

The soil on the open ridges is generally very clayey, and would require a great deal of pulverizing to bring it into cultivation. The bottoms in the valleys are very fertile; as are also the limestone and volcanic ridges, which are mostly under forest, and the areas covered with lava-overflow.

Roads are the great necessity of the country; and a main line running up the east side of the peninsula has been under survey and construction, at the expense of the Government, for the last two or three years. But on the west side, from Dargaville north there is no road, only a most wretched track to Hokianga. There are several thousand acres of both open and forest Crown lands between Kaihu and Maunganui Bluff, very suitable for settlers, and which would be taken up if it could only be got at. This area is but the fringe of a solid block of 400,000 acres of Crown lands which stretches away inland through the forest, over a plateau-country, to near Kaikohe. It is proposed to explore a road-line through it, and, if funds are available, to open a bridle-track. Until this is done no settlement can take place; for in its present state it will to the settler for ever remain an impenetrable, unknown land.

A road has been surveyed and graded up the Kaihu Valley to this land, and tenders are now invited for its formation. It is continued through the forest behind Maunganui Bluff, thence by the beach to Hokianga.

Again, from opposite Herd's Point, Hokianga, a road has been surveyed through the forest for thirty miles to Victoria Valley, seven or eight miles of which have been made at each end, and other contracts are now let in extension of the work thus begun at either end. On this being accomplished a good bridle-track will be opened from Awanui to Dargaville, Wairoa River, Kaipara Harbour. Settlers can then see the land, and will have a way to and from it. In the course of the next two or three years, the monotony of the long stretches of uninhabited country on this line will be relieved by the homesteads and clearings of the settlers.

These bridle-tracks are all made on carefully-graded lines, which will be eventually the main road-lines, and can be easily widened out for dray traffic. Wherever they run through bush it is felled at least half a chain, generally a chain wide.

In the Waikato Valley road-works are in progress connecting 20,000 acres of Crown lands with the railway. This land lies about ten miles west of Churchill. Naturally it was quite shut out, and little known until opened up by road-formation and sectional survey.

On Te Aroha Block drains are being cut, and the road-lines formed with the stuff dug out. As soon as these works are completed several thousand acres can be offered for selection.

Te Puke Block.—The road from Tauranga is now in formation, by Armed Constabulary and Natives, to this block. Tenders have been invited for the formation of a road across the block, and 3,000 acres have been surveyed along this road-line for deferred-payment settlers, and can be offered shortly.

All the works in Auckland Land District, with the exception of Te Aroha and parts of Te Puke, are directed by the Chief Surveyor. Te Aroha is under the Public Works District Engineer, and Tauranga to Te Puke under the County Engineer.

*Taranaki.*—A great deal has been done in this land district by opening lengths of three or four miles of road into the bush from the Mountain Road. Side-cuttings and partial formations have been made in places. The Manganui River was bridged on one of these lines, and several minor bridges and culverts have been constructed on other lines; altogether, about a total of ninety miles has thus been opened up. Every section behind Mount Egmont, it may be said, has been rendered accessible by the opening of these occupation lines; and, as a consequence, a very great stimulus has been given to the settlement of a district which is exceedingly well adapted, in its fertile soil, numerous clear streams, and railway-communication, for the hardy, working settler.

There have been more lands disposed of on the deferred-payment system in the Taranaki Land District for the twelve months ended 30th June, and more selectors, than in any other land district except Otago.

The works in Taranaki are directed by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and set out and inspected by the Crown Lands Ranger.

*Hawke's Bay.*—Tracks have been formed through the Waitara Block, which is at present withheld from sale or lease so as to give full scope to the prospectors for auriferous quartz along the Mohaka.

In the Seventy-mile Bush several blocks have been opened, and are in course of further opening by roads run in from the main road. The soil in these blocks is excellent, many of the sections level, all of them well adapted for grass, and none more than seven or eight miles from main road or projected line of railway. Of these blocks, the Kumeroa village settlement and adjacent rural lands were offered lately, when twenty village allotments and seventeen deferred-payment selections were made, absorbing 2,100 acres, at a price of £3,450.

The Ngamoko Block, of 4,000 acres, is another of these blocks: it is immediately west of Norsewood, and has been opened up by a road-line running through the middle of the block, cleared a chain wide, and now being formed. The land is a fertile loam, situated between two branches of the Manawatu, and is mostly level. It has been surveyed into sections of 50, 100, and 150 acres each. It is about seven miles by the road from the Kopua Railway-station, and is well worth the attention of settlers. Will be offered shortly, partly on deferred-payments and partly on immediate payments.

Works in Hawke's Bay District are directed by Chief Surveyor.

*Wellington.*—In the part of the Seventy-mile Bush comprised within this land district there are two blocks, best known by the native names of Pahiataua and Mangaone: together they comprise about 50,000 acres of forest-land, lying on the east side of that part of the main interior road between Eketahuna and Mangatainoko, near Manawatu Ferry, and which have been surveyed into sections of from 40 to 320 acres each. The Wairarapa West County Council has been intrusted with the opening-up of this country by clearing and formation of occupation road-lines, which run from the main interior road across the block for four or five miles each. In this way a road has been completed across from Eketahuna to the east boundary of Mangaone Block, and since continued on to Alfredton. The land along this line has been very much spotted for educational and municipal endowments; but what was left was offered on 27th April last. Of 3,324 acres open for selection on immediate payment, 268