

of the bridge will shortly be proceeded with. The bridge will give access from Kahui Road, which is metalled, to lands on Parihaka and Tohu Roads.

*Mount Egmont Tracks and Huts.*—Up to the present date three separate Boards of Conservators have charge of portions of Mount Egmont Forest Reserve, each Board having control on its own side of the mountain (north, east, and south); the remaining (western) side will probably be placed under a Board of Opunake and Rahotu settlers, unless the Egmont National Park Bill (which has already been before Parliament) is passed. Each Board has constructed a horse-road towards the higher slopes of Mount Egmont—the North Egmont Board by way of Egmont Road (from New Plymouth and Inglewood) to its house, at an elevation of 3,200 ft. above the sea; the East Egmont Board (from Stratford) by way of Pembroke Road, to its house, about 4,000 ft. (within this Board's boundaries a new track four miles and a quarter in length, being an extension of Surrey Road from near Tariki Railway-station, has been cut this year under special Government grant); the South Egmont Board by way of Manaia Road (accessible from Manaia, Kaponga, and Stratford) to its house, at an elevation of nearly 3,000 ft. Last year's vote was equitably divided between these three Boards, who with it have done the following works: North Egmont—house lined, partly ceiled and painted, improvements to pathways around house, improvements to and maintenance of two miles of coach-road and two miles of bridle-road within the reserve: East Egmont Board—erection of new house, improvements and maintenance of about four miles of bridle-road to house; South Egmont Board—enlargement of house, maintenance of about four miles bridle-road. All the above Boards are trying to popularise their respective routes by improving the access to their houses, and by enlarging and improving their house-accommodation. That the routes are becoming very popular is evidenced by the fact that nearly three thousand people visited the various houses during the past season, many remaining for periods up to fourteen days, a large number of whom ascended Mount Egmont.

*Ohura Main Road.*—The metalling contract in progress at date of last year's report was completed in April, 1899, making the total length of metal laid from Stratford about 12½ miles. Improvements to the road by sanding—a dry yellow sand found in some of the cuttings—12 ft. wide by not less than 12 in. deep, have been proceeded with where practicable, and the road is fairly good and trafficable for drays for a length of about thirty-eight miles, or nearly to Whangamomona Township, forty-two miles. Of course, it cuts up in parts and becomes bad in the middle of winter, but our winter contract price for carting goods the forty-two miles, at £3 9s. per ton (summer price is £2 10s.) shows that, although metalling would be a great boon, still the road is yearly hardening and becoming better. The worst part of the road now is just beyond Whangamomona Township, and here we have failed after repeated trials to find either metal or suitable sand. About 50 chains of this part of the road will be very bad during the coming winter, and will have to be corduroyed to keep it open for traffic. The class of papa near by, or within two miles, is not suitable for burning, or it would have been tried as a substitute for metal, that already laid answering well. During the past year 5 miles 66 chains of dray-road has been made in extension of that formerly done, the road being now formed as a dray-road to the summit of Pakaranui Ridge, about fifty-five miles from Stratford (about two miles past north end of Whangamomona Improved-farm Settlement). This work was of a very heavy nature, nearly 107,000 cubic yards (principally of hard papa rock) having to be excavated and removed. After the road had been formed along the ridge, at about 50 to 51½ miles from Stratford, enormous slips came across it, quite blocking it, and in parts carrying it away. These had to be removed to the extent of over 18,670 cubic yards. 2 miles 70 chains of 8 ft. bridle-road has been formed; 2 miles of felling, stumping, and clearing has been done in Tangarakau Gorge, and the work is still in progress; 162 culverts of various sizes, and in total length 4,150 ft., have been made and placed in position; three flood-openings (small bridges) have been constructed; and two large dray-bridges of 70 ft. and 60 ft. main spans (in total length 205 ft.) have been built over Whangamomona Stream, near the township. Timber and ironwork has been prepared for a bridge over Raekohua Stream, to the north of Whangamomona Improved-farm Settlement, and at south foot of Pakaranui ridge, and the bridge will shortly be erected. Plans have been prepared for Waingarara Bridge, and are in hand for Mangapapa and Tangarakau No. 1 Bridges; these will be put under construction as funds will permit. As I have stated, the further felling, stumping, and clearing of Ohura Road through Tangarakau Gorge is being pushed on, but we have to follow close up with a bridle-road to enable the bushfellers to obtain supplies. This formation work is being done, however, on the grade line, and will simply require widening to form the future coach-road. As we have now passed actual settlement, we propose to push on with this preliminary work in order to give the earliest possible access to north end of Ohura Road at Mangaroa.

*Kohuratahi-Tangarakau.*—Two miles of bridle-road; twenty-one culverts, in length 390 ft.; 18 chains of felling, stumping, and clearing; the removal of 2,370 cubic yards of slips; and maintenance of two miles of Kohuratahi Road, has been charged against this vote. Further work appears under heading "Kohuratahi Block."

*Putikituna.*—This road is now available and is being used as a bridle-road from Ohura Road to Tangarakau Stream, about eight miles and a half, at the point to which it is proposed to bring steamers from Wanganui. During the year 3 miles 23 chains of dray-road has been formed; 70 chains of bridle-road; eight culverts, 180 ft., made and fixed; one bridge, 45 ft. long, constructed; two tunnels excavated in rock, one 6 ft. and one 10 ft. high, to obviate bridges; two miles and a half of dray-road and three miles and a half of bridle-road maintained. Before the road can be fully utilised for passenger or goods traffic with Wanganui it should be widened where necessary to dray-road width. In the meantime, the road is of value to settlers who have felled, grassed, and are beginning to occupy their farms.

*Taihore (Widening).*—The settlers on this road raised a special loan for widening it to dray-road width from Ohura Road to Puniwhakau Road, about eight miles and a quarter, their loan being subsidised by Government. To the 31st March five miles of the road has been completed, including fifty-three culverts, in total length 1,384 ft. Specifications and plans of the work were