

*Road, Wairua to Sandy Bay.*—Vote 107, item 4. A commencement on this line has been made by starting the grade survey, on which Mr. S. G. Anderson is now engaged. He had completed 4½ miles for contract on the 30th ultimo, at a cost in surveying of £95 12s. 9d. This road will run from the Great North Road, near the crossing of the Wairua River, through some homestead selections, and thence through the Crown estate in Opuawhango and native land, to a point on the Whananaki Harbour, suitable for a landing and future township. The nature of the country is such, that although a good deal broken, a good line on easy grades will be secured. Mr. Fairburn accompanied Mr. Anderson on the preliminary exploration, and chose the most suitable direction. The next item in the appropriations,—Wairua to Sandy Bay Road,—will be a branch from the above running almost wholly through Government land, and this it is contemplated to proceed with as soon as the survey of the other is completed.

*Purua and Mangakahia Districts.*—Vote 107, item 7. It is proposed to expend this vote in building a bridge over the Wairua River, which at present prevents the Crown lands being occupied on the further side. We have already made a considerable mileage of bridle road through Crown lands, which this bridge will render easy of access. Mr. Fairburn has obtained data for drawings of the bridge, though nothing further has been done owing to pressure of other work.

*Manganui Bluff to Kaihu.*—Vote 107, item 9. At the date of last year's report, 8½ miles of bridle road had been completed over the Bluff. In December last, the work was again commenced, under a foreman and party, and, since that time, about 7½ miles of road have been partly completed; but it will not be open for traffic until September, as there are contracts in progress for 4 bridges of from 12 feet to 20 feet spans, and draining and fascining to be done, which will bring the cost of the 7½ miles up to about £1,450. A large portion of the road has been done by piece-work. Although a nearly level line, a large number of swamps and streams have to be crossed, which makes the work expensive. At the end of the present work, a distance of some 4 miles has been constructed by the County Council. To effect a junction, therefore, with the work of last season, there will remain to be formed about 6 miles of level bush and easy ascent to the Crown lands which have been subdivided for sale. Mr. J. C. Blythe is in charge of this work.

*Okaihau to Victoria Road.*—Vote 107, item 12. On this line, which will in the future be the Great North Road, a distance of about 17 miles has been explored by Mr. Garsed, who obtained a grade of one in twenty-one, over the Maungataniwha Ranges, crossing them in a saddle at about 1,100 feet above the sea. This portion will be expensive to make as the cuttings will be very steep, and nearly the whole of it is through forest. At the Okaihau end an exploration is in progress to determine a line to effect a junction with the part already known. As the spring sets in it is hoped the work of actual construction may be commenced.

*Helensville to Kaipatiki.*—Vote 107, item 13. The works under this head consist in the construction of a swing bridge over the tidal waters of Kaipara, which is 251 feet long. A contract was let for £1,136 13s., on plans and specifications drawn out by Mr. Fairburn, but unforeseen difficulties, in the way of rock, has rendered extras necessary, amounting to £120, this, together with a small contract for about half a mile of road leading to the bridge, and the purchase of part of the road, will absorb the vote of £1,500. The works will shortly be completed. The lands recently sold by the Government, and those still open for selection, will thus have the greatest difficulty in approaching them removed, though to complete what has been begun, the road should be continued on for some four miles.

*Lake Whangape to Block VII., Awaroa.*—Vote 107, item 15. This road had been commenced under the appropriation for the previous period. During the present year 5½ miles have been constructed, at a cost of £887, under Mr. J. C. Blythe's superintendence. More than ordinary difficulties have been met with on this line, owing to rock-cutting, and the work of keeping open the first part of the road across the swamps. Mr. Blythe has built a good substantial cart bridge over the Maire stream, of 66 feet span, complete in every respect, and of good totara and rimu timber, for the very small sum of £90. This road may be taken as a fair specimen of the style of bridle road we are making all over the country, and as the nature of the country (excluding the swamps and rock-cutting) is also a fair average of what is usually met with, the cost per mile will serve as a guide for others. Taking 12½ miles of part bush and part open, the side cuttings 4 feet in the solid, all the streams bridged, the cost has been at the rate of £91 per mile, the work being done by day labour under a foreman. The grade, as you are aware, nowhere exceeds one in ten. We hope to push through to the open land on the West Coast this season. The end of the formation is now 15¾ miles from Churchill.

*Waikato River to Block XVI., Awaroa.*—Vote 107, item 14. Work was continued on this line in December last, and since then a party has been continuously at work by day labour, having completed 5½ miles, up to the 30th ultimo, of open and forest country, nearly all of which has been side cutting, 4 feet in the solid, at a cost of £687 for everything. Some expenditure has taken place, on portions completed last year, in raising embankments across swamps, removing landslips, and planting willows along the swamp embankments. The ensuing summer will see this line through to the open land of the West Coast. By means of this line, and that from Lake Whangape, a large extent of Crown land of very good quality, though broken, will have been opened. Mr. J. C. Blythe has charge of this line also.

*Hikutaiia to Ohinemuri.*—Vote 107, item 16. Shortly prior to the date of last report this work had been commenced, in spite of the opposition hitherto offered by the natives. It has now been carried into the village of Paeroa at Ohinemuri, and with the exception of a contract for raising one of the swamp embankments is completed, though in connection with it, a drainage contract has yet to be let, but for which tenders are now called. This, being one of the main roads of the Province, has been constructed for cart traffic 16 feet wide. The length is 6¼ miles. Owing to the length and number of swamps crossed (one being 76 chains long), and the necessity of providing long outfall drains, the work has been costly, averaging about £580 per mile. During the summer, as you are aware, it was used by one of the line of coaches forming a connection between Thames, Te Aroha, Hamilton, and Raglan. Mr. Nepean Kenny has had the immediate charge of the work, and has carried it out in a substantial manner.