

in the reports from each district as given in the Appendices ; but the totals of the work performed may be briefly given here :—

Dray-roads constructed	...	...	...	...	229 miles
Dray-roads improved	...	...	...	...	74 "
Dray-roads maintained	...	...	...	...	848 "
Bridle-roads constructed	...	...	...	...	93 "
Bridle-roads improved	...	...	...	...	6 "
Bridle-roads maintained	...	...	...	...	197 "
Bridges built, twenty-seven : of a total length of 2,438ft.					

In addition to roads especially designed for the purpose of opening up the Crown lands for settlement, the department has under its charge a great mileage of main roads running through parts of the country where the population is sparse, and, consequently, where no rates can be levied for their repair. The following comprise the principal of such roads : Oxford to Rotorua ; Rotorua to Tauranga County boundary ; Rotorua to Maketu (in part) ; Rotorua to Wairoa ; Rotorua to Galatea, *via* Waiotapu ; Rotorua to Taupo, and the branch to Maungaiti on the Lichfield Road ; Taupo to Pohue, on the Napier Road ; Taupo to Tokaanu ; Tokaanu to Okahukura ; Tokaanu to Waioru (the junction with the Napier-Karioi Road) ; tunnel to Ohakune *via* Taumarunui ; Alexandra to Kawhia ; the north end of the Stratford route ; Waitomo Caves Road ; Pipiriki to Karioi ; Karioi to Moawhango, on the Napier-Karioi Road ; Makohine (eight miles from Hunterville) to Turangarehe ; Field's Track from Karioi to Mason's ; the south end of the Stratford route, in part ; and Ormond to Opotiki (in part). In the South Island : the main road from Kowhai to near Kumara *via* the Otira Gorge ; the Haast Pass Road ; part of the Waikawa-Catlin's Road ; and other minor works. The West Coast counties were subsidised towards maintenance of the main road from the Railway terminus at Belgrove to Hokitika and Westport. In addition to the above, the local bodies in various parts of the colony have been assisted by funds to maintain and repair a number of roads.

That portion of the main road which runs from Hunterville through the centre of the North Island *via* Lake Taupo, which was in hand at the date of last report, was completed in May, so that coach connection can now be maintained in the summer between Hunterville and Taupo. It is expected that this new route will be a good deal used in the summer time, as it leads through a picturesque district, and affords the most direct route from Wellington to the Thermal Springs District. A considerable length of this road is being metalled at the present time ; and when the Awarua County comes in for settlement, it will be greatly used.

The Stratford route, which is eventually to connect Auckland with Taranaki, has advanced at both ends ; but at the southern end the contractors have had very great difficulties to contend with in the extraordinarily bad weather experienced all through the season. At the present time a length of six miles is under formation by co-operative contracts at the south end, and a like amount at the north end ; in which locality also six miles have been widened out into a cart road. The line has now been located within narrow limits for the whole distance from Ongarue—where it branches off from the Main Trunk Railway line—to Stratford, though all the detail surveys are not complete. The acquisition by the Crown of some considerable areas of land along this road points to the desirability of pushing on the works as quickly as possible, for much of the country is available for settlement, and will be taken up so soon as access is provided.

The Pipiriki-Karioi Road has also advanced towards completion during the year ; and as there is a large number of men engaged on co-operative works on it, the road will probably be finished by next summer, and thus open a large extent of country for settlement.

Progress has also been made on the Catlin's-Waikawa Road, in Otago, which forms another important main road leading through a great extent of Crown land. On its completion, a considerable extension of settlement should take place within that district. At the present time there is a number of co-operative contracts in hand.

Of the various works to open up Crown lands it is needless to speak here, but full details will be found in the reports of the Chief Surveyors. The amount of this sort of work the department has on hand at the present time—taking into consideration the scattered localities in which it lies—is probably greater than has been the case for many years past, and it is scarcely likely to decrease. From the nature of the country in which most of the work lies, it is to be expected that the cost per mile of the roads must increase—many things tend towards this result.

The assistance of the local bodies, in directing and forming many of the roads mentioned in the tables, has been availed of, and in such cases nearly all the detail work is subject to the supervision of the departmental officers. Over and above this, the Chief Surveyors have to approve of the proposed expenditure by the local bodies of all sums derived from "thirds" of deferred-payment, perpetual-lease, lease-in-perpetuity, occupation-with-right-of-purchase ; and "fourths" of small grazing-runs—work which entails a large amount of care and expenditure of time.

During the year, a large proportion of the road works have been executed by co-operative contracts, which have absorbed a considerable number of men, as illustrated by the following table, the numbers being the average for each month :—

1892. April	...	...	90 men.	1892. October	...	...	349 men.
May	...	...	82 "	November	...	...	321 "
June	...	...	147 "	December	...	...	399 "
July	...	...	197 "	1893. January	...	...	377 "
August	...	...	268 "	February	...	...	391 "
September	...	...	339 "	March	...	...	396 "

The following table shows the sums of money borrowed from the Treasury under "The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act Amendment Act, 1891," on the security of the blocks mentioned therein. A great many road-works have been undertaken in connection with the opening of these blocks, and a great deal is still in hand. The system has greatly increased the work of the clerical and account-keeping branches of the department, and great care is necessary to see that the accounts are properly kept.