

spent, with liabilities at the end of the year of £3,389. Village Settlements: Voted, £3,380; spent, £2,898; liabilities £1,480. And, finally,—Roads to give access to Marton—Te Awamutu Railway: Voted, £40,800; spent, £35,155; liabilities, £14,191.

The following summary shows the road-works performed during the year:—

Dray-roads constructed	...	...	...	...	...	296 miles.
Dray-roads improved	...	...	...	...	...	223 "
Dray-roads maintained	...	...	...	...	...	1,215 "
Bridle-roads constructed	...	...	...	...	...	238 "
Bridle-roads improved	...	...	...	...	...	155 "
Bridle-roads maintained	...	...	...	...	...	405 "

The roads from Hunterville to Murimotu and Tokaanu, and from Pipiriki (at the head of the steamer navigation of the Wanganui River), *via* Karioi, to Moawhanga, have been formed throughout, but not wholly metalled.

The Stratford-Ongaruhe Road has been formed for 31½ miles from the Stratford end, and for about 16 miles from the Ongaruhe end; leaving about 57 miles to complete the connection with Auckland.

The main road from the Catlin's River to the Waikawa River, through the Tautuku Forest, has advanced so far that only a bridge over the Tautuku River remains to complete the whole distance of 34 miles. The large area of forest-land which will no doubt be settled upon, and the produce from which must pass over this main road, will fully justify its construction.

Of roads through Crown lands, and roads to give access to them through settled districts, 1,402 miles were constructed and maintained last year. These roads are essential to advancing settlement. Without them the Crown lands would be almost valueless. They must be continued if the land is to be made use of.

The several works which are proposed to be undertaken during the current year are detailed in the estimates which accompany this Statement.

The cost of constructing and maintaining main roads during the past year was about £10,000 more than in the previous year; and for the current year the expenditure is estimated at a still higher rate.

It must be evident to those who have travelled over the principal main roads and bridges of the colony—which are wholly or partly maintained at the expense of the County Councils—that they are fast falling into disrepair; and as it would be false economy to permit such works, constructed at great expense, to get into such a state as to require further large expenditure to restore them, it is proposed in some cases to entirely take over control, and in other cases to assist the counties. It is abundantly evident that many of the local authorities are financially unable to bear the burden of the cost of maintaining such roads as carry the through traffic of the colony, especially in parts where no rates can be collected.

For main roads the large sum of £40,000 is asked for, in order to execute the works detailed, and which works the local authorities are unable to provide.

The provision made for miscellaneous roads amounts to £20,000. These roads are mainly for the convenience of settlers who have in years gone by acquired lands from the Crown, but who are not yet provided with reasonable means of access to their properties. A few of the works are for the convenience of tourists, and others are such as should reasonably be provided for.

The sum of £20,605 is required for roads to give access to the North Island Main Trunk Railway. The principal work to be undertaken is a further length of the Stratford-Ongaruhe Road, to connect Auckland with Taranaki. The other sums applied for are to metal the Pipiriki-Karioi Road and a portion of the Hunterville-Tokaanu Road, and to open further tracks into the Crown lands adjacent to the railway-line.

Out of the Lands Improvement Account it is proposed to expend £150,000 in the construction of roads and tracks to open up Crown lands. This, as already stated, is of prime importance to the further settlement of the country.

Under the heading Grants in Aid, there are three items which call for some notice. These are: (1) Co-operative works for unemployed, £5,000; (2) improved farm settlements, £20,000; and (3) advances to co-operative workmen, £500. The first is intended to meet unforeseen demands for employment, and for works the necessity for which may arise during the year. The second is to provide means to pay for the felling, burning, and grassing of Crown lands in moderate areas, suitable for workmen of small means. In this way a start will be given to the farmer, and the Government will receive interest, in