

cases rather one of convenience than of proper classification. Some of the works carried on by the Engineers of the Public Works Department will give access to Crown lands not yet opened, whilst some of those of which the Surveyors of the Crown Lands Department have charge, are of political value. I think that there is no sufficient reason for altering the present arrangement, if due care be taken to avoid overlapping estimates and want of proper co-operation. It will probably be satisfactory to honorable members that I should glance at the whole, leaving my colleague the Minister of Lands to add whatever he may think right, to supplement my notes, when the occasion arises. Very interesting information relative to the work of the Crown Lands Department, as the pioneer of settlement, has already been afforded in the report from that department which has been laid on the table.

It will be most convenient to arrange my enumeration by localities, without regard to the department in charge of each work. Honorable members will find an arrangement by departments in the Public Works Estimates, which will shortly be placed before the House.

Much progress has been made with the road-works, but comparatively few have arrived at completion. I shall not detain honorable members long with the subject of past construction, which will be found detailed in the printed reports of the Engineers-in-Charge.

Of the works under the vote of £66,650 for roads, &c., north of Auckland, part have been carried on by the several County Councils of the district, under agreements as to the objects on which the several grants were to be expended. A portion of the vote has been applied to the construction of a main road between Auckland and Mangonui, and is being expended on this work under the superintendence of the Chief Surveyor, Auckland, Mr. Percy Smith. The works done on this road have made it fit for wheeled traffic as far as Wellsford, a distance of fifty-five miles and a-quarter, and they include three bridges of considerable size. On the next two sections, contracts are in progress in the neighbourhood of Whangarei.

Thence to Kawakawa, Whangaroa, and Mangonui, works are also in progress; and, between Mangonui and Awanui, contracts are completed or in progress over about eighteen miles. These, when finished, will make a road between the two last-named places fit for wheeled traffic.

Of the whole distance from North Shore to Awanui, about forty miles of new road will, on completion of the contracts now in hand, have been formed, a portion of which has been metaled.

*Aroha Drainage.*—In Waikato and Thames, the most important works are the Aroha drainage, in which considerable progress has been made. About eight and a half miles of drains remain to be done.

*Whatawhata Bridge.*—The bridge across the Waipa at Whatawhata, on the Hamilton-Raglan Road, in length 520 feet, was opened in April last.

*Te Rore Bridge.*—The Te Rore Bridge across the same river, two miles and a-half below Alexandra, providing communication between Kawhia and the Waikato and Auckland Railway, is under contract and progressing satisfactorily.

*Mountain and Coast Roads, Taranaki.*—On the Taranaki promontory, the road at the back of Mount Egmont has been metaled for a distance of nearly eighteen miles. The formation of the coast road, or that leading from the Waingongoro through the Waimate Plains and the Parihaka Block, to Stony River, has been completed during the year. It is now practicable for wheeled vehicles throughout its entire length, and for more than half that length is already graveled. Honorable members are aware that, in addition to facilitating settlement in a very promising district, this work is one of special political importance. It has been carried out to a large extent by means of the Armed Constabulary Force.

*Maintenance of certain North Island Roads.*—A number of other roads have been maintained, improved, extended, and surveyed in the North Island, for particulars of which the reports of the Engineer-in-Charge may be consulted by honorable members desiring fuller details. With one or two important exceptions these are not new works.