

inclusive of the amount authorised for payment of interest on loans, £1,887 17s. 3d. The following is a summary of work executed by the local bodies out of "thirds" and "fourths" during the year, and the cost of same: 303 chains bushfelling and clearing, £100 16s.; 1,069½ chains formation and earthwork, £978 17s. 9d.; 357½ chains metalling and gravelling, £845 13s.; 87 ft. bridging, £169 4s.; 311 chains culverts, with their intake and outfall drains, £122 1s. 5d.; 2,585 chains maintenance and repairs, £469 10s. 7d.; interest on loans, £1,504 13s. 2d.; total, £4,190 15s. 11d.

I am unable to show what "fourths" have been paid to the New Plymouth Harbour Board, as such payments have always been made by the Treasury without reference to me. The amount payable should be computed monthly by me, as the calculation must necessarily be on the territorial revenue, less that derived from lands within the North Island Main Trunk Railway area.

The number of contracts let during the year was 370, in addition to twenty-six in progress at the commencement of the year. All, with the exception of forty-three, are completed. Two were by ordinary contract, one for carting supplied, one for metalling a mile of Ohura Road, and the remaining 351 contracts were on the co-operative system.

G. F. ROBINSON, Road Surveyor.

WANGANUI.

Tangarakau Clearing.—Work was recommenced on the river on 10th January, and completed for the season on 26th March. The five miles of steamer-channel cleared during 1898 have been recleared of snags, and the remaining seven miles up to Putikituna similarly cleared. When the water is 5 ft. above low summer-level small steamers may be taken up the twelve miles if care is exercised, but the river is much too small and the fall too great to allow of steamer navigation when the river is at a lower level than this. The cost of clearing the last three miles will be entered in the expenditure for 1899–1900.

Clifton.—No expenditure out of this item. Two contracts for dray-road formation are in progress on Makaranui Road.

Flood-damages, Makohine Village Settlement and Clifton Block.—This has been all expended on the Rangataua (Clifton) Block and neighbourhood. 40 chains of clearing, repairs to approaches, and renewal of Makara Bridge (30 ft. span), have been effected.

Hautapu Main Road.—No expenditure; the work will be started in May.

Huikumu.—The work done comprises 108 chains engineering survey, 113 chains of bridle-track formation (4 ft. wide). The track now extends to the lower flats. With the sum available it was not possible to make the track more than 4 ft. wide.

Hunterville I., II., III.—During the early part of the year considerable progress was made with the formation of bridle-tracks, but since August the works have been practically at a standstill through want of funds. A large amount of work in forming bridle-tracks is urgently required in this block. The work done comprises 428 chains of engineering survey, 76 chains traverses and plans of deviations, 817 chains bushwork, and 652 chains formation, besides 15 lineal feet of culverts, and maintenance of eighteen miles of formed tracks. There still remain in the block thirty-seven miles of roads to be formed into bridle-tracks. Complaints as to the want of road-access are very numerous.

Mangawhero—Murimotu.—Forty miles of bridle-track in fairly good order. The traffic returns are as follows: Travellers on horseback, 3,785; pack-horses, 1,549; cattle, 312; sheep, 2,670; pigs, 100.

Okahukura.—Maintenance of tracks and erection of 100 lineal feet of culverts and 20 lineal feet of bridges.

Otaranoho.—One contract for 52 chains of bridle-track in hand.

Pipiriki—Waiouru.—This road has been joined on to the wharf constructed at Pipiriki by the River Trust, by an approach 9 chains long. The road was open for traffic all through the winter as far as Toanui, but the Mangawhero Flats were almost impassable during the winter, and were again scoured out by a heavy fresh on the 11th November, the rainfall at Raetihi amounting to over 8 in. in three days. In order to procure shell-rock, 6,227 cubic yards of stripping were shifted, 2,384 cubic yards of shell-rock have been quarried and broken, and 197 chains of metalling have been done, thus completing the gaps at Mangaetoroa and Waipuna, and making continuous metalling from 130 chains on the Pipiriki side of Huikumu Saddle to within 20 chains of Toanui Pa, being a length of 15 miles 12 chains, besides, 6 chains of metalling has been done at the new approach, Pipiriki. The flats along the Mangawhero River, that are so bad during winter, can now be avoided, by using the alternative route *via* Rangataua Road; but to form a good road the metalling will require to be extended to Ohakune. Next season's operations should include the metalling of this part, and the worst places between Pipiriki and Huikumu.

Raetihi—Ohura.—The work done comprises 108 chains of dray-road reformed, 6 chains new ditches excavated, 5 acres bushfelling, and one bridle-track bridge 30 ft. span across the Mangaone Creek. Two contracts for extension of bridle-track are now in hand. It was proposed to do about 108 chains continuous metalling between the Valley and Middle Roads, but it had to be postponed owing to the wet weather.

Raetihi—Parapara.—The lower seven miles of bridle-track have been repaired; the bush-track portion, eight miles in length, has been improved at the worst points; and one contract is now in hand on the approaches to the Mangawhero Bridge, and others are being prepared.

Raetihi Township Roads.—Three acres of bush have been felled and burnt on the side-streets.

Rangiwaea.—No expenditure, but bushfelling on the roads has been arranged to be started in May.

Retaruke Valley.—No expenditure, but the extension of the bridle-tracks is to be started in April.