

has been a serious obstacle to traffic. As previously reported, there is a good natural road along the bay; and the tussocking and bridge mentioned (the cost of which has been comparatively small) will make the head of the bay quite accessible from Woodend.

Seaward Forest to Coast.—Mileage made, &c., $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles nearly; acreage that will be rendered better accessible, 5,000 acres. The work done during the year consists of 140 chains of formation, 190 chains gravelling, 110 chains of ditching, 80 chains of tussocking, and eight bridges. This road runs through Seaward Forest at Oteramika Bight, and connects the settled country of Oteramika with the country lying between Seaward Forest and the coast. As already reported, there is a large amount of inferior, nay, almost useless country lying between Seaward Forest and the coast, and between Awarua Bay and the Maitara River. It would be a delusion, however, to suppose that the country is all alike, and I have no hesitation in saying that the new road will tap a large amount of land that will eventually be settled. Much of the land I mention is, no doubt, wet, and could not, even when drained, be regarded as first-class; but it is not simply the peat or moss that parties who have not been through it might suppose. The road, in my opinion, will be of great utility in opening up a considerable extent of second-class country that would otherwise have for ever remained a useless and an inaccessible waste. Should, in the natural course of things, the road ever be extended southward to the beach the advantage to the general public will be very great, there being at present no means of communication between the coast-line and the settled parts of Southland anywhere between the Maitara River and the Woodend-Awarua Road. Prior to the latter road being formed there were no roads connecting the coast with the settled districts at any part of the long stretch intervening between Portrose and the Bluff. I feel convinced that both roads will ultimately be of immense advantage to the Southland District. I may say that the Seaward Bush Railway intersects the Oteramika Bight Road at the north end, and that the portion of the road north of the Seaward Forest was subsidised by the County Council and Road Board respectively. All of the above roads were constructed under the supervision of Mr. C. H. Howorth, Engineer to the Southland County Council, whose professional skill and carefulness are well known to the department.

Stewart Island Roads.—Mileage of tracks cut, &c., $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles; acreage rendered more accessible, 2,000 acres. The work done during the year consists of 8 miles 14 chains of track-cutting, of fencing and supporting track 1 mile, of 9 chains of drain, and of bridge over inlet between Horseshoe and Halfmoon Bays, also of bridge over Freshwater River. The chief tracks cut were from Oban westward to Freshwater River, and from Horseshoe Bay to Lee Bay. The other items of work were the repairing of road round Halfmoon Bay, the additional fencing and supporting of track Halfmoon to Horseshoe Bay, the forming of drain in Ayr Street, Oban Township, and the construction of foot-bridges over Freshwater River and over inlet between Horseshoe and Halfmoon Bays respectively. All executed by the Resident Engineer, Public Works Department.

J. SPENCE, Chief Surveyor.
