

coach-roads affording access to the railway at both ends, and leading through the centre of the North Island—namely, from Hunterville to Turangarere and Tokaanu; also from Pipiriki, on the Wanganui River, to Ohakune, Karioi, and Moawhanga; also about 65 miles of road between Stratford and Ongarue, leaving about 40 miles of that road still to be made; besides many miles of minor roads and exploration tracks, and temporary and permanent service roads and bridges. It has also provided us with an estate of 1,137,377 acres of freehold, and 129,148 acres of leasehold land, besides other large areas, which have been partially acquired.

#### TOTAL EXPENDITURE TO END OF 1893-94.

The expenditure on all works and services throughout the colony out of the Public Works Fund up to the 31st March last, including the value of the provincial and the purchase-price of the district railways, has amounted to a total sum of £29,293,451. The principal items are as follow, viz: Railways, £15,806,308; Roads, £3,855,455; Immigration, £2,146,552; Buildings, £1,890,711; Purchase of Native Lands, £1,297,517; Lighthouses, Harbour-works, and Harbour Defences, £906,958; Telegraph Extension, £679,793; Development of Goldfields, £572,441; Defence Works (general), £429,719; Departmental Expenditure, £376,162; and Cost of and Discount on raising Loans, £1,026,828.

#### CO-OPERATIVE SYSTEM.

The co-operative principle of constructing public works continues to give very satisfactory results both to the State and the workmen, and the interest in the matter has also become more widespread.

As time wears on the advantages claimed for the system of constructing public works on the co-operative principle are being more and more amply verified. As compared with the contract system, a much better class of work has been done, whilst the cost to the colony has been no greater. Another advantage is the power which is left in the hands of the Government to regulate the expenditure on public works. As a case in point, during the months of April, May, June, July, and August, whilst work was available in the settled districts, the Government reduced its expenditure on roads, railways, and other public works. This enabled the settlers to take advantage of the labour that was thus set free, and it removed the complaints which were made in the past that the local bodies and the settlers could not obtain the labour when required.

A very pleasing feature in connection with this matter was the few complaints made by those who were retired from the works, for only in one or two isolated cases did they complain—thus negating once and for all the objection that was taken to the co-operative system by those who asserted that the co-operative men would become a political power, and that pressure would be brought to bear by them to force upon the colony an increased public-works expenditure.

In previous years inquiries were received from the neighbouring colonies in reference to the system, and during last year similar inquiries came from America, while recently the British Government has, through the Agent-General, requested to be furnished with the fullest information with regard to it. An article in explanation of the system has been prepared by the Under-Secretary for Public Works, and will appear in the next issue of "The New Zealand Official Year-book." Copies of this article will be sent to England and elsewhere, and the Government confidently expect to hear of the scheme being largely adopted in the carrying-out of public works in other countries.

The number of men employed under the system during the last twelve months has been as follows:—

Month.	Public Works Department.	Lands Department.	Total.
September, 1893	840	1,115	1,955
October, "	829	1,060	1,889
November, "	900	1,098	1,998
December, "	1,028	1,094	2,122
January, 1894	984	1,042	2,026
February, "	951	1,081	2,062
March, "	911	951	1,862
April, "	744	896	1,640
May, "	780	960	1,740
June, "	756	1,018	1,774
July, "	694	974	1,668
August, "	695	1,094	1,789
Average monthly number	845	1,032	1,877