of the amount is proposed to be expended on school buildings, £26,050 on