

gap of two and a half miles, on which nothing has been done by Government. On the section between Havelock and Pelorus Bridge there have been two and a half miles of new road formed and metalled, a cart-bridge erected over Cooper's Creek, and the old Pelorus Horse-bridge strengthened. A contract has also been entered into for painting the Wakamarina Bridge.

The branch road up the Wakamarina Valley has been formed as far as Deep Creek, and arrangements are now being made to have it metalled.

The extension of the main road from Pelorus Bridge *via* the Rai Valley to the Nelson side of Whangamoa Hill has been surveyed, and thirteen miles let in five small contracts. The work was only begun at the end of last month, so there has been no time to do much.

In addition to the improvement of about four miles between Havelock and the Pelorus Crossing, and the construction of a cart-bridge over the Pelorus, it is necessary to make about thirteen miles more new road before communication for wheel-traffic can be established between Havelock and Nelson.

Tracks in Pelorus Sound.—Tracks have been cut from Kenepuru Sound to Crail Bay, and from Kenepuru Sound to Manaroa, and another is in progress over the Torea Portage, with a boat-channel through Gullery's Neck. It is also intended to cut one between Opouri Bay and Kawai Sound. These tracks, which are all through narrow isthmuses, are intended to shorten the distance for boating between the different parts of the Sound—a much needed convenience.

Aorere Valley Road.—Two contracts entered into in November, 1880, each for a mile of the cart-road in the upper portion of the valley, were completed early in the financial year.

Motueka Bridge.—Some little additional protective works have been constructed to prevent the encroachment of the river, and the bridge has been painted.

Clarence Bridge.—This bridge was first proposed in 1877, when a vote for £5,000 was taken, but on making the survey it was found that the cost would be about double the amount voted. Nothing was therefore done till this year, when, authority for the extra expenditure having been obtained, designs were prepared for the bridge, also an order to be sent to England for the ironwork, and which goes next month.

In consequence of the size and rapidity of the river, and the difficulties of the site, the bridge will be an important one. It is to have four spans of 120 feet, and one span of 60 feet. The piers are to be cast-iron cylinders filled with concrete, and the superstructure a combined timber and iron truss, like the Clutha and other large bridges already built. The Clarence Bridge is designed to carry both road- and railway-traffic.

Tophouse and Tarradale Road.—A contract for forming the road round four bad rocky bluffs in the Wairau Gorge was finished early in spring, and tenders have just been received for the completion of the road through the gorge, and widening the portions done last year. A contract for improving the four- and five-mile banks in the Big Bush has been let, and tenders are advertised for similar work at Ray's Saddle. These two latter are on the portion of the road between Foxhill and Tophouse.

As shown by my last annual report, the next most important work required in improving this road, the through communication between Nelson and Canterbury, is the cutting of some spurs to avoid several crossings of the Acheron River.

Nelson to Buller Valley Road.—The metalling contracts in the Motupiko, Clark, and Hope Valleys, which were in operation at the end of the year, were duly completed in May, and the road has since been maintained by Government.

The Matiri contract, which comprised the construction of the last portion of the Dray Road, between Nelson and the West Coast, was finished in October, and a weekly coach has since been run between Foxhill and the Lyell.

A contract has been entered into for improving the gradient and metalling about two miles between the Motupiko and Clark Rivers, and instructions have been issued to widen the worst places between Fern Flat and Lyell.

A contract was entered into on the 23rd February for the erection of a bridge over the Owen River, and tenders are now invited for one over the Matiri. The former has one span of 80 feet, and the latter two spans of 80 feet.

Contracts are in preparation for improving the road at the rocky cutting below the Owen and the western side of Spooner's Range. A considerable diversion is to be made at the latter place, so as to get an easier gradient.

WESTLAND DISTRICT.

Westport-Reefton Road.—The small bridges over Coal Creek, Orawaiti Overflow, and Nine-Mile Creek, tenders for which were advertised at the end of last year, have all been completed in a satisfactory manner. They are all small works of the usual type of construction. A contract has also been entered into for strengthening the Blackwater Bridge.

A contract is in preparation, and tenders will at once be called, for the bridge over the Inangahua near the Buller Junction. In consequence of the difficulties of the site, it was necessary to have a more detailed survey than usual, and to put down a number of borings to ascertain the nature of the ground; this accounts for the delay in getting out the contract.

The design, as finally adopted, is for a bridge of five spans of 80 feet and eleven of 30 feet. The roadway at the highest point will be about 50 feet above the bed of the river.

Reefton-Greymouth Road.—The bridge over the Inangahua, referred to in my last annual report as being nearly finished, was duly completed early in the year.

A contract has just been entered into for the construction of a bridge over the Little Grey, at Devery's Terrace, the only unbridged river between Reefton and Greymouth. The site decided on is not particularly good, but it is the best obtainable anywhere near the direct line of communication. The bridge is to have seven spans of 60 feet and three of 15 feet.

Greymouth-Okarito Road.—A deviation between Kumara and the Teremakau River, and some minor improvements at the Teremakau Bridge and on the Bowen-Okarito Section, were the only works in hand on this road during the past year.

Haast Pass Track.—The amount available for new works out of the vote of last session is now