

employment of five men to keep the road open. The returns of traffic are: Travellers on horseback, 3,091; pack-horses, 1,807; sheep, 1,200; cattle, 70; horses, 40. As in last year's report, besides maintenance, the most urgent work is the formation of the road, with the necessary bridges and culverts, for about two miles, from Mason's to Taukora. I have again to recommend that this part be improved as soon as possible.

Nothing whatever has been done during the year to the proposed Mangawhero Valley Road from Parapara (on Field's Track) to the new township of Raetihi, on the Pipiriki-Ohakune Road. This will be an important road in the future, and ought to be made as soon as the land adjoining is acquired from the Natives. When this more direct and easier road is once formed, Field's Track above Parapara should be merely kept open, but never converted into a dray-road.

Kuripapanga-Karioi Road.—The part of this road maintained by the department only extends from Moawhango to Karioi. No men have been kept constantly on the road, but occasionally there have been several men engaged in clearing slips, cutting water-tables, &c. The chief new works which have been done during the year are: Eleven chains approaches to Moawhango Ford, 20 chains light formation, 145 chains tussocking, and 44 chains catch-water ditches near Waiouru. The Upper Hautapu Bridge contract has been let on the co-operative principle, but as yet no expenditure has been incurred on it. This bridge will be completed in May. All the streams will then be bridged from Hunterville to the Rangipo Desert. The works which most require doing in the coming year are: Widening and metalling the formation in places in the Turangarere Bush, completing the Hautapu Bridge, catchwaters and extra culverts at Rakitepauma, straightening, tussocking with light formation from Waitangi to Karioi, &c. There is already considerable traffic along the road, and when the Pipiriki and Tokaanu Roads are completed there will probably be a very large increase of it.

Hunterville-Turangarere Road.—The formation of this road was completed last July, but the surface was so soft that it was November before the first vehicle was taken through. Owing to the heavy slips last winter, and the large amount of carting for the railway co-operative works, very extensive repairs over the first seventeen miles of the road had to be undertaken and carried out so that the road might be metalled. Before these contracts were let the country adjoining the parts to be metalled was thoroughly explored, and where metal was found, the pits were opened up and tracks cut into them, with the result that the metalling has cost a great deal less than was at first anticipated. The metalling was commenced in October last, and is still in progress. Twelve miles and a half have been completed, and five miles more are in progress. When this latter part is done there will be only $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the road unmetalled, and about three miles of that distance does not require any, unless the traffic becomes exceptionally heavy. This leaves about nine miles and a half, which ought to be done as early as possible next season. The co-operative work on the upper end of the road was completed in May last. Since then various small co-operative contracts have been let on the lower portions of the road, at repairs, widening, straightening, &c. The work done under this system comprises 25 chains stumping and clearing, 180 chains new formation, 44 chains re-formation, 450 lineal feet culverts. The work done under large contracts comprises chiefly 118 chains stumping and clearing, 270 chains formation, 66 running feet bridges, 274 lineal feet culverts, 1,000 chains metalling. This road has had a very beneficial effect in opening up the country, as evidenced by the rapid increase of population at Ohingaiti and Mangateweka. When the Awarua, Motukawa, and adjoining blocks are properly settled by Europeans there will be a very large traffic along this road, quite independent of the fact that it will be a great tourist and mail route between Auckland and Wellington Provinces.

Turangarere-Tokaanu Road.—The total expenditure for the year on this road is £2,098 0s. 1d. Of this sum, £117 4s. 9d. was expended on the engineering survey of the road from Waiouru to Mangatoetoe, 17 miles 26 chains, and the remainder on the construction of the road between the same points. The line of road was completely resurveyed during June and July; the length was reduced by 74 chains, the grades were much improved, and the desert was totally avoided, though by the deviations considerably heavier work was necessitated at places. The construction was commenced on the 11th November, under the co-operative principle, and will be completed early in May, though the road is already quite passable for any sort of wheel-traffic, there being a side-track past the two miles still incomplete. The cost of construction to date is £1,980 15s. 4d., and the work done consists of fifteen miles formation, 50 running feet bridges, 800 lineal feet culverts, and 8,000 superficial feet of timber, cut and delivered. The number of men employed has ranged up to seventy, and the wages earned have averaged from 8d. to 1s. 6d. an hour. The cost of living is very high, and the hardships from the severe climate and from want of firewood so considerable that the prices were purposely fixed somewhat higher than usual. Great care has been taken to make all the work so stable that maintenance will be reduced to a minimum. This road will be considerably used as a tourist, mail, and drover's route, but will not be of much direct use for settlement purposes, as the country in the vicinity is very poor.

Tunnel-Karioi Road (South End).—The work done consists of six miles clearing 10ft. wide, 30 chains stumping and clearing, 95 chains formation, 10ft. bridge, 150 lineal feet of culverts, &c. All this work lies between Karioi and Ohakune, and was performed in order that drays might get through to the part of the Pipiriki-Ohakune Road which had previously been converted into a dray-road. Though this road is now passable for drays, it is quite unfit for coaching purposes. It is therefore urgently to be recommended that funds be provided at once so that this road may be put in hand, formed, and ready for coach-traffic in time for the completion of the Pipiriki-Ohakune Road, which will be probably about next December. The work was mostly done by co-operative labour. On the part from Ohakune to Waimarino—twenty-two miles—a few fallen trees have been removed, otherwise no work has been done. There is scarcely any traffic over this part of the road.

Pipiriki-Ohakune Road.—Of the total expenditure for the year, £662 17s. 1d. was spent in day-labour, £683 0s. 6d. on co-operative labour, and the balance on large contracts. Under day-labour it included inspection, maintenance of twenty-five miles of road, 120 chains stumping and