

All except the centre 9 miles is now prepared for contracts for the conversion of the track into a dray-road. This 9 miles will also be ready by the end of August, so that the whole road could be put through by the end of next summer if sufficient funds are available. The sections at the Pipiriki end should be let first, and, if possible, about the time the new steamer starts on the Wanganui River. The 8 miles at the Ohakune end should not be started before October. The character of the work along the upper parts of the Kaukore Creek, and at a few places further on, is of an exceptionally heavy nature. Being a cross-country road the number of creeks which have to be crossed is very large, and unfortunately timber at the Pipiriki end cannot be obtained. Probably it will have to be brought from Wanganui.

The cost of the engineering survey, with plans complete to date, has been about £12 10s. per mile. Nearly all the old pegs are untrustworthy or entirely gone, and in some cases the line is injudiciously laid out, especially so at creek crossings, besides grades of 1 in 12 have been altered to 1 in 15. This in itself causes considerable deviations. The culverts originally specified were in most cases totally unsuitable for the creeks for which they were respectively intended.

5. *Tunnel Karioi Road (south end)*.—This road is designed to act as a service-road to the Main Trunk Railway, besides being the main arterial road through the Waimarino country. From Karioi to Ohakune, 8½ miles, is already a good bridle-track, with a chain clearing. Engineering plans are already prepared of this part. By adopting 1 in 15 grades in places and making the work somewhat heavier, I succeeded in shortening the original road by about 30 chains. The survey cost £67. The work on this part is of a nature eminently suited for winter work, and should be let as soon as the votes will allow. The road traverses the Rangataua Block for about 4 miles, the remainder is still Native land. The greater part of the road lies through heavy forest suitable for milling. From Ohakune to Waimarino there is a fair bridle-track with 6ft. trenching, and about 4 miles felled 1 chain wide, the remainder is through standing bush. The distance from Ohakune to the open Waimarino plains (altitude 2,600ft.) is about 16 miles; much of the ground is a cold swampy nature. Three large rivers are crossed, and quite a number of small ones. Two of the large rivers are already spanned by dray-road bridges, 138ft. and 520ft. respectively; the third river is crossed by a wire-bridge for foot passengers, and a ford for horses. The large bridges are already showing signs of decay in parts; much faulty timber has been used in them, and the approaches to them have been chosen with great want of judgment. Nothing has been done on this road during the past year except clearing off a few trees and repairing two small bridges. I have not yet had time to make a proper examination of the country between the Waimarino Plains and the Pipiriki-Ohakune Road, but, as far as I can yet judge, the entire location of the road is very debatable. If possible, the whole road should be kept further to the west. Till a proper exploration is made, I think no expenditure beyond maintenance should be incurred on this line. I am not acquainted with the country between Waimarino and Taumarunui. Of all these roads I have no hesitation in saying that I consider that the Hunterville-Turangarere Road will have, when completed, by far the most beneficial effect in developing and opening up the country generally, and as such it ought to be hurried on without delay.

G. T. MURRAY, Road Surveyor.

NAPIER.

Waiomatitini-Hicks Bay Road.—This is a 6ft. bridle track, and gives access to Crown lands; 3¼ miles have been constructed during the year by a party of Natives working under a European overseer, at a cost of £196 10s. 3d. The total length now completed is 5 miles 5 chains; total cost £309 9s. 9d.—equivalent to £38 13s. 8d. a mile. There are about 8 miles more of this road to complete at the Kawakawa end, which should, if possible, be done next summer.

Tologa Bay-Mangatokerau Road.—This is a 3ft. bridle-track; 6½ miles have been completed during the year, and 1½ miles last year: total 8 miles at the rate of £25 a mile. This road was formed to give access to Crown lands, and runs through the Mangatokerau grazing-runs. It is formed throughout on good grades.

Ormond-Opotiki Road.—Two contracts have been let and completed during the year for widening 6½ miles of this road, from a 9ft. bridle-track to a 14ft. dray road: total cost £725 14s. This includes 120 box culverts, 15 being 18ft. long, and 105 9ft., and one bridge 12ft. span, cost per mile £116 2s. 3d. On this road £481 17s. 6d. has also been expended during the year on the wages of surface-men, who have been employed keeping the road in repair, removing slips, trees, &c. Length of road to be maintained is about seventy miles, nearly all of which is in very broken forest country. Through traffic during the year has been about 600. The vote on this road is expended, but it is necessary to keep men on it during the winter months, otherwise traffic will be stopped.

Danevirke to Wainui Road.—There has been one formation contract of 25 chains in length completed during the year, and a bridge of 56ft. in length constructed over one of the streams, commonly known as "Deep Creek." This latter is a great convenience for wheeled traffic, and was a work very much required. The total expenditure for the year for formation works has been £311. There are contracts let for two bridges of 41ft. and 55ft. in length respectively, and the work will probably be completed during the early part of next year. The cost of these two bridges will be about £400.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.