

*Gisborne District.*

This district is subject to fairly frequent and severe flooding, and, in consequence, highway operations are subject to interference and delay. However, a number of important works have progressed particularly as regards bridging.

A new bridge over the Uawa River at Tolaga Bay has been completed and opened for traffic. The replacement of the Waipaoa River Bridge at Kaiteratahi to replace the old structure on which loading has had to be restricted is nearing completion after a series of unfortunate delays.

In connection with improvements at Waikohu, progress has been made with a comprehensive scheme, which was prepared in connection with bridge-replacements and the elimination of two railway-crossings. By deviating the main highway, involving the erection of two river bridges, the alignment is being very much improved. One bridge replaces an old structure which was extremely narrow with sharp approaches and urgently in need of renewal.

On the East Coast highway from Te Araroa towards Opotiki a commencement was made with the erection of a 300 ft. bridge over the Whangaparaoa River where traffic has had to use a ford, negotiable only under favourable weather conditions. Continual floods have been experienced ever since the work was started and these have retarded progress.

Reconstruction and metalling have been carried on as weather conditions allowed, and major flood damage has been repaired. Several sections of highway in this district traverse unstable country, large hillsides are continually on the move, causing frequent subsidences in the road surface, and often necessitating the restoration of a length of road which has moved downhill.

*Napier District.*

A considerable amount of reconstruction and widening have been carried out during the past year, but the extraordinarily heavy flooding which occurred in the Hawke's Bay area has necessitated the concentration of operations in the direction of restoring communications. The complete obliteration of considerable lengths of State highway passing through steep hilly country has required the use of men and machinery to open up access for arterial and local traffic. Owing to the destruction of several bridges temporary structures have been erected to carry traffic until permanent arrangements can be finalized.

Heavy formation work has been continued on the Runanga Deviation between Tarawera and Taupo, and also on the highway skirting Lake Waikaremoana towards Hopuwhine.

Investigations have been made with regard to reconstruction work required on the State highway between Wairoa and Hangaroa with a view to adopting a deviation for improving alignment northwards from Opoiti towards Te Reinga.

Portions of the Napier - Palmerston North State highway have been in course of reconstruction, particularly in respect of certain lengths where irregularities in the paving had developed. In the vicinity of Woodville the old pavement requires widening and some of the alignment needs correction.

In connection with the elimination of the level railway-crossing at Mangamanaia, a deviation has been commenced on the Gorge side for the purpose of avoiding an existing sharp bend. A new bridge on this deviation will replace an old wooden structure near the bend in question.

*Taumarunui District.*

The principal works in this district, other than ordinary maintenance, have been the renewal of old bridges and the reconstruction and metalling of sections of highway below standard requirements.

On the Te Kuiti - New Plymouth State highway heavy formation has been in progress, particularly between Te Kuiti and Pio Pio. A considerable length has been practically completed as regards formation and metalling. The new alignment has been placed on a higher level so as to avoid sections which in the past have been subject to flooding, and the general standard of the road has been vastly improved. Proposals for this length include final preparation and sealing, and it is hoped to carry out a certain amount during the current year.

On the Te Kuiti - Taumarunui arterial highway improvements have been continued, and metal was placed on lengths completed. Consideration is to be given this year to the possibility of sealing a number of miles on this highway.

It is also expected that certain lengths of heavily trafficked highway in this district, which do not require reconstruction, will be sealed during next season.

Improvements by way of widening, &c., have been in progress on the Pio Pio - Tatu, Te Maire - Mangaohutu, and Stratford-Taumarunui main highways and work has been in progress in connection with the erection of an overbridge to eliminate the level railway-crossing on the Main Trunk line at the top of the Spiral Hill.

*Taranaki and Wanganui Districts.*

Further progress has been made in the reconstruction and realignment of the arterial highway between Waitara and Mount Messenger, on the Te Kuiti - New Plymouth State highway.

A large amount of reconstruction has also been carried out on the New Plymouth - Hawera and Hawera - Wanganui State highways. This work is in the nature of rebuilding lengths of pavement laid many years ago and which were of irregular camber and insufficient width and, in addition, showed signs of weakness under present traffic. In the course of reconstruction, improvements have been made in the alignment, and by adjustment of grading visibility has been very much improved. This class of work has been carried out over a number of sections which were most urgently in need of attention, and the general standard has been raised considerably. In due course the remaining sections which do not meet the needs of traffic will be dealt with in similar fashion.