

culverts and bridge; 4,975 cubic yards of rock-cuttings; and 29,735 cubic yards of earth-cutting. The total length of the contracts is eight miles, three of which are in heavy bush, the remainder in fern and scrub.

Six of the contracts are on the Mokau-Awakino road, let under the arrangement for the expenditure of thirds, and employed 17 men. They comprised 6,766 cubic yards of earth-cutting; 1,064 cubic yards of rock-cutting; 5 chains of surface-forming; 82 chains of drains, containing 1,200 cubic yards of earth; and 520ft. of timber in culverts. They cover $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles of road in open country.

Two are on the Te Kuiti-Awakino road, and cover a length of a little over a mile, of which 53 chains is in forest, the remainder in bush clearings. They employed 7 men, and contained 2,422 cubic yards of earth-cutting; 30 cubic yards of rock-cutting; $5\frac{1}{4}$ acres of bush-felling and clearing; and 12 chains of drain, measuring 320 cubic yards.

Two are on the Taumarunui-Ohakune road, and extend over a length of three miles in open country. Ten men were employed on them. They contain 3,970 cubic yards of earth-cuttings; 163 chains of surface-forming; 28 chains of drains, measuring 1,047 cubic yards; and 4,299ft. of totara timber in culverts.

The work contained in the whole 18 contracts completed is as follows: Earth-cuttings, 42,893 cubic yards; rock-cuttings, 6,069 cubic yards; bush felled, $77\frac{1}{4}$ acres; surface-forming, 271 chains; drains (length), 372 chains; drains (contents), 14,017 cubic yards; timber procured and built, 48,528 superficial feet.

C. W. HURSTHOUSE, Road Surveyor.

HAWKE'S BAY.

DURING the year 169 men have been engaged on co-operative contracts. There has been a sprinkling of worthless ones among them, but the bulk has been of a fair class, with a number of very good, deserving men. Co-operative works have been carried out in six different localities, the extremes being 240 miles apart. The experience has been that though there is generally some little trouble and discontent when parties are first taken on, caused by the occasional loafer always in evidence among any number of unemployed, to the injury of the cause of the deserving ones, it dies out so soon as the disturbing element is got rid of, and the works progress without friction.

The average rate of wages made on the contracts has been slightly under 1s. an hour for the time actually worked, and the men have had to pay for the cost of their transit to and fro, ordinary tools, and hire of tents. The minimum wages earned per man per day, all weathers, on any one contract—namely, 3s. 4½d.—was at Waikopiro, when the works were carried on during the latter end of the winter, when a good deal of wet weather was experienced.

At the present time co-operatives are at work at Hicks' Bay, Motu, Nuhaka, and Waikopiro; but all the works will, except the last-named, shortly be completed.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI.

DURING the year the system has, with few exceptions, worked smoothly, and the average wage earned on the various works has been more nearly equal than in past years. Disparities, of course, exist, and cannot be avoided, as, though we arrange the contract prices to give about 9d. per working-hour to the average man, the good men—some of whom may be classed as experts—will make 1s., and in some exceptional cases more than 1s., per hour; while the indifferent workers and old men will make as low as 6d., and in some cases only 4d., per hour. These differences cannot be avoided, as were we to lower the contract rates some of the men could not live. Our rates compare favourably with those paid by local bodies. We have tried equalising the wage by putting good and indifferent workers together, but the result has always been quarrelling, and separation at the end of the contract. Despite the term "co-operation," the good worker will not give the result of his labour to the indifferent one.

On works where local men are employed the average wage earned is nearly equal on all contracts, because the local men have invariably had previous experience of the class of work performed, and are more nearly equal in working-power.

The principal works on which co-operative men have been employed during the year are the Ohura, Mimi, Okoke, Douglas and Makuri, Mangaere, Waitotara, and Rawhitiroa Roads, and the Ngairi Swamp drainage-works.

On the Ohura Road the highest rate earned in any one month was 8s. 10d. per day, by J. Kinnaird's party, in October, 1894. This was in deep papa-rock cuttings on the Mangaotuku Saddle, where by skilful use of explosives heavy falls were obtained; and the men worked ten hours per day. The lowest wage earned was 3s. 8½d. per day, by Hogan's party, in March, 1895; and the next lowest was 5s. 8d. per day, by Cornish's party, in November, 1894. As the food is dearer on the Ohura Road works than outside, in consequence of the distance it has to be packed, men with families have not much to spare for them, after paying for hire of tents and tools, and the cost of living.

On the Mimi Road the highest rate earned by any one party per month was 7s. 6d. per day, by E. Robinson's party, in February, 1895, working ten hours per day; the lowest was 2s. 10½d. per day, by J. Smale's party, in July, 1894.