

MARLBOROUGH.

During the past year ending 30th June, 1882, 17 miles 20 chains of roads, and about 12½ miles of tracks have been constructed in this district, which may be classed as roads assisting to develop the occupation and opening up of Crown lands, viz.,—(1) In the Awatere Valley, 7 miles 20 chains; (2) in the Rai Valley, 7 miles; (3) in the Wakamarina Valley, 3 miles; (4) in the Sounds, 14 miles of 6 feet tracks.

Number 1.—7 miles 20 chains long, forms a portion of the main line of road through the Awatere Valley, from Picton, *via* Blenheim and the Taylor Pass, to the upper part of the valley, and thence southwards to Canterbury. This road passes through and opens up for profitable occupation, a block of good pastoral country, known as the Awatere Shearing Reserve, 13,127 acres in area, surveyed and subdivided into 8 sections, preparatory to offering for sale. The greater part of the line is on side cutting, through sandstone and pudding-stone, very hard to work in places, but forming an admirable metalled road when disintegrated by a short exposure to the weather.

The road has been carefully graded and cut 14 feet into the solid, making up roadway to an average of over 20 feet wide at a mean grade of 1 in 37, the steepest grade being one in 9 for a distance of about 4 chains, cut through a hard sandstone breast cutting, which was unavoidable. The cost of this road was £2,756 14s., or an average of £380 4s. per mile.

The engineering surveys and specifications were prepared by the Awatere Road Board's Surveyor and Inspector at the Board's expense, subject to my approval, the Board's Inspector supervising the works generally during their progress, with occasional and final inspections before payment, by myself.

To bring the contracts within the scope of small parties of working men during the slack time of the year, the work was divided into 13 contracts. To this and the care taken in honing out the road to the hill contours between grade pegs, is to be attributed the comparative small cost of the work, taking into account the broken nature of country passed over.

Roads numbers 2 and 3, and tracks number 4, have been carried out under the direction and supervision of the Public Works Department, and a report on them appeared in the statement of that department, pp. 58, 59.

HENRY G. CLARKE,
Surveyor.

NELSON.

Roads.—During the month of January, instructions were received to survey and construct a horse-track, with gradients for a dray-road from Hampden, Matakītiki to Walker's Track, Maruia. Mr. T. Sadd was sent to commence the work until the services of Mr. H. Tarrant, Road Surveyor, could be obtained. On the 10th of February, the first contract was let. The survey has been completed from Hampden to the Glenroy Junction, a distance of 14 miles, and contracts let for bush-felling and formation for that length. The total cost to 30th June on contracts let, including expenses of survey and an overseer, amounts to £3,063. No payments on contracts have been made during the year.

The remainder of the line is now being surveyed to the Maruia, a distance of about 7 miles. When this portion is constructed, it will be a good road from Hampden to Reefton for a horseman.

When the above is completed, it is proposed to commence grading a road line to connect the Tadmor and Sherry Valleys with the main road from Nelson to the West Coast, by way of the Hope Valley, which will open out a block of good land for selection.

JNO. S. BROWNING,
Chief Surveyor.

Road, Cobden via Coal Creek to Seventeen-Mile Diggings.—The sections of this undertaken under vote of £1,500 last year, were—(1st.) A length of 3 miles 1 chain in the Coal Creek Valley, not before constructed at all, and which will open up a good deal of fair agricultural land for settlement. Metal is difficult to obtain along most of the length. The road will probably be completed about end of October next, but a further vote of £500 is required to finish it properly, so as to be available for horse traffic throughout. The felling has been made 40 feet wide, clearing 6 feet, formation 6 feet, metal 3 feet, with side drains, culverts, and bridges. (2nd.) A length of 48½ chains of side-cutting at the Ten-Mile Bluff to make ascent at each end practicable for pack horses. An old track which was in existence was altogether too steep. This work, which involved a good deal of rock-blasting, is not yet quite complete, owing to difficulty of getting men for the work, also owing to wet weather. It will be finished not later than end of August. The felling here has been made only the width of the track and slopes, formation 6 feet, metal 4 feet.

Road, Grey Valley to Teremakau via Bell Hill and Bruce's Paddock to Upper Ahaura.—The work hereunder has consisted of—(1st.) Lake Poerua Contract, 1 mile 10 chains in length, now in progress. This extends from the open ground at Bruce's Paddock to the settlers' homesteads at Lake Poerua, and is to be metalled 8 feet wide for a dray road. The felling has been 1 chain wide, and clearing 16 feet wide. It will facilitate the settlers getting out their produce to the Christchurch Road, and thence to Hokitika and Greymouth, which at present they have great difficulty in doing. (2nd.) Hatter's Terrace to Haupiri Plains. Of this division a length of 6 miles has been surveyed, and of this length tenders have just been accepted for 3 miles. Tenders have also been called for the other 3 miles. The felling to be 40 feet, clearing 6 feet, formation 6 feet, metalling 3 feet. It is only contemplated to metal this for a bridle track. The survey of further sections is in progress.

F. W. MARTIN,
Resident Engineer, P.W. Dept.