

stumping, and clearing); 100 chains metalling; 4,450 lineal feet of culverts, varying in size from 6in. by 8in. to 6ft. by 8ft.; 210 running feet of bridges. The work done under maintenance includes the usual removal of fallen trees, slips, clearing out of water-tables, culverts, &c., and also extra bush-felling at places along the road which remained constantly wet by reason of the road not being sufficiently exposed to sun and wind. This bush-felling has had a most beneficial effect, and evidences the advisability of having the bush felled 3 chains wide in heavy forest country. Between 13 miles and 21 miles this road is very subject to slips, and will for some years to come entail constant attention. Between 29 miles 60 chains and 31 miles 40 chains the road is also over sideling of a slippery nature. Otherwise the route will be easy to maintain. Good beds of metal have been encountered at various places, but long haulage will be necessary at both the above-mentioned slippery sidelings. The traffic along this road is certain to be so heavy that it should, if possible, be metalled throughout as early next summer as the state of the road will permit of such work. A contract for 2½ miles of metalling is at present in progress: this, when completed, will insure a good winter road as far as the 10-mile peg.

The co-operative contracts have so far been very successful. The men have found their own picks, shovels, mattocks, and axes (all other necessary tools being supplied to them), and are receiving 7d. per cubic yard for earthwork and 1s. per cubic yard for papa, with other prices in proportion. The wages earned have ranged from 8d. to 1s. 3d. an hour, according to the ability of the men and the character of the work. This co-operative section will be completed by the 30th April, and will probably cost less than the estimate. The Awarua Block (Native), through which the road passes for over 20 miles, contains land of good quality; besides, the road provides better access to the Otamakapua Block on the east and the Tekapua Block on the west. The worst part of the whole road is known as Vinegar Hill, near Hunterville. It is under the supervision of the Rangitikei County Council. It was badly formed at first, and, through defective maintenance, is now every winter in a disgraceful state.

*Turangarere-Tokaanu Road.*—Contract No. 4 of this road—price, £1,350—is at present in progress, and I have a party staking out the eighteen miles which still remain to be let. Some slight deviations are being made where this can be advantageously done. This road will be opened for through traffic next Christmas.

*Tunnel-Karioi Road (South End.)*—Practically no work has been done on this road during the past nine months, except since the middle of March, when I started a party of six men stumping and clearing the section from Ohakune to Karioi, a distance of eight miles and a half, of which seven miles is through bush. One party of co-operative labourers is already at work on the formation, and three other parties will be started immediately. Only work which is absolutely necessary to allow of dray-traffic is being done at present, and care is being taken that all work executed is on the permanent lines and grades. These works are under the supervision of Mr. C. Field.

*Pipiriki-Ohakune Road.*—The total expenditure upon this road for the nine months ending the 31st March is £4,963 19s. 3d. The engineering survey of the central nine miles of this road was completed in August, 1891, at a cost of £128 7s. 5d., including plans and specifications. There has been a day party of from two to four men constantly at work for the last nine months on the central nine miles. Cost of day party to date is £255 13s. The work done consists of 9 miles scrub-cutting, 12 acres bush-felling, 60 chains stumping and part clearing, side-ditching, culverting, repairs to bridges, &c. From 6 miles to 8 miles and from 17 miles to 25 miles the horse-track (previously existing) is at present under conversion by contract into a coach-road. About eighty men are engaged on these works. Both these parts will probably be completed early in June. The total cost of these contracts will be £5,158, and the expenditure to date has been £1,984. The work done consists of 545 chains stumping and clearing, 450 chains formation, 330 lineal feet of culverts varying from 6in. by 8in. to 4ft. by 4ft., with one 60ft. bridge and one 30ft. bridge. These works, as well as the day party, have been under the supervision of Mr. C. Field. From Pipiriki, at 0 miles, to 6 miles is now almost completed, and will by the end of April be open for dray-traffic. This part has been constructed by unemployed labour, under the supervision of Mr. A. W. Brook- ing. Total cost to date, £2,595 18s. 10d. This includes 60 chains re-formation of old road, 4¼ miles new road-formation, 1½ miles bush-felling, 3 miles light stumping and clearing, 500 lineal feet culverts varying in size from 12in. by 12in. to 48in. by 48in.

The number of men ranged from seventy in November, 1891, to thirty in March, 1892. The prices were 8d. per cubic yard for earthwork, and 1s. 2d. per cubic yard for papa, with other prices in proportion; and the earnings have ranged from 4d. to 1s. 6d. an hour, according to the ability of the workers and the nature of the materials. The cost has agreed very closely with the estimate, and the work as a whole has been unusually well done.

It is very desirable that the central nine miles of this road should be made passable for coach-traffic by next February. It should therefore be put in hand as soon as ever the money is available. The Ohakune-Karioi Road should also be properly constructed throughout as early as possible. During the next few years there is certain to be a very large amount of settlement going on in the Waimarino Block; consequently a road must soon be made, and I am of opinion it should be done at once.

*Wanganui River Improvement.*—The expenditure for the nine months ending the 31st March is £842 12s. 1d. The work was commenced on the 6th April, 1891, and has been carried on continuously since. All the rapids have been cleared of snags as far as Pipiriki—that is, a distance of fifty-six miles from Wanganui—though actual operations extended only over forty miles. Up till the first February there was only one punt and, on an average, about six men engaged at snagging; but since then there have been two punts at work. Work is at present going on at four different places. About thirty men in all are employed, partly at contracts and partly at day-work, all under the supervision of Captain Marshall. The work will be handed over to the Wanganui River Conservators Board as soon as the total amount of the present authorities is reached. I am submitting a report on the