

APPENDIX C.

ANNUAL REPORT ON ROADS, BY ASSISTANT ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

The ASSISTANT ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Public Works Office, Wellington, 30th June, 1876.

I have the honor to forward my annual report on road work executed in New Zealand during the past year, under "The Public Works and Immigration Act, 1870," up to the 31st May.

There has been no great length of new roads completed, the principal works being confined to the repairs and maintenance of those already made, and their improvement where required; nevertheless several of the roads in the interior in Native and other districts have been pushed forward steadily, if slowly, and the internal means of communication is being improved from year to year.

With the view of reducing the cost of the maintenance on the several roads, and of increasing the usefulness of a strong active body of men, it was arranged that the services of the Armed Constabulary should be called into requisition more generally for this work than has before been the case. Accordingly, in October last, the first steps were taken in this direction, and gradually since that time bodies of Armed Constabulary have been distributed over the several districts in actual working parties, and have accomplished a large amount of useful work in road making as well as road repairing, under the direction of the several District Engineers.

The actual strength of the working parties according to the last return were as follows:—*Waikato*, in five parties, 53; *Taranaki*, between White Cliffs and Mimi, 15; *Taupo*, in seven parties, 36; *Turanganui*, on Ormond Road, 18; *Wairoa*, in four parties, 24; *Tauranga* to Napier, and to Katikati, 37; *Opotiki* and Ormond Road, 31; *Patea*, *Hawera*, *Opunake*, &c., 13; *Ohinemuri* to Katikati, 12; Total, 239.

The roads in each district will be found described below, each under its proper heading, the information in each case having been furnished by the different District and Road Engineers.

ROADS NORTH OF AUCKLAND.

(T. HEALE in charge.)

The works now under contract and those which have been completed during the current year are as follows, viz.:—

1. Works on the portion of the North Road from Whangaroa towards Mongonui, about $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles. These make the road from the Bay of Islands to Mongonui fairly passable for horsemen.

2. Works performed chiefly by Natives on the extension of the Bay of Islands and Hokianga Road; in detached pieces, about 3 miles in all. Completing the distance of about 13 miles between Kaikohe and Taheke.

3. The large bridge over the Waiarūhe River (to replace what was formerly called the "Black Bridge," which was destroyed by a flood). This consists of one span of 41 feet trussed, and four spans of 20 feet each, plain—total, 121 feet; the two main piers are bedded on the solid rock which forms the bottom of the river. The work is expected to be finished by next October.

4. Some small works to complete the road from Ahipara to Kaitia, contracted for with Natives last year, and finished in September last, extending over a length of about 7 miles.

5. Section No. 1a, on the Mahurangi and Port Albert Road, the completion of which has been delayed by the opposition of one of the landowners; length $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

6. Section No. 5, on the same road, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, being its extension to the town at Port Albert, which is situated on the Oruawharo, an arm of Kaipara Harbour.

Surveys.—In addition to works, the following surveys of roads still required to complete the main through road from Auckland to the North have been made, viz.:—

1. *From Kawakawa to join the main road at Waimate, about 14 miles.*—This is a most necessary work, being a part of the through main road; it will enable produce to be conveyed direct from the country districts to Kawakawa, instead of by land to Waitangi, and thence round by sea.

The proprietors through whose land this road will pass have made liberal offers in reference to the land that will be required, being anxious to facilitate its construction.

2. *From Albertland to Waipu, about 25 miles.*—This road would open some of the best land in the North, hitherto unsettled for want of a road; the line presents no great difficulties or bad gradients, but several long bridges and a number of smaller ones will be required in its construction.

3. *From Warkworth (Mahurangi) to the North Shore at Auckland.*—The portion of this yet to be made is from Warkworth to Te Weiti (where it would join a provincial road), a distance of about 15 miles, in which there are no serious natural difficulties. The line according to the new survey would shorten the distance by at least 25 miles.

The present track is very dangerous, even in summer; very steep in many places, and very wet and swampy in others.

Mr. Marsden Clarke, who is in local charge of the road and bridge works in and around Waimate district, recommends the following works for execution, viz.:—He describes the main road between Waitangi and Okaihu as in good order, excepting one section of about two or three miles, which would cost only £300 or £400 to make it a really passable road.