

total cost has not exceeded what it would have been had the work been done by contract, and the men employed are well satisfied. Men who had been working under the old system, and who the overseers had considered were not able to do a fair day's work, and who were consequently not worth even the 4s. 6d. per day which they were paid, have turned out excellent work, and are moreover anxious and eager to do the work. Instead of being disappointed and complaining as they were in the past, they have been made happy and contented, and have been able to put by a little money. An entirely new phase has, in fact, been put upon the whole business.

It will be necessary to ask for a further vote this year in case work has to be found in districts where no authorised works are in progress. Efforts will be made to settle the men on small holdings in positions favourable to their obtaining work, and thus they will have a chance of becoming independent.

ROADS TO OPEN UP LANDS BEFORE SALE.

These roads, looked at from a settlement point of view, are at present the most important ones in the colony, as it is only by means of them that the remaining Crown lands, lying for the most part far inland in country to which there are only bush-tracks, can be profitably occupied by the settler. The funds provided yearly are utilised in making roads or tracks into unoccupied Crown lands, and, as settlement advances, in widening and improving such tracks, so as to more easily reach lands beyond.

It is proposed to ask for a vote of £3,800 for the current year for this purpose, and to supplement this by a vote of £30,000 out of the Consolidated Fund, as announced in the Financial Statement, and also by a loan to the Minister of Lands under the provisions of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act Amendment Bill, if that Bill becomes law. It is expected that this expenditure will largely conduce to *bonâ fide* settlement.

Full details of the work done and of the lands opened up by these roads during the past year will appear in the annual report of the Survey Department.

VILLAGE SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS.

The expenditure of £4,884 under this class was incurred partly in providing roads in the vicinity of the settlements, and partly in making advances to the settlers for improvements effected on their holdings, in terms of the regulations under which they took up their lands. The proposed vote of £17,629 for the current year is to cover the estimated liabilities for further advances, which the settlers can claim, and for such local roads as the vote will permit.

ROADS TO GIVE ACCESS TO NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

Good progress has been made with the work on these roads during the year, notwithstanding the exceptionally wet weather experienced. In addition to work done, several contracts have been prepared, and will be advertised as soon as funds are voted. During next summer it is expected that some important roads will be completed, affording, amongst other advantages, direct coach-communication between the termini of the northern and southern systems of railway.

On the Tunnel to Karioi Road nearly 3 miles of formation are approaching completion, 5 miles have been let by contract, and 6 miles have been let at piecework-rates to the Maoris living in the vicinity of Te Koura and Taumaranui, and the survey of the portion of the road from Mokau Station to Taumaranui, 43 miles, is well advanced towards completion.

On the Kuripapanga to Karioi Road nearly 5 miles of old road have been re-formed, and contracts comprising nearly 12 miles of dray-road are finished, besides about 5 miles of open country tussocked and levelled off.

On the Hunterville to Turangarere Road an engineering survey has been made, 15½ miles have been constructed, 5½ miles are under contract, and plans and specifications are ready for tenders for the remaining 14½ miles to Turangarere, as soon as funds are voted. This will complete the road-communication between Hunterville and the Murimotu Country.

On the Turangarere to Tokaanu Road the grade-survey of 33 miles is com-
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