

adding half the roads in progress, we have a total of 645, which used as a divisor would give the sum of £189 per mile. The principal part of these roads are not metalled, but one example of a road through bush, Palmerston to the Gorge, drained, bridged, and metalled complete, has cost a little under £700 a mile.

The above figures will make it obvious that, notwithstanding the many assertions to the contrary, the cost of road making in the North Island has not been excessive, but extremely moderate when we consider the difficulties under which a great portion of the work was carried out.

Mr. Blackett, Assistant Engineer-in-Chief, has had especial charge of all road works, and has conducted their supervision with much energy.

ROADS IN NELSON SOUTH-WEST GOLD FIELDS.

A road is in course of construction to connect the new district of Reefton with Westport on the one side and Greymouth on the other.

The road connecting with Westport commences at a point known as Christy's, on the Buller, which is the limit of water-carriage from Westport,—and thence proceeds up the Inangahua Valley to Reefton; whence, crossing the watershed it follows the Mawheraiti branch of the Grey to Ahaura, from which point again water-carriage connects with Greymouth.

The Reefton district is thus served from two different shipping places.

The work has been divided into two portions—from the Westport end to Reefton, and from the Greymouth end to Reefton.

The contracts let on the Westport side amount to an approximate sum of £12,082 15s., while the work on the Greymouth side is partly under contract and partly under day labour, and amounts to £13,362 15s.—in all, a sum of £25,445 10s.

ROADS IN WESTLAND.

The object of the works undertaken in this district was to provide a main trunk line from Greymouth at the north to Ross at the southern extremity; and in carrying out this object it was considered advisable to utilize the roads already made by the County authorities to connect the principal mining districts.

Out of a total distance of about 58 miles of trunk line, about 17 miles of local roads were thus utilized, leaving a balance of 41 miles to be constructed. Of these about 17 miles are now completed, and 13 in progress, the remainder, between Omotomoto and Marsden, about 11 miles, being yet untouched.

The importance of this trunk line has been increased by connecting it about midway between Hokitika and the Greenstone with the main coach road to Christchurch, the branch line being about $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles long. This provides for traffic either north or south from the Christchurch road.

The estimated expenditure for the above was £32,000, but this will be exceeded by about £3,000, and no expenditure has yet taken place between Omotomoto and Marsden.

The expenditure on roads in the Middle Island, to end of June, has been—in Nelson, £9,917 15s.; and in Westland, £22,462 14s. 10d.; making a total of £32,380 9s. 10d., which amount is charged to the Middle Island Railway Fund.

The roads in the Nelson South-West Gold Fields will average probably from £600 to £700 a mile, having been laid out less expensively than those in Westland, whilst the roads in Westland, which have been well laid off, and substantially built and gravelled, will vary from about £700 to £1,500. This may be accounted for partly by the high rate of wages, and partly by the difficult nature of the country.

THE RAILWAYS.

The Government is quite aware that some impatience has existed in different parts of the Colony because the construction of these works has not been earlier proceeded with; at the same time we feel satisfied that when the circumstances which have prevented their earlier prosecution are known, it must be