

BLENHEIM-WAIPARA RAILWAY SURVEY.

The working-survey has been extended 33 m. 47 ch. to 38 m. 40 ch. This carries the permanent location through the Starborough Estate. A trial survey has been finished up to 51 m. 5 ch., and is still in progress, the explorations to determine the route being advanced some distance beyond the above-mentioned point.

In May last a trial line survey was started at the Waipara end to determine the best route and the character of the works required to connect the main line with the section of this line permanently located through the Cheviot Estate.

SLEEPERS.

A large number of contracts and agreements for the supply of sleepers were current during the year ended 31st March last, and the deliveries made in the districts from which they were obtained were as follows, viz.:—

Auckland District: 930 ironbark, 1,167 puriri, 5,717 totara.

Nelson District: 5,279 black-birch.

Westport District: 13,035 silver-pine.

Westland District: 104,536 silver-pine.

Otago District: 694 ironbark, 16,907 black-pine and totara, 500 kamai.

Details of contracts current during the year ended 31st March last will be found in Appendix D.

ROADS, BRIDGES, ETC.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

A contract for repairs to Mangere Bridge was completed during the year, also contracts for repairs to the Panmure and Orakei Bridges.

The District Engineer has supervised the construction of a further portion of Whangaparapara to Blind Bay Road for the Mines Department. This is being done by co-operative labour.

WESTLAND DISTRICTS.

The road from Waimangaroa to Denniston has been completed to 3 m. 40 ch.; the width is 7 ft. The survey has been completed to Denniston. The following works were inspected and reported on: Karamea Bridge; road from Lyell Bridge to Ryan's; road, Costello's Hill to Charleston; road, Granity Creek southwards; road from Westport to Waimangaroa; road from Reefton to Black's Point.

The deviation of the Great South Road round Mount Hercules is nearly completed. The length is 5 m. 45.61 ch.

Estimates have been prepared showing the cost of the completion of the Mapourika Lake Road. The work requiring to be done is the widening of the existing track.

Repairs to the Okarito Forks-Waiho Road have been carried out during the past summer. These consisted of putting metal on some of the worst parts of the road, cleaning out drains, renewing culverts, and repairs to a bridge. Only partial repairs were possible with the money available.

The following works were reported on for the Mines Department: Road, Grey River to Moonlight; track, Moonlight to Paparoa; track to Croesus Battery; Ten-mile Bridge, Barrytown Road; Twelve-mile Road Bridge, Grey; Kumara Road; Denniston Track; No Town Bridge; Blackball-Paparoa Track; Moonlight-Paparoa Track; Ahaura Bridge repairs; Paroa-Teremakau Road; Cape Terrace Road; Donnelly's Creek foot-bridge, Ross; Brandy Jack's Creek Bridge, Totara Flat; Grey River; Moonlight Road; Croesus Track; track, Ten-mile Creek, Barrytown Road; track, Lake Brunner to Maori Creek; road-bridge, Maori Creek; bridge over Little Grey at Squaretown. Reports were furnished on Stillwater Road Bridge; Taipo Seven-mile-track; flood-damage, Hokitika Wharf; roads and bridges between Okarito, the Forks, Mapourika, and Waiho.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Head Office plans and specifications for a steel cantilever road-bridge over the Rangitikei River at Mangaweka were prepared. Designs for the restoration of the Vinegar Hill Bridge were reported on for the Rangitikei County Council, and on a suspension-bridge over the Mangawhero River for the Wanganui County Council. A report on a suitable design for a bridge over the Taueru River was furnished to the Carterton-Taratahi Road Board.

A report on the Shoal Bay Rifle-range was furnished to the Defence Department.

A considerable amount of work has been done in improving the Mount Eden Rifle-range, and a small house has been built to hold apparatus, &c.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

Te Aroha Sanatorium.—The new bath-house was completed, and an outside swimming-bath has been concreted and plastered, and other works done.

Government House, Auckland.—The repairing and renovating of the interior of the building was continued and finished during the year, and by the end of April everything was put in fair order.

A new guard-house has been built at the Princes Street entrance. The grounds have been kept in their usual order; a part was occupied by the Auckland Industrial and Mining Exhibition from May, 1898, to February, 1899, but the buildings, &c., have not yet all been removed.