

and crosses that river at thirty miles from the starting-point. The first ten miles of the distance is through land which is not of good quality, although no doubt it will some day be used for grazing purposes. The hills are generally bush-clad on the top, the remainder being covered with fern and manuka scrub. From ten to thirty miles the soil is nearly all first-class. The width of the valley varies, but averages, I should say, about half a mile of level first-class land, with, in most places, easy slopes, steepening as they rise to the hill-summits on either side. I think the width of useful land will be from one and a half to two miles. There are no large streams to cross except the Ohura, and no swamps of more than about a chain in width. This length of the road can be easily made. One contract for six miles of bridle-track, beginning at the Ongarue end, was completed early in October last: since then no further work has been done. Before I took charge of the road Mr. A. B. Wright had completed the survey of the thirty miles above described, but no extension of the survey was made up to the 31st March. A party under Mr. W. H. Adams is now, however, carrying on the survey towards Stratford. I believe the Government has lately purchased some 20,000 acres of land near the Mangaroa, which this road will assist in opening up.

Otorohanga to Kihikihi.—No work has been done on this road excepting some small repairs to the approaches to the Puniu Bridge, at a cost of £4.

Waitomo Caves Road.—This has been maintained for traffic at a cost of £6 11s., but now requires to be cleaned up before winter. I enclose a statement showing length, &c., of roads, and work done.

Turangarere-Tokaanu (to boundary of district, 30 miles).—A length of 11 miles of new road has been completed except bridging the Mangatarata Stream, where at present there is a ford. It will require a 40ft. span, and should be done, as the ford is not good, and when the stream is in high flood traffic is stopped. Four miles of the new road was done by Maoris in petty contracts, and the remainder by ordinary contract by Europeans. Another contract for a length of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles is in hand, and so far good progress has been made with it. When the contract in hand is finished the road will be completed to the district boundary, excepting the bridge above mentioned and one to cross the Mangatoetoeuui in the length now under construction, but which is not included in the contract, which provides for a ford only. I consider that both these bridges should be built as soon as possible, as both or either of the streams when in high flood will completely stop traffic. The Mangatoetoeuui will require about 80ft. of bridging. Two men have for two months been constantly employed in repairing damage done by rain-water. The soil is very light, and of an extremely friable nature, so that the heavy rains which frequently occur in the locality cause great erosion. From this cause the part of the road between the Poutu Bridge and Rangipo Desert, will, I think, be expensive to maintain.

Rotoaira-Waimarino (32 miles).—At present there is very little traffic on this road, but it requires repairing after very heavy rains. The Mangatepopo Bridge has been built and the approaches to it made; four new culverts also have been put in at Heretua. The erection of the Wanganui Bridge is in hand. Maintenance men are employed as occasion requires.

Taupo-Tokaanu (36 miles).—This road requires a good deal of widening in places, and putting in a better state of general repair by the time the Turangarere-Tokaanu Road is finished, so as to afford a good continuation of that road on to Taupo Township. Hitherto the road has been repaired only when and where it was absolutely necessary to do so to keep it open. No men are regularly employed on it. There are three unbridged streams on it which, when flooded, are not fordable; to bridge them would cost about £1,500. The road is in a passable state for light traffic.

Main Roads.

Oxford-Rotorua (33 miles).—The work done on this road has been entirely in the nature of maintenance. The road is in as good order as can be expected, considering that no part of it is metalled. The Ngongotaha and Utahina Bridges, which are common to this and the Tauranga-Napier Road, require extensive repairs, which must be done before next summer. Four men were employed in maintaining this road during the summer, but it will be necessary, in order to keep it passable, to increase the number to five during the winter and spring. There is considerable heavy-wagon traffic on the road, a large quantity of stores and timber for Rotorua pass over it, and the return wagons are generally laden with sulphur ore.

Tauranga-Napier, via Taupo (190 miles).—Only maintenance work, so far as I am aware, has been done on this road. It is in fair order. The bridges at Tahungatara and across the Waikato River at Atiamuri require considerable repairs to be made soon, as also does that at Mohaka. Ten men are constantly employed on the maintenance. Sixteen miles in length of a branch of this road—from Atiamuri towards Lichfield—has been maintained; one man is employed on it. Most of the imports into the Taupo and Tokaanu districts now pass along this branch from the railway at Lichfield.

Maketu-Rotorua (36 miles).—This road is in very fair order; as soon as possible, however, a bridge should be built across the Waiwhakaritu stream, the ford at which is constantly getting out of order. Two men are employed on the maintenance of this and the short branch of 2 miles to Tikitere.

Miscellaneous Works.—The works at Lake Rotorua outlet have been very nearly completed; what remains to be done is some work for the better protection of that already done, and some small groins. The alteration of a pier in the Morea Bridge and the removal of a few snags are necessary to deepen and otherwise improve the waterway of the Ohau channel and render it navigable for small vessels. When this is done there will be opened a very pleasant and picturesque water-trip around both Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti.

Roads to open up Lands before Sale.

Rotorua-Waiotapu (20 miles).—The road has been maintained in good order. It requires widening at some of the bends, which are too sharp and narrow for wagons with long teams to be safely driven around them. One maintenance man has been constantly employed.