

Wanganui and Taupo Horse Road.—The character of this road was described in last year's report, and a total length of thirty-two miles has now been surveyed. During the past year seventeen miles and nine chains have been completed, making a total of twenty-four and a half miles. The work has been done under contracts of about five miles long each, and the rate of progress during the year has been as follows, viz.,—Sections 1 and 2, 222 chains; section 3, 28 chains; section 4, 60 chains; section 5, 63 chains; section 6, 396 chains; section 7, 400 chains; section 8, 200 chains. On this last there are still about 200 chains to complete the contract, and when this is done tenders will be called for the next section. There have been several small slips on the side cuttings, which are being cleared away, and the finished portion of the road is in good order.

WEST COAST ROAD—PATEA TO PUKEARUHE.

(O. CARRINGTON in charge.)

Pukearue to New Plymouth.—Thirty miles. Very little roadwork has been done on this section since last year's report. Some of the Constabulary stationed at the former place have been employed on the approaches for the Mimi Bridge, and have also been sawing timber for that structure, which will be a plain piled bridge similar in construction to that built by the Constabulary over the Urenui. It has been found necessary to execute some additional work on the latter, as the piles in the two centre piers do not appear to have been driven deep enough in the first instance, and other and longer piles are now being driven to a hard bottom to secure a solid foundation.

Inland Road.—On this line of road the Mangaoraka Bridge has been erected, and three more, the Upland Road, the Mangonai, and the Waiongona Bridges, are now in hand. 104 chains of this road have been formed, and 174 chains are in progress. A section has been made of the whole of this line; and as the cuttings proved to be heavy, it was found advisable to reduce the width of the cuttings to 10 feet and ordinary formation to 15 feet, which will however suffice for present traffic. The inland Waiwakaiho Suspension Bridge undertaken by the Provincial Government, assisted by a grant of £350 from the General Government, is in progress. All the timber and ironwork are delivered at the site, and both piers have been built; the mooring posts are fixed, and the chains are in their places, as well as some of the cross-beams.

Omata to Stony River.—On this section a dray bridge has been erected over the Kaihihi River, consisting of one centre span of 45 feet trussed, and two side spans plain of 20 feet each. Also about 386 chains of road have been formed and 212½ chains gravelled or metalled, and 93 chains of gravelling are still in progress. When this work is completed, the sum of £5,000 authorized will have been expended.

Stony River to Waiorongomai (one mile north of Waiweranui).—On this section two dray bridges have been erected, the Werekino and the Mataneunu. The approaches to the latter are also completed, and those of the former nearly so. They and the bridge have been delayed considerably, owing to opposition from the Natives as to the exact site to be chosen.

120 chains of road have been formed, and 29 chains have been gravelled.

Waiorongomai to Umuroa.—No work has been done on this portion of the road, the Natives still being adverse to it.

Umuroa to Waingongoro.—At the date of last year's report three bridges were in hand on this section, viz. the Waiaua, the Mangahume, and the Waiteika. These have now been completed and passed. 426 chains of road have been formed, and 140 chains have been gravelled. The approaches to the Waiaua, Mangahume, Waiteika, Taungatara, Motemote, Waiokura, Inaha, and Kapuni Bridges, some of which required heavy cutting through rocky formation, have been completed, and those of the Punehu and Otakeho Bridges are in progress. The latter has been much delayed owing to the Native contractors failing to complete their work, and leaving it half done.

Owing to the recurrence of such-like events, and the generally irregular manner in which Natives carry out work, it has been deemed advisable to gradually increase the number of European workmen on the road, and this has been attended with good results, and their relations with the Natives continue to be amicable. The Native mail contractor, Hone Pihama has, since he became so, been of considerable service in forwarding the work, more especially that of gravelling, in which he has assisted materially.

The Kaupokonui and Kapuni Bridges, erected last year, have been well examined and screwed up.

Waingongoro to Patea.—On this section, 592 chains of road have been gravelled and 94 chains have been formed, and the Waingongoro, Tangahoe, and Manawapou Bridges have been screwed up and painted.

All the metalled and gravelled portions of the above-described road are in good order; the unmetalled portions heavy on account of wet weather, and will continue so during the winter. That part between Waiorongomai and Umuroa is almost impassable in places.

Sundries.—The Marsland Hill Depôt, in New Plymouth, has been put in repair for the reception and accommodation of about 120 immigrants; if required, the amount of accommodation could be doubled by an addition to the internal fittings. The erection of a jetty at Opunake was called for; plans were prepared and tenders were called for, but, being too high, were declined.

In connection with this, a trial pile was driven in the bay to a depth of about 8 feet. The driving was hard but quite successful, and the pile, on being drawn, was found sound and uninjured.

Remarks as to future Expenditure.—Between Waingongoro and Umuroa, about twenty-four miles, no survey has yet been made. There are many streams which would require bridging, but the land is generally level, though swampy in parts. Probably it would cost about £350 a mile to form and bridge this section—say £8,400.