

obtained locally from settlers, and 1,000 totara sleepers were similarly obtained for the Whangarei-Hikurangi Railway extension, and 500 for the Kaihu Valley Railway extension.

*Eketahuna.*—Contracts are in progress for the supply of 60,000 totara sleepers, being cut from the Mangahao and Mangaone Reserves, as above mentioned, and about 36,000 have been delivered. Tenders were invited in May last for a further supply of 16,000 sawn or hewn totara sleepers for the Eketahuna-Woodville Railway, and seven tenders were accepted for 15,500 in the aggregate, to be delivered on the line, the price ranging from 2s. 3d. to 3s. per sleeper.

Two small contracts were also let to settlers during the year for the supply of 2,600 and 1,000 hewn totara sleepers respectively. The former was completed in June, 1895, and the other contract is in progress.

*Belgrove (Midland Railway).*—Tenders were invited for 12,000 birch (*Fagus fusca*) sleepers for this railway, and six tenders were accepted for 8,200 in all, at 2s. each. These contracts were entered into in November, 1895, and completed in April last. Four petty or co-operative contracts were also let to men in need of work for the supply of 1,500 sleepers at the same price, and 1,200 of these have been delivered. These ten contracts employed about twenty-nine men during their progress.

*Westport.*—As reported last year, four tenders were accepted for a total of 20,000 silver-pine sleepers, and about 18,000 of these have now been delivered. A petty contract for 344 silver-pine sleepers was also completed during the year. About 15,800 sleepers were shipped from Westport by the s.s. "Hinemoa" during the year, and 1,200 were issued to the Railway Department.

*Greymouth.*—Forty-six contracts for the supply of silver-pine sleepers were in progress during the year ended the 31st March, 1896, of which thirty-eight were entered into during the year. These forty-six contracts amounted in the aggregate to 47,550 sleepers, of which 37,418 have been delivered. One of the contracts was for 10,000 sleepers, and the others range from 300 to 2,000 each, most of them being for 500, let to working-men.

*Otago.*—A contract was let in October last to Mr. T. Rolf, Invercargill, for the supply of 3,000 totara sleepers for the Seaward Bush Railway, and the contract was completed at the end of same month. Offers were also received from the settlers in the Catlin's and Seaward Bush districts and accepted for small lots, varying from 66 to 387, totara sleepers at 2s. 6d. each. Under this arrangement 5,329 sleepers were delivered during the year by the Catlin's River settlers, and 297 by the Seaward Bush settlers; delivery being near the railway-line in each case.

## ROADS AND BRIDGES, ETC.

### AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

*Te Aroha to Katikati Road (Thompson's Track).*—The formation and widening of this track over the range from the Gordon Settlement was begun in March, 1895, and has been in progress since then until the end of May last, when the work was stopped for the winter months. The track has been formed from 8ft. to 12ft. wide from the Te Aroha side to the Saddle at 5 miles 60 chains, and down the other (Katikati) side to about 9 miles 70 chains. A portion only (about 1½ miles) of the remainder of the road to the end at 14 miles requires widening. Serious slips have occurred this month which have blocked the road.

*Miscellaneous.*—The Katikati-Karangahape track was examined and reported on for the Mines Department. Drainage works in Te Aroha Block IX. and Block XI. were carried out for the Survey Department. A marble obelisk was erected on the Native burial-ground at Ngaruawahia, and enclosed within a picket-fence; and a similar monument erected over the grave of Major Te Wheoro at Rangiriri, and enclosed with a cast-iron fence. The drainage of the Remuera Sheep-dip was set and carried out under the supervision of this department on behalf of the Stock Department.

### WESTLAND.

*Karamea Bridge Contract.*—A contract for the erection of this bridge was let in May, 1895, and completed last month.

*Great South Road.*—The survey of the deviation at Rotokino Swamp at Mount Hercules was completed in May, 1895. A route presenting no serious difficulty was found, and plans for the formation of this portion of the road were prepared. The work of widening the road for a length of about 2 miles 52 chains from 23 miles 50 chains was in progress and completed on the co-operative principle during the year. It was done in six sections, employing altogether forty-six men. Two small bridges between the Waitaha rivers were also erected by co-operative contract, the timber for which was obtained by tender; and the erection of a wire foot-bridge at Duffer's Creek is in progress. This track has now been widened from the Waitaha River to Mount Hercules, a length of 27 miles 10 chains, and from Lake Wahapo to Okarito, 7 miles in length, giving a total length between the Waitaha and Okarito of 34 miles 10 chains open for dray traffic, or between Ross and Okarito of 44 miles 10 chains open for traffic. The intervening portion between Mount Hercules and Lake Wahapo is 18¼ miles long, and of this 5 miles 45 chains, being the deviation at Rotokino Swamp, has to be formed, and the remainder, 12 miles 10 chains, widened. The total length of the road from Ross to Okarito is 62 miles 50 chains—viz., from Ross to the Waitaha, 10 miles 15 chains (open); Waitaha to Mount Hercules, 27 miles 10 chains (open); thence to Lake Wahapo, 18 miles 25 chains (not completed); and thence to Okarito, 7 miles (open).

*Kamieri-Kokatahi Bridge.*—The erection of this bridge and the metalling of the approaches to same were let in two separate co-operative contracts in April last, and the works were completed early in August. Twelve men were employed.

*Miscellaneous Works for Local Bodies, &c.*—The following works were inspected, and reported on during the year, viz: Ahaura-Kopara, Mackleys-Waipuna, and Blackball extension through township to mine, roads. Also suspension foot-bridge at Blackball Creek; road and bridge, Grey