

Gisborne to Waimata.—Vote 107, item 24. Mr. Barnard reports that this line is very nearly finished. Ten miles on the direct road, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to render it accessible from Ormond and Gisborne respectively, are completed to a width of 8 feet in the solid, or about 12 feet general width, at a cost of about £1,850 a large number of culverts and small bridges have been built, under the immediate supervision of Mr. H. Krippner. Mr. Barnard reports that the road would have been completed and open for traffic, but for the heavy slips caused by the late heavy rains.

Gisborne to Wairoa.—Vote 107, item 25. This is part of the main road between the above places. The works have been carried out by Mr. Winter, the County Engineer, under Mr. Barnard's supervision. In all $27\frac{3}{4}$ miles are completed and under contract, the present termination of the work being at the Wahau village site, situated on the Crown lands lately surveyed for sale. It is hoped that the whole will be completed early in spring. The works have for the most part consisted in widening and improving the old line, building bridges and culverts, &c., a large number of which are necessary. Mr. Barnard reports that the late heavy rains and floods have seriously damaged the line, necessitating additional expenditure to clear slips.

Katikati Te Aroha Road.—This road does not come under the expenditure for opening Crown lands, but it is being constructed under the direction of the Survey Department, Mr. A. C. Turner, County Engineer, having the immediate supervision of it. The road is $12\frac{3}{4}$ miles in length, of which is $7\frac{3}{4}$ through forest on the Te Aroha range, which it crosses at an elevation of about 1,700 feet. Two contracts have been entered into for the construction of an 8-foot road on a one in thirteen grade, but, owing to the extraordinarily bad season, only $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles have been completed up to date, mostly in the open country. When completed, it will furnish a direct means of communication between Tauranga and Te Aroha, and will be much used. The magnificent view to be obtained on the summit of the range will prove an attraction to many travellers. The above are the works of construction carried on by this branch of your department in connection with the opening of Crown lands before sale under the Honorable the Minister for Land's votes. In addition to those, under the Honorable the Minister for Public Works we have directed the construction of bridges, and contracts for road formation on the Great North Road, the formation of a cart road from Helensville to Kaukapakapa (still in progress), and its continuation as the West Coast Road towards Port Albert as a bridle road, including in the latter a bridge of 186 feet length across the Makarau river, now nearly finished; the North Road being under the immediate charge of Mr. Fairburn, and the two latter works under that of Mr. Blythe. As so many of the works are still in progress, it is impossible to say exactly what it would be fair to count as complete, but the approximate amount is 85 miles for the year under the Honorable the Minister of Land's votes. A trial of over two years has fully demonstrated the fact that in the class of work undertaken by the department it is cheaper to employ first-class labourers, under a reliable foreman, than to let everything by contract; the work too is much better in quality. Large bridges, or other works which can be exactly specified, are better undertaken by contract. In this opinion I am supported by all the officers working under me, whose special attention was called to the matter when asking for their annual report.

S. PERCY SMITH,
Chief Surveyor.

Whangaroa Highway Board.—Mr. E. Frissell, Engineer to the Board, reports that the works have been confined to the main Raglan-Waipu road, with the exception of some pipe culverts, on the first branch road to harbour.

There have been 1 stone, 8 pipes, and 7 timber culverts laid down, 4 bridges repaired (using about 1,200 feet of timber), and 153 chains of earthworks, and 141 chains of surface formation with a formation width of 20 feet, completed, at a total cost of £226 14s. 10d., including about 800 feet of timber (distributed at different bridges for repairs as necessary) and 11 pipes on hand. I may mention that I consider the works have been done very cheaply.

The works have been done in detached portions, in order to distribute the benefit of them as far as possible, extending from the west boundary of district to the Waimarino creek, a distance of nearly 7 miles, not including that portion between the Waimarino and Tukorokoro creeks, the contractor for which has thrown up his contract.

Nearly all the portions of road missed badly require forming, but that, together with remainder of road to the Waitetuna Bridge, must be left in abeyance until funds are available.

There was one hundred pounds (£100) expended on the mountain road, outside district, but as that was done by day labour, under the superintendence of the Board, I need not further refer to it.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Ahuaturanga Block.—Blocks VI. and IX., *Woodville Survey District.*—During the past year 2 miles of road have been formed for dray traffic, including the erection of bridges and culverts, at a cost of £474 2s. 1d. Cross roads, cleared through the bush, 66 feet in width, 105 chains, cost £108 8s. 9d.; cleared 20 feet in width, 65 chains, cost £27 16s. 9d. The length of road through the Ahuaturanga Block, opened for dray traffic, but not metalled, is 4 miles, the bush has been felled and stumped 14 feet in the centre over another 2 miles, at a total cost of £1,841 9s. 9d., or 5s. 2d. per acre. The cost includes exploration, levelling, and the supervision of the work. These lands were offered for sale in March last, when 11 sections, containing 1,674 acres, were disposed of for £2,036 9s. 6d. cash, and 16 sections, containing 2,520 acres, value £3,415, were taken up on deferred payments. From the deferred payments one-third, or £1,138, will be handed to the Woodville Road Board to be expended on road works inside the block.

Puketoī Block.—*Tahoraiti Survey District.*—Block XIII. The bridle road has been widened and continued about 30 chains, 2 bridges built, and 30 chains of road cleared, at a cost of £180. Block XIV. 5 miles of road have been explored through the forest cost £45 17s. 2d. The sum of £75 out