

Paemako—Ohura Road.—The only expenditure so far incurred is the purchase of materials, and carting them, for building a small punt to ferry across the Mokau River, near Te Wairere crossing. The fords on this river are bad, and two of them very dangerous. I propose to put this punt at a place called Te Taheke, where there is a Maori living, who, I have no doubt, will be glad to take charge of it, if allowed to collect a reasonable toll. The punt, eventually, when the road is made, is to be floated down the river to where the permanent crossing will be.

Kihikihi—Waotu.—Nothing has been done during the year on this road, but I understand that the settlers along it will subscribe something towards improvements, which, if added to our £50, may enable something to be done to better advantage than by spending the £50 alone.

Wharepukunga No. 1.—As such a limited quantity of land was taken up in this block I thought it best, in the absence of instructions to do otherwise, not to expend the money until more land is taken up, or, at any rate, until those who settle there ask for roads, which, as far as I know, they have not yet done. Accordingly no work has been done, and no expenditure incurred.

Stratford—Ongaruhe Road.—The work done on this road includes two miles of road formed, less culverts. Of this length, about three-quarters of a mile is flat or surface-forming, and a mile and a quarter side-cutting. The whole is in very heavy bush country. Also, in addition to the above, a length of 392 chains of bush on the road-line has been felled, of a width varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 chains, and a piece of light bush, about 12 acres in area, at Heao, for a horse-paddock. The whole area felled has been sown with cocksfoot grass and clover. A small bridge across the Toetoe Stream has been built, which opens the road for wheel traffic from its junction with the Taumarunui—Ohakune Road to the Ohura Bridge site, a distance of 24 miles 10 chains. Nearly all the timber (totara and maire) required for the Ohura Bridge, which will be 135 ft. in length, has been sawn, and is now being delivered on the site. The 24 miles 10 chains has been maintained in good order, as has also the part between the Ohura and Mangaroa Rivers, a length of two miles and a half, but no wheeled vehicle can yet be driven on to this last length for want of the Ohura Bridge. In felling the 392 chains of bush above mentioned, all trees over 18 in. in girth which were on or near formation level, the stumps of which would require to be grubbed in doing the earthworks, have been grubbed out by the roots, instead of being felled in the ordinary way.

Taumarunui—Ohakune Road.—All the work done on this road is in the nature of repairs or maintenance, and extends over the whole length of twenty-eight miles and a half from the Te Porootarao Tunnel to Taumarunui, and includes the reconstruction of two small bridges, the foundations of which were scoured away by floods in January and February, 1897, and sanding a mile and a quarter of the road where it joins the railway at Te Porootarao. This sanding has so far been done by the Public Works Department in connection with the extension of the railway, as, without the coating of sand, the road, with their traffic added to the usual amount, would be quite impassable during the winter. Between the junction of the Stratford—Ongaruhe Road and Taumarunui two small bridges, which will cost about £120 each, will be required before long. The present bridges at these streams were built by the Maoris some fifteen or twenty years ago, and have only been temporarily patched up since. At present this road is in good order throughout for wheel traffic.

To New Purchases (Native Lands), and Improved Farms unprovided for.—No expenditure has been required or incurred under these two headings.

Karioti—Alexandra Block.—Although an expenditure shows on the return, no work has been done, as this amount was in payment for work done during last year, and included in the report for that period as a part of the Waitetuna—Aotea Road.

Whatawhata Swamp.—The repairs to the road through this swamp are in hand, under agreement with the Waipa County. In June last a contract was let for cleaning out the drains, and the County Clerk informed me that the Council considered it too late in the season to cart earth for other parts of the work, and had therefore postponed letting it until the spring. In June also I certified for £25 towards payment of the work in hand. I have not heard from the county how the work is progressing during the last month, but before that a contract for cleaning out 40 chains of drain had been completed, and other drain contracts let.

"Thirds," Kawhia County.—During the year £484 15s. 2d. has been spent on roads to give access to lands from which the "thirds" accrue. The roads on which the expenditure has taken place and the amounts spent are as follows: Te Kuiti—Awakino, £331 0s. 4d.; Manganui, £48 6s. 5d.; Waitetuna Valley, £64 15s. 11d.; Hunt's Road, which leads from Te Kuiti—Awakino Road to Section 5, Block V., Awakino East, £40 12s. 6d.; Briscoe's Road, nil; and Harihari to Kawhia, nil. The work done on Te Kuiti—Awakino Road is included in that shown in the table. On the Manganui Road, which runs up the Manganui Valley from Te Kuiti—Awakino Road, 28 chains of 8 ft. road in swampy bush country with side-drain and clearing. On the Waitetuna Valley Road, which runs up the valley of that name from the Raglan—Waipa Road, 1 mile 8 chains of 16 ft. cart-road in open country. On Hunt's Road, 32 chains of 8 ft. horse-track in bush country and side-cutting. On Harihari to Kawhia and Briscoe's Road, which latter leads from Te Kuiti—Awakino Road to Section 2, Block VIII., Awakino North, nothing has been done.

Co-operative Work for Unemployed, Advances to Co-operative Workmen, Schools on Improved-farm Settlements, Works unprovided for, Flood-damages (£1 for £1), and Miscellaneous.—No expenditure under any of these headings has taken place within my district.

Miscellaneous Roads and Bridges in Native Districts.—A length of nine miles and a half of Maori horse-track has been much improved. It is a part of the track leading from the Mokau to the Ohura. Other small repairs have been made to several tracks and roads, and a ferry across the Waipa River, in connection with the Native school at Kopua, nearly completed.

Miscellaneous and Engineering.—Under this heading no works have been executed. The expenditure has covered rent of office, office-expenses, instrument and field-allowances of Road Surveyor, railway official ticket, office assistant's salary, and travelling and other expenses not fairly chargeable to any particular road or work.