

CATLIN'S RIVER ROAD.

Schedule of Works, &c.

This road starts from its junction with the main Catlin's-Waikawa Road, near the Catlin's River Bridge, and extends up the left bank of the river for a distance of 4 miles. Contracts were let to the first party of contractors on the 22nd May, 1891, so that about one month's work was done on the first half mile previous to the 30th June, 1891. The road formation is 15ft. wide, slopes of cuttings $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and of embankments $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. On the whole the "leads" were long, notably in the second mile, where the "lead" extended to over 20 chains. Owing to the nature of the ground provision had to be made largely for the passage of water under the road. The culverts are built of black-pine, totara, and kamai. Two bridge-platforms have also been built over the larger creeks. Particulars as to cost, number, &c., given on the attached schedule.

The number of men employed on this road for the first few months run about thirty, and about the 31st March fifteen. These men were all settlers, the most of them residing on the sections adjacent to the road. The arrangements made with the contractors were that they form the road in accordance with the plans and specifications; this included stumping, culvert-building, and finding their own plant and material for the due performance of the work. The prices given for earthworks included stumping, and were regulated according to the amount of work in that respect, and to the length of the "lead." (See schedule.)

I can only estimate the wages earned approximately. If I were to judge by the time taken to perform the contract, even allowing for wet weather, my estimate would be erroneous, because, as all these men were settlers, they very often were at work on their own land when they could have been working on the road. I think on the whole they earned wages—that is, from 6s. to 8s. per day.

The work done by the contractors is fairly up to the requirements of the specifications, and in some cases particularly well done. There is no reason to complain of the quality of the work done by the settlers. Considering the work done as regards formation, stumping, culvert-building, and the prices given per cubic yard or per chain, I think the cost of the work very moderate. The climate, too, must be taken into consideration as militating against the speedy performance of the work and adding a little to the cost.

There is no gravel showing in the cuttings, but in two places rock shows in well defined faces, and at other places rock can be got by opening out quarries either in private property or Government reserves. On this road the stone is fairly well distributed, but will require to be blasted, and consequently expensive. Note.—Any metalling ought to be done during the summer months only.

Schedule of Prices given for the Earthworks, Rock, and Culverts, and Number of Culverts built.

Earthworks.—Formation only: From £1 10s. to £2 per chain, according as the stumps were numerous or otherwise. Side-cuttings: From 11d. to 1s. per cubic yard, including the stumping. Block-cuttings: The lowest 1s., the highest 1s. 6d., according to the length of lead; the lead being from 1 to 3 chains for the 1s., and averaging about 11 chains for the 1s. 6d., with intermediate prices and distances. In all cases prices included stumping. The prices given for rock were 1s. 9d. and 3s. 6d. per cubic yard. In the first case there was no lead, and a fine open face; in the second case the lead was long, and the excavation in a solid block-cutting. In both cases dynamite had to be used. *Culverts:* The prices varied from (per lineal foot) 4s. to 5s. for a 12in. by 12in. in the clear, including the necessary inlets and outlets. The side-logs are 12in. square: timber scarce, and had to be brought a considerable distance by bullock-teams. Culverts, 18in. by 18in. in the clear, cost 6s. 6d. per lineal foot, including excavations as above; and 2ft. by 2ft. cost 7s. 6d. per lineal foot. Instructions were given by the engineer to call for tenders locally, and the prices as quoted above were the prices of the lowest tenderer. The number of culverts on this road, all sizes, being forty-eight. Two bridge-platforms, similar to any ordinary bridge-decking, cost each £22.

TAUKUPU VALLEY ROAD.

The work done on this road between the 30th June, 1891, and the 31st March, 1892, consisted only in logging up the timber fallen on the first five contracts up to the 5 miles. A contract was let towards the end of March for the building of sixteen culverts, but was scarcely begun by the 31st March. This contract, and another one let since for the remainder of the culverts to the 5 miles, will be accounted for next financial period. The cost for the logging ranged from 15s. down to 10s. per chain, according to the nature of the timber to be logged up. The logging was 40ft. wide. The wages earned by three contracting parties did not exceed 5s. per day. The other two contracting parties earned about 8s. or 9s. per day. In the former case bad management in carrying out their contract was the principal cause of their earnings being small.

A. CROSS, Inspector.

SOUTHLAND.

Mossburn-Te Anau Road.—A grant of £300 was placed in the hands of the Wallace County Council for the purpose of maintaining and improving the portion of this road between Centre Hill and Mararoa River, and was spent in draining the worst parts, renewing culverts, and easing grades, &c. As this line gives access to some 43,000 acres of resumed runs, which are to be divided and offered as small grazing-runs early next year, I propose to ask for authority to expend money under the provisions of "The Government Loans to Local Bodies Amendment Act, 1891," for the further improvements of this road.