

slight improvements to their house, a building 60 ft. long by 24 ft. wide, containing five rooms, built at an elevation of 3,200 ft. above the sea, and distant twenty miles from New Plymouth. The East Egmont Board, Stratford, has greatly improved over four miles of bridle-road, on continuation of Pembroke Road, within their boundaries, and are about erecting an accommodation-house at an elevation of about 3,800 ft. above the sea. The South Egmont Board, Manaia, has improved about four miles of bridle-road, on continuation of Manaia Road, and greatly enlarged their house—a building about 60 ft. long by 20 ft. wide, containing eight rooms, erected at an elevation of 2,990 ft. above the sea. The various Boards have spent their grants carefully and judiciously, and obtained good results for the expenditure; but if full advantage is to be taken of the accessibility of Mount Egmont and of the natural scenery about it these Boards will require some assistance each year to supplement the amounts they raise from fees, subscriptions, &c.

*Anderson Roads and Bridges.*—This road, now called Rawhitiroa Road, extends from Eltham to Waitotara Valley Road, about thirteen miles being dray-road and the remainder bridle-road. The metalling commenced last year by Hawera County Council, extending from Eltham to what used to be Mangamingi Road (a distance of about eleven miles), has been completed, about five miles being metalled with machine-broken stone and the remainder with shell rock. Our work has consisted in maintaining about two miles of dray-road, and the removal of slips, re-formation of road where it slipped away.

*Ngaire.*—The system of drainage commenced on these swamps (two) in 1894-95 has now been completed, 135 chains of drains being cut during the past year, and 7 miles 77 chains of main drains deepened, the work being equal to cutting new drains. As the swamps subsided so certain drains had to be deepened to keep the work in an effective condition. The system of drainage has, I think, fully answered expectations. All that is now required is that the drains as existing should be kept clear, and that, as portion of the land subsides more than others, the main drains thus affected should be deepened. Now that the drains are in good order one good maintenance-man on each swamp (about 2,000 acres) would keep them serviceable, but were they neglected great loss would quickly ensue. A small sum has been asked for on the estimates this year for maintenance, and unless it is granted the drains must be handed over to the charge of the local body, or the district be formed into a Drainage Board. Where fires have run over parts of the swamps grass grows more readily and luxuriantly, and it appears now to be only a question of time for the land to consolidate to become of great pastoral value.

*Mangamingi Township.*—The 43 acres felled last year has been sown with grass, the township surveyed, and will shortly be offered for sale. As the site is well chosen (at the junction of two roads), and is over ten miles from Eltham, it should soon be useful as a centre and depot.

*Patea River Bridge.*—On Rawhitiroa Road, about fourteen miles from Eltham. All the material (timber, ironwork, &c.) required for this bridge is now on the site, and a contract has been let (on co-operative principle) for its erection. The main span of the bridge is 80 ft., the total length being 125 ft. The erection of the bridge will be a great boon and convenience to all settlers on Rawhitiroa Road to the eastward, the ford hitherto used being dangerous at the best of times, and impassable even in slight floods. The lands in Kaitangiwhenua Block will be rendered much more accessible, and, in areas to suit sheep-farming, should find ready sale and occupation.

*Poti-Ngaire, Maata, Improved-farm Settlements.*—No road expenditure.

*Central Patea Valley.*—Ball and Maben Roads: Beyond a small payment for land taken, no expenditure has been incurred during the year under this vote. It is proposed to commence work on the new road-line from Ball Road to Patea River at an early date, felling, stumping, and forming it as a 5 ft. bridle-road, and continuing the same work on Maben Road up Patea River.

*Kaimanuka and Rawhitiroa.*—The balance of this vote has been expended on clearing slips off part of Waitotara Valley Road, improving part of the bridle-road, and maintenance of the upper part of the road. Other expenditure on this road is shown under the head of "Waitotara Widening."

*Waitotara Valley.*—See "Waitotara Widening."

*Waitotara Widening.*—The widening of this road from 5 ft. bridle-road to dray-road width (in continuation of the county road opened as a dray-road for twenty-two miles from Waitotara Township) has been pushed on during the summer, the dray-road being now completed to near Taumata-tahi Improved-farm Settlement, about thirty miles from Waitotara. 6 miles 16 chains has been widened this year, part of it being in heavy rock. 125 culverts have been lengthened or renewed, the total length of new work being 2,268 ft. Repairs have also been made to the decking of the bridges, and six miles of dray-road, together with 13½ miles of bridle-road, has been maintained. The vote being nearly exhausted, work will shortly be suspended until the new votes are passed.

*Ball Road (Blocks IX., X., XIII., XIV., Carlyle and Opaku Survey Districts).*—A contract has been let for forming one mile of this road, and metalling with machine-broken stone 70 chains of it near Alton, about eight miles from Patea. As the stone had to be got at Waiwakaiho, near New Plymouth, railed sixty miles to Ball Road Station, and then carted an average of two miles and a half to the contract site, the work was naturally expensive, the metalling for 12 ft. wide by 8 in. deep costing £11 10s. per lineal chain. The whole of the formation has been completed. The metalling is commenced, and should be completed early in May, if the weather will permit.

*Weraweraonga.*—During the year 1 mile 8 chains of dray-road and 1 mile 4 chains of bridle-road has been formed; twenty-two culverts, containing 369 lineal feet, and one bridge, 30 ft., have been constructed, and five miles and a half of the road has been maintained. The road is now open as a dray-road from Waitotara Road to within about two miles of Taranaki provincial boundary, and is a bridle-road onward to Ridge Road.

*Okahutiria.*—The expenditure has been incurred for widening this road from bridle- to dray-road width, in continuation of the road from Waverley. Two miles of engineering survey and plans, 1 mile 62 chains of dray-road formation, 30 chains of extra stumping and logging where new road