

I am indebted to Mr. Warren, County Clerk, for particulars as to the three roads above on which the county has expended Government grants under the general advice of the department through Mr. Barnard.

#### VILLAGE SETTLEMENT ROADS.

In addition to the roads enumerated above, constructed under specific votes of Parliament, the Government granted sums to be expended in rendering access to the various village settlements, and to provide some employment to the most necessitous of the settlers. A large amount of work has been done in this way; but as the work is still proceeding, and is of a more desultory character than on the class of roads already referred to, complete details as to lengths, &c., formed, cannot be given. These works were of absolute necessity to enable the settlers to get on to their lands at once. Treating them in their geographical order, they are as follow:—

*Ahipara to Herekino.*—The Herekino Village Settlement is situated in the most inaccessible part of the northern peninsula; and therefore, to provide a means of access to it from existing roads, the above line was started in April by Mr. Wheeler, who graded eleven miles, prepared specifications for seventeen contracts, and let them to the Maori owners of the soil over which the road runs, all within the short space of ten weeks. Up to date no part has actually been completed and open for traffic; but about three miles of clearing has been done, and a start made on most of the contracts. The road is on good grades, and will be available for carts when completed.

*Herekino Roads.*—The greater part of this settlement is bush, with no means of access to the various sections except by the survey lines, which, having been cut nine years ago, were generally grown up and only to be found by the surveyors, and therefore unavailable for traffic by the settlers in conveying their goods to their various sections. To meet the difficulty, the settlers were set to cutting tracks along the road-lines and sometimes along deviations from them, the men being employed at day wages. As soon, however, as a way had been provided to each section, the work on the permanent-grade lines was started, and is now being carried on by piecework as in all the other settlements. Up to date not much has been done under the piecework system, four contracts only being in operation, as the overseer has instructions not to encourage the settlers to seek for employment on the roads where it withdraws them from clearing their lands. A very large amount of work will have to be done to make roads through the settlement, and to provide a road to the Whangape Harbour, by which route stores are at present conveyed to the settlers by the monthly steamer. Mr. R. McLeod has charge of the works in this district, under Mr. E. Fairburn's occasional supervision.

*Takahue Roads.*—Up to date two miles and a quarter of road of various widths and 117ft. of culverting have been done, besides some temporary tracks cut by Mr. Wheeler when making the survey of the block; and three contracts are in operation at the present time. Mr. H. Larmer, the County Engineer, is in charge of the works.

*Fern Flat Roads.*—About a mile of road has been made, and 42ft. of culverting done; and two contracts are in force for additional work. Mr. Larmer, who is in charge, reports serious damage to the roads through the late rains.

*Motukaraka Roads.*—To date, about three miles of road of from 6ft. to 12ft. wide have been completed; and ten contracts are in operation on the various lines of road through the settlement. Mr. R. Cochrane is in charge.

*Punakitere Roads.*—Close upon five miles of road from 6ft. to 12ft. wide have been finished, and nineteen contracts for further extension are in hand. A large bridge is also being built over the Punakitere River, which at present cuts the settlement off from the outside world. Mr. R. Cochrane is in charge.

*Waimamaku Roads.*—A road leading from the county road to the Waimamaku Village Homestead Association settlement and to the other village settlement in this locality has been laid off, and the first three miles of it are under construction by the Maoris who gave the land for it on condition that they should have the work, and instructions have been sent up to put the settlers on to further works, as far as the sum allowed will go. The actual selection for sections has not yet taken place, but there are about thirty men on the ground waiting for it, who are clamouring for work. Mr. R. Cochrane is in charge.

*Hukerenui Roads.*—Three small contracts have been let in this settlement, and specifications prepared for a bridge by Mr. A. B. Wright; and arrangements have been made for doing something to the main road from Kawakawa, though little or no good can be done whilst the road remains in the fearful state it is reported to be in.

*Whamanaki Roads.*—One mile of road 5ft. to 10ft. wide has been completed on a line which leads through one of the village settlements, and which at the same time forms part of a main line of road out to the Great North Road. As many of the settlers in this settlement find employment at the saw-mill, roadworks to give them work are not of so great a necessity. Mr. E. J. Fairburn is in charge.

*Parua Bay Roads.*—About a mile and a quarter of 6ft. to 10ft. road is completed, and four contracts are in operation. This work is partly on the main line of road referred to under Whangarei-Taheke. Mr. E. J. Fairburn is in charge.

*Omaha Roads.*—About three miles of bridle-roads have been made, by twenty-four contractors, on several lines of road, so that most of the sections in this settlement are fairly provided with access, though something more is yet required to be done. Until more funds are available, however, the work is at a standstill. Mr. H. Lundius has had charge.

*Main Road through Dacre's Claim.*—About 3 miles 16 chains of this road have been constructed by the Rodney County Council, supplemented pound for pound by the Government, in order to give access by land to the special settlement at Omaha from the port of Mahurangi.

*Waitakerei Roads.*—Three quarters of a mile of cart-road has been made here, and it is proposed to add a small bridge to enable the settlers to get at the remaining sections.