

to be packed over dry. The portion of present road from beach to ford is through very low, swampy ground, and is constantly scoured by water from river and several small creeks in times of flood. The only objection to proposed route is that all traffic would have to be regulated to suit the tides, as the river could not be forded on the beach for, say, an hour before and after high water; but this is nothing uncommon on the Coast, and the ford is firm and good.

Makawiho to Mahitahi.—Four miles of this section of road remains to be constructed. A considerable portion of it being through deep swamp, it will also be expensive, and will be continued as funds are available.

Bruce Bay to Makawiho.—This is an entirely new road, and of far greater importance than the Makawiho to Mahitahi one. The length is only three miles, and, if constructed, the whole of the through as well as the local traffic would pass over it. At present a choice of evils is open to the traveller and packer—viz., to cross on the beach if the river is fordable; if not, swim up at the Native village, and go round a long, rocky, and dangerous bluff, only passable at or near low water; or else go up the river, through the Native reserve (with, on this route also, a deep lagoon or creek, fordable or not according to tide—the Natives have now given notice to County Council of their intention to stop this track), and down the Hunt's Beach to Makawiho section. Bruce Bay is the port at which all goods are landed for Gillespie's Beach, Cook's River, and intervening districts, and frequently also for Okarito, Mapourika, and Waitangi, when the Okarito bar is blocked up or unworkable.

As this is one of the most populous parts of South Westland, the traffic is very considerable, and the construction of road in question would be a great boon to a large district. I consider this and the Hunt's Beach to Makawiho section our most urgent works on South Westland roads, and would recommend them for first consideration on the estimates.

Haast Pass Road.—The vote asked for on account of this road is proposed to be spent in making a track round the Clarke and other bluffs that now obstruct the way when there is any fresh in river, and in general repairs necessary to keep the track open for traffic.

Jackson's Bay to Cascade River.—A portion of this road was felled and stumped under a former vote, and it is now proposed to form this part if funds are available, as a step towards filling up the gap between portions already constructed.

Cascade River to Barn Bay.—This is a road now being constructed (under directions from the Hon. Minister of Mines) by small piecework contracts, and which it is proposed to continue and complete if the vote is passed.

JOHN STRAUCHON, Chief Surveyor.

CANTERBURY.

Summit Road.—The work comprised 2 miles 57 chains, let in three contracts on the 9th May, 1891, by the Akaroa County Council, for widening and re-forming the original track to 15ft., and constructing stone culverts and laying pipe-drains on portions of the road between the point where the Pigeon Bay and the Little Akaloa Bay Road cross it, at a total cost of £306 2s. 6d. The works are now reported as completed. Good progress had been made on my first inspection, and the work appeared to have been carried out in a workmanlike and satisfactory manner under Mr. Bristow, the County Engineer's supervision. I passed a payment for £150 on account of these contracts on the 6th November, 1891. The Akaroa County Council also let three other contracts on the Summit Road, for 2 miles 12 chains of precisely similar work as the foregoing. The amount of the contracts is £212 9s. The location of the works is between the Long Bay and Le Bon's Bay saddles. The works are not yet finished, as, pursuant to custom, the contractor has been allowed to postpone the completion till the winter months. If the Summit Road was completed for traffic, and connected by lines of fairly easy grades with Akaroa, Little River, and Lyttelton, there would be open for the ordinary tourist and health-seeker a route which affords the most charming views of open grassed hills, belts and clumps of trees, deep inlets, ocean expanse and coast, and of distant mountains. On this account alone the road should be hastened to completion, and the route utilised for tourist traffic.

Waikerikiri Road.—The Akaroa County Council were offered, on the 15th October, 1891, £200 on condition that they found a similar sum; but nothing was done under the arrangement during the last financial year.

Gough's Bay Road.—A sum of £100 is to be paid by the Crown to the Akaroa County Council on similar conditions. The specifications have been submitted and approved for the widening of 120 chains of the road, and for the construction of crossings and culverts, all of which it is reported have been finished at a cost of £111 10s.

Alford Forest Village Settlement Roads.—Proposals have been made by the Mount Somers Road Board for forming, shingling, and draining roads in the settlement. It is proposed to offer the work so that the villagers may be able to obtain employment; but the works are not yet started.

Adair Village Settlement.—The original grant of £50, which was authorised on the 17th August, 1887, was expended on works to benefit the villagers in the locality. There is a balance of £22 4s. 3d. due, which the Levels Road Board report was expended in rebuilding a bridge in the settlement. The work has not yet been inspected, but would have been some time back if, unfortunately, I had not missed meeting the overseer when I called at Timaru. A further sum of £120 has been allotted to the Levels Road Board, on the understanding that the Board finds £30 additional for the construction of roads in Adair Village. The specifications have been approved provisionally, but no work was done during the year. The Ashley County Council having declined the £500 on the terms offered by the Government, there is nothing further to report on the subject.