

Travellers on horseback, 2,421; packhorses, 1,915; sheep, 200; cattle, 247; pigs, 80. Owing to the outlets by the Wanganui River and Hunterville Road, the traffic on this track has not greatly increased. Again I recommend that the Taukora Bridge (30ft. span) and approaches be constructed, so that the 20 chains detour and a bad crossing may be avoided.

The *Mangawhero Valley Road* from Parapara to Raetihi has again been started; seven miles engineering survey and three miles of plans have been done at the south end. At the same end two miles of bridle-track are now in progress, and at the north end (Raetihi) two miles more have just been started. The survey and plans of the whole road (eighteen miles) will probably be completed about August next. The line runs through Native land throughout; still, it is advisable to finish the bridle-track through next summer. When finished as a dray-road it will be the main outlet of the Waimarino Block.

*Watershed Road*.—This is to give access to the Palmerston North Knights of Labour and Somerville Association Blocks. Drays can now get within 140 chains of the Te Kapua Block, and next summer it is proposed to complete this part. The work done comprises four miles engineering survey, 6 miles 20 chains traversing, 360 chains bush-work, 320 chains formation, 150 lineal feet culverts.

*Te Kapua Block*.—In the Knights of Labour Association 180 chains of bush-work are in progress, and during the next year it is proposed to continue this bush-work for six miles along Murray's Track. In the Somerville Association 100 chains of bush-work are in progress, and it is intended to at once start about 200 chains more, chiefly on the Rangaiti Road, which will, when completed, give good access to Pohouuiatane, northern end.

*Turakina Valley Road*.—This will be the main access to the Pohouuiatane, Ruanui, and partly of the Maungakaretu Blocks. During the year the following works were done: Engineering survey of 6 miles 20 chains, 140 chains bush-work, 280 chains formation, 40 chains metalling, 24ft. bridge, 300 lineal feet culverts, concrete ford across the Turakina River. Nearly all the work has been done on the co-operative principle. The character of the work on this part has been unusually heavy, but, with the exception of one bluff, the work on ahead is comparatively easy. It is proposed to push on the road for four miles additional during the coming year, so that dray-traffic may be possible up to the Pohouuiatane Block. The road will have eventually to be continued through to the Murimotu open country.

*Makotuku Valley Road*.—This is really a continuation of the Wanganui-Parapara-Raetihi Road, and will in future form part of a main arterial road to Auckland, *via* the Ohura Valley. It is now being pushed forward by co-operative labour, a fair proportion of the men being settlers. The bush-work on the first five miles of this road is extremely heavy; the falling and clearing are being done of standard dray-road width, but the formation (of dray-road width) is only being done in patches where most required. As yet only 100 chains of bush-work has been completed, but 220 chains more are well advanced. It is proposed to continue the construction of this road as rapidly as possible, so as to thoroughly open the country taken up by the Marton Associations, as well as the country beyond them.

*Waipuna Ridge Road*.—This opens up about 4,000 acres of free-selection land, already mostly taken up by settlers on the Atuahae Block. About two miles engineering survey has been done, and several co-operative parties of settlers started on the work.

*Rangataua Road*.—This opens up part of the Clifton No. 1 Association. Co-operative contracts for 150 chains of bushfelling and clearing dray-road width have been let and started by settlers. The engineering surveys were done last year by Mr. H. J. Lewis.

*Wanganui River Improvement*.—The work during the year has been done under the supervision of Mr. J. T. Stewart, on behalf of the River Trust, with the exception of that done since the 26th February last, when the works were placed under my charge. The past summer has been very favourable for operations on the river, but the Natives have proved very obstructive, though by continued firm dealing it is hoped they will not be so much longer. The works comprise—new rough stone groins, improving previous ones at Ohinaina, Upokopoito, Ruapirau, and Matahiwi bends, shifting boulders and snags at various rapids. The total expenditure for the year is £265 17s. 11d. During April it is intended to further improve the rapids at Upokopoito and Haumoana, and about 1st May stop operations, except the removal of casual snags, till next spring.

The subsidised steamer "Wairere" has made her usual weekly trips to Pipiriki with regularity, except on six occasions during February and March when the river was so low that she could not get up. The steamer has proved very useful in furthering the prosecution of the roadworks in the Waimarino Block and in assisting its settlement, but the element of uncertainty as to her reaching Pipiriki at low water has considerably lessened her usefulness. Another wire rope has been laid down at Haumoana. This, with those laid down last year at other rapids, assists the steamer greatly in ascending the rapids. The owners, Messrs. Hatrick and Co., have another steamer for the river on the way out from England. Her dimensions are: Length, 120ft.; width amidships, 18ft.; draught light, 12in.; estimated speed, 11½ miles an hour; stern-wheel paddles; estimated number of passengers, 400; horse-power, 122 I.H.P. It is intended next summer to establish a bi-weekly service, with very light loads.

*Hales-Pohouuiatane*.—This is a horse-track leading into the Pohouuiatane Block, subsidised by the department to the extent of £500. Five miles of engineering survey and plans have been prepared under the Upper Wangaehu Road Board, and contracts for same called for and let. The works are now in progress. The road will give temporary assistance in the settlement of part of the Pohouuiatane Block, but will be of no permanent value.

*Rangitikei Bridges*.—The Mangawharariki and Otara Bridge sites were levelled, and approaches thereto laid out. Plans and estimates of approaches were also made.

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