

explored right through, and the fact that an excellent line can be obtained has been proved. At the northern end Mr. Garsed has graded three miles ready for contract, besides running four miles of grade-line, which we afterwards determined to abandon as the main line, though this will make an excellent settlement-road, running as it does through a country very suitable for that purpose. At the extreme northern end the survey was stopped by the Natives from going through lands where the road-right has lapsed. This has been reported to you. Until this difficulty has been overcome we shall not be able to let the contracts. During the ensuing season we propose building a bridge over Waihou, and continuing the grade survey to Mangamuka, which portion will probably also be let for construction. Mr. E. Fairburn has inspected the road, and generally directed the works, Mr. R. Blundell being the local inspector.

*Helensville to Kaipatiki.*—The long swing-bridge over the tidal waters of Kaipara, of 251 feet length, was completed satisfactorily early in the season. Early in June, 1883, the construction of the road from the bridge towards Babylon was commenced under Mr. J. C. Blythe's direction, and six small contracts have been let, principally for clearing scrub and ditching the roadsides. Tenders have also been called for the erection of two bridges. The building of the bridge induced the public to purchase nearly every section offered for sale in that locality, which shows the advantage of opening up the Crown lands by roads.

*Waikato River to Block XVI., Awaroa.*—Mr. A. B. Wright was some time engaged on the continuation of this road, twenty-three and a half miles having been opened since it was commenced, except that several of the culverts are not yet up. There is a contract going on for the supply of timber, and three men are engaged in building culverts as the timber is supplied. The length completed this year is six and a half miles. I may add that the last part of it is, however, only roughly done, in order that a way through to the West Coast might be available.

*Waikato River to Block VII., Awaroa.*—On this road-line two and a quarter miles have been made, partly by Mr. J. C. Blythe, partly by Mr. A. B. Wright, with road parties. A total distance of eighteen miles has been constructed from Churchill, giving a through road to the West Coast. I understand that one of the small bridges has been burnt, thus closing the road for a time, but, as there must be a certain amount of money accruing from the deferred-payment sales, the local authorities ought to be able now to keep the line open. This line, and the last referred to, will have opened up a considerable extent of Crown land, the quality of which, especially on the first, is excellent, some of which it is proposed to cut up during the summer.

*Hikutaia to Ohinemuri.*—This road was completed last season. I understand that it is the best part of the coach-road from Thames to Te Aroha.

*Tauranga to Te Puke and Matata.*—Up to the 30th June Mr. Goldsmith had completed nineteen and a quarter miles of this line as an 18-foot cart-road, thirteen and a half miles having been made during the season, at a cost, including everything, of £171 12s. per mile. As this includes some very heavy embankments, side-cuttings, and expensive bridges, I consider the price to be very small. Ten miles were made by a road party, and three and a half miles by Natives at piecework. When two bridges now building, and a small piece of road now under construction, are finished, a coach-road will have been opened from Tauranga to Otamarakau. It is proposed to make about a mile and a half more to connect with the Public Works road from Opotiki and Matata, which will finish this part. It is also proposed to explore a line from Otamarakau through the Crown lands in as direct a line as possible to Te Teko, and afterwards make it.

*Opotiki to Waiotahi.*—Mr. Crapp, of the Public Works Department, reports that 13 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of road-line have been laid off for construction, 24 chains of side-ditches for road formation through swamp, 550 cubic yards of earth moved for filling-in swamp, 13 chains of side-cutting formed 18 feet wide, 18 chains 8 feet wide, and 11 chains 10 feet wide; 2,700 feet of puriri timber has been cut in the bush for small bridge on this road. The land along this line of road has all been lately bought from the Crown, but this road, when constructed, will be the means of opening up a great deal of back country; estimated area, about 16,000 acres. The above work has been done out of £500-grant to the Opotiki Highway Board.

*Opotiki to Ormond.*—During the year the works on the Gisborne side of the Motu River consisted in repairing and keeping the line open. Mr. Krippner, under Mr. Barnard's direction, let two contracts for clearing, 3 feet on each side, of thirteen miles, and for building ten additional bridge culverts; and a party of five men were engaged in removing slips and clearing the paddocks as resting-places for stock. The burning-off was a failure, however, owing to the wet, so that very little grass was sown. No work is going on just now at all. This road will always be a source of expense owing to the nature of the country through which it runs. On the Opotiki side Mr. Crapp reports that ten miles have been formed 4 feet wide, and the forest cleared 1 chain wide. There have been 1,673 cubic yards of rock excavated in widening precipitous portions of this road from 4 feet to 8 feet wide. About nine miles of road have yet to be laid out to form a junction at the Motu Bridge. This is now being done, and the work of construction will be put in hand as soon as the season will permit.

*Te Aroha-Katikati Road.*—This road, under the supervision of Mr. A. C. Turner, has been completed as an 8-foot bridle-road during the season, nine and a half miles having been added to the three and three-quarter miles finished last season, making thirteen and a quarter miles altogether. Very heavy side-cutting, a good deal of which was in rock, has been met with. Slips during the formation were frequent, and are likely to continue for some time, for which reason two men have been continued on pay, under Mr. Goldsmith's supervision, to keep the road open. It affords a direct means of communication between Tauranga and Te Aroha, and will be a favourite route for equestrians from the fine views obtained along it. It would be, comparatively speaking, inexpensive to convert this into a coach-road, as the grades are excellent everywhere.

*Huihuitaha to Patetere.*—This road was just on the point of completion at the date of last year's report. It has been open some ten months, and is a good deal used, especially in summer-time, by people driving from Cambridge to Taupo.