

bridges, &c., in various parts of the colony, a larger amount and a greater number of separate works than has ever occurred before. Whilst the above was the total amount authorised to be contracted for, the actual amount voted by Parliament for expenditure during the year was £391,461; out of this the actual amount spent to the 31st March was £265,905, to which has to be added £8,861 spent on behalf of the Mines Department, and £7,586 under the Land for Settlements Acts, making a total of £282,352. Of this sum £47,977 has been spent by local bodies under agreements with the Government, the plans and specifications of the works connected with same having to be passed by the department.

At the 31st March, over and above the expenditure, the liabilities on works in hand amounted to the following: Roads and bridges (general), £299,742; land for settlements, £2,768; Mines Department, £9,421—making a total of £311,931.

The monthly average amount of expenditure was £23,530, and varied from £19,500 to £30,600, according to the season.

The number of works of the above nature are now becoming so numerous that they are a very severe tax on the officers of the department, and frequently occupy time which ought to be given to the other work of the department.

The following table will show, in brief form, the nature and extent of the works undertaken by the department, further details of which will be found in the Appendix:—

District.				Constructed.	Widened and Improved.	Maintained.	Cost.		
				Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	...	...	...	212	310	1,124	67,841	18	2
Hawke's Bay	...	...	...	118	4	279	29,323	18	0
Taranaki	...	...	...	86	25	219	34,100	8	10
Wellington	...	...	...	123	84	635	61,647	19	9
Nelson	...	...	...	10	7	219	12,027	4	3
Marlborough	...	...	...	68	2	24	15,191	10	3
Westland	...	...	...	8	5	164	10,128	1	1
Canterbury	...	...	...	10	13	50	5,817	16	11
Otago	...	...	...	38	33	75	22,446	5	11
Southland	...	...	...	38	6	4	14,282	17	4
Flood-damages	...	...	...	...	...	86	9,544	3	6
Totals—									
Dray-roads	...	...	...	312	350	2,010	...		
Bridle-roads	...	...	...	399	139	869	...		
Totals...	...	...	...	711	489	2,879	282,352	4	0

During the year a total of 575 miles of engineering surveys was completed, the cost of which is included in the sums above; and, in connection with the roads, 96 bridges, of a total length of 10,588 ft., were built.

Whilst the expenditure for last year is greater than for the previous one, the mileage of roads constructed is less by something over a hundred miles, the work now consisting more and more every year of enlarging bridle-roads into cart-roads.

With the exception of a few special items, all the work done by the department has been on the co-operative system.

Some of the principal roads on which expenditure has taken place may be mentioned here, but fuller information as to each item will be found in the Appendix.

North of Auckland a great many roads have been extended and improved, either by the department or by the local bodies, and facilities of communication for settlers increased. The road from the Kaihu Valley Railway northwards to Hokianga is now almost completed as a cart-road. It gives access to some of the new settlements in that part where the land is of fair quality. The Great North Road, running from Auckland to Mangonui, has been improved and extended, but is not yet open for cart traffic at the northern end. Some metalling has been done here and there on the above road, but the material is very scarce, and consequently expensive. The Tokatoka Swamp, which contains some good land and timber, has been improved by roads and drains, and part of the tramway intended to get out the timber has been in use for that purpose. A wharf has been built at Raupo, and two artesian wells sunk, one of which delivers about 40,000 gallons per diem.

South of Auckland the Tuakau-Kahuhuru Road has been improved and extended; it is the main road through Raglan County, and passes through a country that has been settled during the last few years. Connected with this road is the bridge over the Waikato River at Tuakau, plans of which have been prepared ready for construction. With the money available, the Great South Road has also been improved in places. The most important work in the south part of the Auckland District that has been in progress during the year is the road from Kuiti to Awakino, which runs through very good country, as a rule, and on its completion it will form a connecting-link between Auckland and Taranaki. There are about ten miles yet to make, besides some bridges to build, and then it will be possible to drive—with some difficulty, it is true, for part of the way—from Auckland to the mouth of the Mokau River. In connection with the lands lately acquired by the Crown in this neighbourhood, this road should be pushed on to completion. On the west side of the Waipa Valley, in Kawhia County, many miles of engineering survey have been