

ROADS AND BRIDGES.

The quantity of work carried out under this head, though considerable, has not been equal to expectations, owing to the extremely wet weather experienced between October, 1911, and the end of this year, during which period the greater part of the year's work is usually done. This year, however, very many of the roads did not dry up sufficiently to allow of any satisfactory work being done. It is feared that the endeavour to get something done in spite of the climatic conditions has not resulted in the usual amount of value being obtained for the expenditure.

Under all votes and accounts, except roads on goldfields, the total expenditure on roads during the last financial year amounted to £485,422. The amount expended during the quarter ended 30th June, 1912, was £113,852.

The *Ohura Road*, connecting the Te Kuiti district with southern Taranaki, and giving access to the greater part of central Taranaki, is now connected through with the exception of two bridges over the Tangarakau, which it is hoped will be sufficiently advanced to admit through road traffic before the New Year. However, numerous slips have occurred for many miles, and a large expenditure will be required to open the road and, for some time yet, to keep it open.

Hodge's Bridge, Awanui; Waipu Gorge Bridge; Ongarue Bridge, near Taumarunui; Manganui-te-Ao Bridge; Whangamomona (Porangi) Bridge; Koharatahi Bridge; Hooker Bridge.—These bridges, mentioned in last year's report as being in hand, are now completed.

The approaches and their protective works at the *Big Wanganui Bridge* are well in hand. The river changed its course somewhat during the erection, rendering protective groynes and a lengthening of the bridge necessary. The lengthening is not yet completed.

Wanganui Town Bridge (Dublin Street).—A contract has been let by the Borough Council for the erection of this bridge, and the contractor has all the piles manufactured and a fair amount of plant and material on the site. Pile-driving has been commenced, but has not proved satisfactory, and is now hung up.

Taieri Mouth Bridge. This is the structure for which, on the Department's design, the local authorities were unable to obtain tenders anything like the estimate, and called on the Government to make good its estimate. The work was accordingly taken over by the Department, the material purchased, and everything carried out for a sum comfortably within the estimate.

Waiau Bridge, Southland.—A contract has been let for this, and the work is in hand. So far the contractors have not made much progress, and have now come to a stop.

Shotover Bridge.—The deadlock between the contractor and the local body still continues, but negotiations are in train with the idea of the Government taking over control, and it is hoped that the structure and its approaches will be completed early in the New Year.

Henderson Pound Bridge.—This is a reinforced-concrete arched bridge, and was erected by the local authorities. It is now proposed to erect a similar structure at Wade under Government subsidy.

Waimoko Bridge.—This structure was completed.

Nuhaka Bridge.—This bridge was completed.

Esk River Bridge.—This is a ferro-concrete structure built during the current year by the local authority.

Waipukurau Bridge.—Extensive repairs were carried out to this bridge.

Rai and Brown River Bridges.—Bridges and approaches thereto were constructed over these rivers.

Wairau Flood Damage.—An expenditure of nearly £4,000 was necessary to repair the damage as a pound-for-pound subsidy paid to the local authorities, who did the repairs.

Ashley Traffic-bridge.—This ferro-concrete structure was erected by the local authorities.

Waikato Bridge at Tokaanu.—Owing to erosion of the river-bank and consequent change in course of river, it was found necessary to shift the bridge, and the opportunity was taken during dismantling and re-erecting to thoroughly repair it. The re-erection is nearing completion.

Tongoio Lagoon Deviation.—An extensive deviation of the main road to avoid the outlet of the lagoon was constructed.

Coalgate to Gorge Road.—Owing to the local body not keeping this road in a fit state to carry the heavy traffic caused by the hydro-electric works at Lake Coleridge, it has been decided that the Department should take over the road, and arrangements are being made accordingly.

Waimana Bridge, Opouriao.—The plans of this structure were supplied by the Department to the local body, who are carrying out the work.

Waihou River Bridge, including a swing span, for which purpose the swing span in the railway bridge at Paeroa (now no longer required there) is to be utilized, was put in hand under the supervision of the local body.

Floods Crossing, Mokau River (Kahuwera), Waitara, Opoua, Waipara, Waiapu, and Motupiko Bridges.—These bridges, for some of which the Government supplied the plans to local bodies, are in hand.

Clutha River Bridge (at Luggate).—Plans for two alternative designs at this crossing have been prepared by the local body and sent in for approval.

Working drawings of the following bridges have been prepared in the Head Office during the past year: Waikaka Stream; Maruia River; Ruakituri River; Pea-soup Creek; Oparau River;