

Mr. Howorth, County Engineer, reports.—

*Bluff Road* (Vote, £500).—This was a grant to the Southland County Council for the purpose of putting the road between Invercargill and Woodend into a passable state, the funds of the local body being insufficient to cope with the extremely heavy traffic, which consists to a great extent of the cartage of firewood by the small settlers in Seaward Bush, who are dependent on this work for a living. The re-forming and gravelling of 80 chains and the repairing with gravel of a further 160 chains of road have been completed.

*Gore Bridge* (Vote, £510).—This work was completed last winter, at a total cost of £2,900, apportioned as follows: £1,000 by Government grant, £950 by county vote, and £950 from the funds of the Gore Borough. The bridge is 400 ft. long, in five spans of 80 ft. each, supported on concrete piers founded on the rock. The width of the roadway provides for two lines of traffic. The main timbers are of Australian ironbark, and the flooring, bracing, &c., of Tasmanian blue-gum. The workmanship, which is of the very best description, was carried out by Mr. James Holland, of Gore. The bridge was severely tested by the flood of last July, and since by heavy traffic, and has given full satisfaction.

*Lynd's Bridge to Makarewa River* (Vote, £100).—The work completed to date is 50 chains of outfall drain and one 10 ft. span sill bridge.

*Reaby Retreat Road* (Vote, £100).—A further sum of £100 was granted to the County Council for the purpose of extending the work and repairing a portion of the metalled road. The vote benefits the Croydon Village Settlement, and gives access to grazing-runs in the Hokonui Mountains. 20 chains of forming and metalling and the delivery of 400 cubic yards of gravel have been completed.

*Makarewa to Grove Bush* (Vote, £100).—The work completed consists of 42 chains of formation and gravelling on some of the worst portions of the road. The vote benefits to some extent Crown lands in Grove Bush, and is the southern outlet for the Forest Hill district.

*Otapiri Road* (Vote, £200).—This road passes across Heale Ridge, and is the outlet for a considerable area of Crown lands recently opened for sale between the Lora and Otapiri Gorges. The work which is completed consists of 62½ chains trimming old formation, 86 chains of gravelling, 6 chains of formation, 228 cubic yards of gravel for repairing old road, and seven 6 in. by 6 in. log culverts, each 20 ft. long.

*Campbelltown Hundred and Campbelltown* (Vote, £600).—Out of this vote £400 was allotted to the County Council for the purpose of reconstructing the road between Greenhills and the Bluff, a distance of about three miles. The contract provided for the lifting and breaking the large boulders with which the road was originally made, and blinding the metal so broken with gravel, which work has been satisfactorily completed. The road gives access to Crown lands in Campbelltown Hundred.

*Girdler's Road* (Vote, £50).—This was a grant to give access to Crown lands in Block IV., Campbelltown Hundred, the work being as follows: 27 chains formation and ditching, 7 chains of fascining, and two 18 in. stone culverts.

*Hillend Bush-Dipton Flat* (Vote, £320).—The vote was for the purpose of constructing the recently-surveyed road through Hillend Bush, and is of great benefit to a large number of settlers at South Hillend and Dipton Flat. It also tends to open up the bush-lands. The work consists of 101½ chains of formation and gravelling, 90 chains of bushfelling, clearing, and grubbing, and ten log culverts, all now completed.

*Waimea Valley* (Vote, £200).—This road connects the Waimea Valley with the Waimea Plains Railway at Riversdale, and the work which is now completed consists of 40 chains of forming and gravelling, 20 chains of forming, and 200 cubic yards of maintenance gravel.

*Bluff Harbour* (Vote, £400).—This vote, which is an extension of the first item of this report, was given for the purpose of completing the road from Invercargill to Woodend; also for partly renewing and constructing portions of the main road from Woodend to Greenhills. The work is in progress, and up to date 40 chains of road has been gravelled, and various portions, extending over about three miles, have been regravelled with 1,500 cubic yards of gravel. This road is the outlet for Crown lands in part of Campbelltown Hundred.

*Waikawa-Wyndham Valley Road* (Vote, £210).—The balance of this vote was handed to the County Council for expenditure, with which 20 chains of road was formed and metalled.

*Oteramika* (Vote, £200).—The amount available for expenditure for the year 1896-97 was £100, which, with £200 of county revenue, was spent in forming and gravelling the road leading to Kapuka Railway-station. Altogether, 84 chains of road was formed and gravelled.

*Timpany's Mill to Gorge Railway-station* (Vote, £200).—Provision has been made by this vote for a track through the bush to the new settlement on the Mataura River, in Blocks IX. and XIV., Oteramika. The work is 107 chains of bushfelling and clearing, 7 chains of fascining and ditching, one 4 ft. by 2 ft. log culvert, and two 18 ft.-span bridges.

*Millwood Special Settlement* (Vote, £75).—This road is situated between Blocks VII. and VIII., Invercargill Hundred, and gives access to the settlement from the main road. 20 chains of forming and gravelling has been done out of this vote.

*Invercargill Hundred* (Vote, £400).—The amount available for expenditure this year was £200, of which £150 has been spent in carrying out the following work: 13 chains of gravelling, 15 chains of formation, 900 cubic yards of gravel. It is proposed to expend the balance of £50 during April and May in gravelling some of the worst portions of the roads in Blocks XIV. and XV.

*Hedgehope-Mataura* (Vote, £300).—The amount available for expenditure this year was £200. The work is now in hand, and up to date 30 chains has been formed and gravelled, and 500 cubic yards of gravel delivered. This work gives access to the Forest Hill Tramway and the Hokonui Bush.