

and Waiteika Roads, Opunake District; and the opening of new roads in the block of land north of the Waitara River (Ngatimaru) soon to be offered for sale. I am also preparing plans for a bridge over the Waitara River Junction Road; for bridges over the Punehu, Ouri, and Oeo Streams, Eltham Road, Opunake; and for road-formation on junction of Eltham and Waiteika Roads (a total of about 9 miles), so as to be in readiness should the necessary votes be passed during the coming session of Parliament.

In consequence of the large amount of time I have had to devote to roadworks during the past year, my work as Ranger has fallen somewhat in arrears. These, however, I hope to overtake during the next three months, as a large number of the road contracts are now completed. I have, however, reported on 195 deferred-payment and perpetual-lease sections, containing 14,753 acres (in this I have been assisted by Mr. Stanners, Road Overseer), and have made special reports for purchasing, transferring, or capitalising on twenty-five sections, containing 2,350 acres; also reports on nineteen Road Board schedules, in many instances having to inspect the roads, the plans of work, and the Road Board's books; also eleven special reports on various works, including one on the drainage of the Ngaere Swamp (in which I was very materially assisted by Mr. T. L. Humphries, Assistant Surveyor). And there has been the usual office-work, preparing plans and specifications for the roadworks under my supervision, the payments of contractors, and weekly returns to the Treasury; and the regular outward correspondence of over 370 letters.

G. F. ROBINSON, Crown Lands Ranger.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SINCE the first votes to open up Crown lands were taken in 1880 to the end of the period now under review the sum of £34,205 has been expended on roads giving access to lands which have been or are being prepared for settlement.

I arrive at this amount by taking the total stated by the late Chief Surveyor in last year's report, and adding to it the amounts spent upon roads in the Makaretu and Te Ohu Blocks, the Woodville Special Settlement, and the Wainui-Tahoraiti Road. This does not include grants to local bodies from the proceeds of lands held under the various deferred-payment systems, nor the direct grants to such bodies.

The total area selected since 1880 out of the blocks affected by the expenditure stated above is about a hundred thousand acres, and, if it is assumed that the same ratio between acreage and capital value holds good for this year as for the period between 1880 and 1886, then this expenditure has affected selected lands of a capital value of £134,000.

The grants to Road Boards from lands taken up under the various deferred-payment systems amount to £21,567 up to the present time.

Rotokakarangu Block.—A grant of £1,250 was placed at the disposal of the Wairoa County Council in the early part of the year for opening up the Rotokakarangu Block. I have not as yet had the opportunity of visiting that part of the district, but the Chairman of the Council has been good enough to furnish me with the following details: $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the Ohinépaka-Patere Road has been formed for dray traffic 12ft. in width, starting from the Wairoa-Napier Main Road in the Ohinépaka Valley. Three miles of a 5ft. bridle-track has been formed from the Cricklewood Junction towards Patere. A contract for a further extension of the dray-road of a mile in length is now in operation, and is expected to be finished by this time.

The above works include a timber dray-bridge 22ft. long, besides four timber and forty-two pipe culverts; but the cost is not stated.

Ruataniwha and Makaretu Blocks.—Fourteen miles of road-lines have been cleared 1 chain wide, and, except on steep sidings, stumped 16ft. wide in the centre, and the whole length has been sown with grass-seed. These roads give access to some nine thousand acres of forest-land, which is now open for selection under the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems, and will also render an education reserve of 2,000 acres more accessible. For formation purposes the worst parts of these roads are adjacent to the Makaretu Settlement; and when I visited the ground I formed the impression that the land would be much more readily taken up if a sufficient amount of formation were done to make a passable horse-track. An expenditure of about £250 would do this. The total cost of the works above described, which were finished at the end of last month, was £1,343 16s. 4d.

Te Ohu Block.—Two miles and a half were explored, graded, cleared 1 chain wide, and stumped 16ft. wide through the Te Ohu Block, at a cost of £407 10s. The immediate area to which this gives access is 1,400 acres of good forest-land, well suited for settlement in moderate-sized farms. Most of the surrounding lands belong to Natives, but, if these should at any time be acquired, access to a considerable area could be got by a continuation of this road.

Woodville Special Settlement.—44 chains were cleared 1 chain in width through the Woodville Special Settlement, at a cost of £57 6s. 3d. The Waipawa County Council has agreed to subsidise £50 granted by the Government by the same amount, to form a passable road to this settlement.

Wainui to Tautane Road.—7 miles 73 chains of the Wainui-Tahoraiti Road have been formed, including two small bridges and 129 culverts; and 3 miles 26 chains on a branch-line through the Tautane Special Settlement have been cleared through forest, at a total expenditure of £2,605 1s. 7d. Three formation contracts, including 5 miles 41 chains, are now in operation on the main line, besides a clearing contract for 2 miles 63 chains near the Tautane Village Settlement. I regret to have to report that the exceptionally heavy rains which have fallen during the past few weeks have brought down slips of considerable magnitude, obstructing, for a time, dray traffic in places. This made it necessary to employ temporarily one or two extra surfacemen, in order that works on current contracts might not be brought to a standstill. It is satisfactory to be able to report that these works are having the immediate effect of inducing settlement, and that the greater part of the land