

*Uruti-Castlepoint Road.*—The Wairarapa North County Council last year expended £100 of a Government grant on this road between Blairlogie Homestead, on the East Coast Road, and the junction of the Tenui loop-line, at Birkett's. Since then £100 has been authorised for expenditure by the department, and works will commence on the completion of the engineering survey.

*Wingate, or Castle Hill, Road.*—In March, 1897, the sum of £180 was granted to the Wairarapa North County Council for expenditure on this road, for which a very considerable amount of work was reported by me last year. Since then—in January last—a further sum of £200 was granted to the same local body, which amount still stands to its credit for expenditure.

*Alfredton-Tenui Road (Contribution).*—The Wairarapa North County Council was recently granted a contribution of £180 for construction, and that local authority has been requested to forward plans and specifications for the approval of the department.

*Mikumiku Bridge.*—This bridge was described in my last report as being under construction by the Masterton Road Board. It was satisfactorily completed on the 30th January last, at a total cost of £643. It has been built over the Waipoua River to replace the bridge burnt by the bush-fires two years ago. It is situate about ten miles north of the Town of Masterton, on the Mikumiku Road, which connects the pastoral district in the Mikumiku Valley with the Upper Opaki district road system. It consists of two trussed spans of 72 ft. and 46 ft. respectively, on concrete centre pier, with abutments and wing-walls of the same material. The sum of £500 was originally authorised for expenditure by the department, but in August, 1897, it was transferred to the control of the local body.

*Mangatariri Road (Kaitangata Block).*—The activity exhibited on this road last year has been in a great measure continued, comprising a mile and a quarter of road graded and pegged, 1 mile 18 chains of bush felled and cleared, 55½ chains of 6 ft. horse-road formation, 32 chains widened to 12 ft., nine small bridges (of a total length of 111 ft.) erected, ten culverts (130 ft. in length) laid, 451 cubic yards of slips removed, 7½ chains of drains cut, and a mile and a half of road sown with grass-seed. This road, which crosses the Kaitangata Block in the direction of Mount Holdsworth, is available for horse traffic for five miles, and 70 chains of it is being widened for dray traffic. The work is progressing favourably, and I expect by the time the authorised funds are exhausted to have a mile and a half opened for wheels. It will be a good road, but costly to construct, owing to the very hard nature of the bluestone rock through which a great part of it has to be cut.

*Waingawa-Te Mara (Kaitangata Block).*—This road is at present in very indifferent condition, and cannot be made available for dray traffic until a suitable bridge has been thrown across the Waingawa River. The only work of importance undertaken has been the erection of a strong wire suspension-bridge, 132 ft. in length, which was completed in April of last year. This bridge is of material service to the settlers on the Mara and Kaitangata Blocks, as providing them with a ready means of egress.

*Waiohine Road (Kaitangata Block).*—The record of work for the year is 48 chains of road-line graded and pegged, 53 chains of bush felled and cleared, 39 chains of formation 6 ft. wide, four culverts (44 ft. in length) laid, 176 cubic yards of slips removed, 1,921 cubic yards of rock excavated, and 25 chains of road-line laid down in grass. A further authorisation of £100 having recently been issued, the work on this road will be continued.

*Dalefield Road (Kaitangata Block).*—The only work undertaken has been the formation of 9 chains of dray-road 14 ft. in width, which was completed during the autumn of last year.

*Taueru Bridge (Masterton-East Coast Road).*—In March of last year a grant of £300 was issued to the Taratahi-Carterton Road Board to be expended, £1 for £1, on the construction of this bridge, and a further sum of £300 has recently been granted to the same local body. Acting on instructions, I inspected the river and arranged the site of the bridge; but no work has yet been done, and consequently no payment yet made, as the Masterton residents have not yet fulfilled their promise to guarantee the sum of £300 towards the cost of erection.

*Kaiwhata Valley.*—In January of last year £437 was granted to the Taratahi-Carterton Road Board for the purpose of constructing a dray-road from Wharau to the Kaiwhata River. The whole amount has been spent on the following works: Two miles of road-line graded and pegged, one mile formed 14 ft. wide, and 640 cubic yards of slips removed. The maintenance extends over three miles, and passes through undulating hills originally covered with scrub, which was cleared when the original track was formed. The Karaka Bay end of this road has been kept open for bullock-dray traffic only; the remainder, which was formed out of accrued "thirds," was subsequently improved out of the above-mentioned grant. A further sum of £300 has been authorised for expenditure by the department on the continuation of this road, and plans are now being prepared for the immediate prosecution of the work.

*Hurunui-o-rangi Bridge.*—On the 2nd February of last year the sum of £1,600 was granted to the Taratahi-Carterton Road Board, to be expended, £1 for £1, on repairs and improvements to this bridge. Of this sum advances have been made to the local body on the satisfactory progress of the work. The bridge is 568 ft. in length, and the operations of the year include raising the old structure (four truss spans of 74 ft. each) 6 ft., and constructing two new spans of 111 ft. each, with ironbark trusses and piers, to replace that portion of the bridge which was carried away by the Easter floods of 1897.

*Flat Point Road.*—Maintenance of twenty miles, 12 ft. wide, has been the only work undertaken by the Taratahi-Carterton Road Board, who have the control and supervision of this road. The route passes through hilly and cleared bush country, and is costly to maintain, as is shown by the removal of 2,600 cubic yards of slips. The only constructive work has been the insertion of ten culverts. £300 has been recently authorised for expenditure by the department, and operations will shortly commence.

*Small Grazing-run 51, Rewa Survey District.*—The sum of £150 has recently been authorised to be expended, and instructions have been issued for the engineering survey to be proceeded with.

*Kaiwhata, Run 49.*—£200 having been authorised, the road-line is now being engineered, with a view of letting the work on the co-operative system.