

properties are superior to heart of totara, and quite equal to puriri. It is therefore, probably, with the single exception of puriri, the most suitable timber in New Zealand for sleepers. I may also say that the Railway Commissioners are now extensively using silver-pine timber for sleepers.

#### SUMMARY.

The total appropriations proposed for railway works this year (including additions to open lines, surveys, and permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock) amount to £316,278. It would have afforded me great pleasure to have proposed larger votes, but, with the limited means at our disposal, and in view of the large demands made upon us for public buildings, and the still larger demands for roads, it has been found impossible to propose a heavier railway expenditure. The allocation of the money available amongst the several works in progress will, I think, be accepted as fair and reasonable.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY.

No great amount of work has been done on this line during the past year, as practically the only portion under construction has been the section between Lake Brunner and Jackson's, on the Teremakau River. The line is open for traffic from Brunnerton to Lake Brunner, and the works on the section from there to Jackson's are well advanced.

Further proposals for a modification in the contract under which the line is being constructed have been made by the company; but, as these are now under the consideration of the House, it would be out of place for me to express any opinion concerning them.

#### KAIHU VALLEY RAILWAY.

This railway was vested in the Railway Commissioners under the provisions of "The Railways Authorisation and Management Act, 1891," on 1st January last, and has since been worked in the same manner as the ordinary Government railways.

#### ROADS.

Under the head of Main Roads £16,000 was authorised last year, and £12,588 spent, with liabilities at the end of the year of £5,968. For Miscellaneous Roads £18,985 was authorised, and £10,525 spent, but, as £82 of this amount was advanced under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, the net expenditure charged against the vote was £10,443 only, while liabilities amounting to £9,783 were outstanding at the end of the year. For grants-in-aid £11,159 was voted, and £7,144 spent, with liabilities of £2,445. Roads to open up lands before sale: Authorised, £88,310; spent, £51,740; but, as £29,751 of the amount was advanced under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, the expenditure charged against the vote only amounted to £21,989, with liabilities, £48,568. Village Settlements: Authorised, £5,788; spent, £4,412; liabilities, £2,256. And finally—Roads to give access to Marton—Te Awamutu Railway: Authorised, £54,996; spent, £29,440; liabilities, £18,495.

This year it is proposed to ask for the following sums, under the above headings:—

	£	s.	d.
Main roads	23,039	0	0
Miscellaneous roads and bridges, and roads to open up lands before sale	110,487	0	0
Grants-in-aid	11,663	0	0
Village settlements	3,380	0	0
Roads to give access to Marton—Te Awamutu Railway	40,800	0	0

The following summary shows the works performed under the heading of Roads, by the Lands and Survey Department during the year:—

Dray-roads constructed	229	miles.
Dray-roads improved	74	"
Dray-roads maintained	848	"
Bridle-roads constructed	93	"
Bridle-roads improved	6	"
Bridle-roads maintained	197	"
Bridges built, twenty-seven: of a total length of 2,438ft.		