

ROADS NORTH OF AUCKLAND—continued.

(J. J. WILSON in charge.)

Kawa Kawa to Whangarei.—The survey of this was completed about twelve months ago, and since then about eight miles through the bush have been felled a chain wide, and a width of 20 feet cleared and stumped in the centre. A few small bridge culverts have also been built, and all the work has been done by Natives, who also undertook to build some larger bridges to plan and specification, but, from lack of skill and experience, failed to carry out their good intentions, and the work was subsequently submitted to public tender.

The work on this road is still progressing, but slowly, the Natives being engaged on earthworks and small culverts. A bridge has been built by contract over the Papauru, one of the heads of the Wairua River, 44 feet long, with wing-walls and approaches, for £119; and several smaller bridges and a culvert are now submitted for tender. Besides these there will be required three bridges of a larger kind, as well as the drainage of a swamp. These and some other works, it is estimated, will occupy another year to complete them; meanwhile the road is practicable for horse traffic, though the crossings of the Wakapara are difficult at all times, and dangerous when flooded,—a state which is nearly continuous during the winter months.

The amount of work executed and the expenditure on this road are as follows, namely,—

				£	s.	d.
Bush and scrub felled and cleared ...	...	...	...	625	12	8
Side cuttings, drains, and small culverts	74	8	0
Earthworks in progress, now due	75	0	0
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				£775	0	0

Wairoa and Kaikohe Road.—The portion of this line between the Hepera, Mangakahia, and the Wairoa River, a distance of about sixteen miles, lies through bush and scrub nearly the whole of the way. The clearing of this had been begun at date of last year's report, and nine miles have since been cleared by Native labour, and five and a quarter miles by contract at the Wairoa end of the line, the felling being 1 chain wide and the clearing 20 feet in the centre. Besides this, 50 chains of side cutting and grading have been completed, and the following bridges are now in hand, many of them in a forward state, namely,—The Maire, 42 feet; Waikopani, 44 feet; Waiwhakae, 20 feet; Te One, 50 feet; Parakao, 30 feet; Auha, 50 feet, a total length of 236 feet, which will cost about £290, and several small culverts to cost £25. These bridges will be built of heart of kauri, totara, or puriri, squared and of the best quality: the work being done by Natives who have already had experience in this kind of work at the northern end of this line under Mr. M. Clarke.

The expenditure on this road has in round numbers been as follows, namely,—

				£	s.	d.
Bush clearing, Natives and Europeans	...	...	...	1,000	0	0
Earthwork and side cuttings, &c., &c.,	...	...	...	40	0	0
due	...	...	...	200	0	0
Bridges, &c., described above	...	...	...	315	0	0
				<u>£1,555</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

At the Wairoa end of the road there are two and a half miles of broken country, through which a survey has been made with a view to the road work being let by tender. It will be an expensive portion of the line, there being at least twenty-four streamlets to cross, and one river which will require a 40-feet bridge. An approximate estimate of the cost of making this section practicable for horse traffic and wheeled vehicles, is from £450 to £500.

Of the upper part of this line, Wairoa and Kaikohe, parts have been improved, namely, from Hepera to Parahake, by draining at the sides, erection of culverts, side cuttings, and a bridge now being built over the Opou Stream; and from Parahake to the open land near the Awarua the road has been cleared through the bush and bridged by Native labour, and offers a good horse track all the way to Kaikohe, with the exception of a few miles of scoria land at Punakitere, where the Native owners appear to object to any further improvements being made.

Kaikohe to Waitangi.—On this line three contracts are in progress, one near Kaikohe, one between Pekekaka and the junction with the Waimate and Waitangi line, and another near the Waitangi Falls, Haruru, the latter almost completed. Some of the work done on this line by Natives is of a very creditable character, as at Ohaewai, in the earthwork and the erection of very substantial stone culverts. Metal suitable for roads is abundant on this line, and it is suggested should be used in covering the softer parts of the road during next summer, which, should the traffic increase, will be necessary, and will make this a really serviceable road. A moderate expenditure for maintenance on this and other roads as they may be completed, will be required, and must be provided for to keep them in a fit state for traffic.

Mr. Wilson reports that he notices a general improvement in the Native people ; that they are acquiring habits of industry, and appear to appreciate better than formerly the value of time, and that they generally clothe themselves better since they have been able to earn money by roadwork. Their contact with Europeans, however, has increased their love of gain, and they are always on the alert to obtain some advantage in their work, or to sell at high rates the timber needed for the bridges and culverts.

(M. CLARKE in charge.)

Mangakahia and Kaikohe Road.—On this line of road about one mile of side cuttings has been completed. A number of small culverts and nine bridges, varying from 6 feet to 45 feet span, have