

The principal works undertaken on this road during the year have been the construction of several deviations between the Taipo and McDonald's. These were necessary for several reasons. The first was that at various points the grades were difficult and objectionable both for coaching and general traffic; the second was that in many places the Teremakau River had been steadily encroaching for years towards the road, and had thereby destroyed a great extent of good land, and would no doubt ultimately take the road with it. This had necessitated several alterations in previous years, and the former Chief Surveyor had decided upon carrying out some extensive alterations of the route, so as to obviate the difficulty in so far as the worst places were concerned. As it was decided to carry out these works on the co-operative system, careful surveys were made and the work was laid out on the best lines obtainable. This enabled the Inspector to accurately estimate the value of work to be done and to allocate the contracts and the parties to the best advantage. The prices were fixed so as to give fair wages to the men. The weather, however, greatly interfered with this arrangement, making the results in a few cases somewhat unsatisfactory. The co-operative system had in these works a fair trial. Taking into account the broken time, and also the fact that a great many of the men were inexperienced at roadwork and bushfelling, the average wages earned proved satisfactory.

The total length of the deviations was 315 chains, and the cost, including the rock-work benching previously referred to, amounted to £3,672. This gave employment to a good number of men for upwards of eight months. These deviations have greatly improved the road for general traffic, besides removing it clear of encroachment of the river; and already the old road has in several places been completely washed away by recent floods. Another benefit, although not primarily intended to be such, is that the Midland Railway Company will be enabled to get past a difficult place without interfering with the road, as they otherwise would have done.

The remainder of the road almost throughout the year was in splendid order—the cribbing had been renewed in many places, the river- and creek-crossings were clear of boulders and safe to ford, and everything promised a moderate expenditure for the ensuing year. A heavy rainfall, however, set in on the 16th and 17th March, flooding the Teremakau and Otira Valleys, and sending an immense stream against an extended piece of cribbing at a point known as Selby's. This ultimately gave way, scouring the road with it for 10 chains. Immediately the flood subsided fords were made to allow the traffic to pass, and a party of men are now at work restoring the cribbing, at an estimated cost of £300. Unfortunately, at this point there is no way of taking the road except along the river, and, as the trend of the stream is towards this place, the work of maintenance will always be a source of anxiety and expense. Should the Midland Railway Company's works go on the embankment necessary for this line will be on the river-side of the road and thoroughly protect it from any future encroachment.

The Gorge portion of the road is now in good order, with the exception of the two wooden bridges crossing the Otira River. These have been strengthened and secured to the best advantage, but all that can be done is only patchwork, as the bridges are not only too light for traffic, but are practically done. (See also p. 53 for details of Canterbury portion.)

Greenstone-Teremakau Road.—I received instructions to proceed with the expenditure of this vote nearly two months ago. The surveyor I sent to take the necessary cross-sections on the old surveyed line found that the route as laid out under the direction of the Grey County many years ago was not only a very expensive but also an unnecessarily tortuous route. This necessitated a resurvey of the greater part, with the result of a saving of $48\frac{1}{2}$ chains in a distance of 3 miles 51 chains, besides taking the road on less difficult grades and over easier country.

Cook's River Southward Road.—There has been no expenditure in connection with new works on this road during the year.

Gillespie's to Manakiaiu Road.—The works undertaken in this locality are the survey of a new track commencing about a mile and a half north of Cook's River and terminating half a mile south of Ohinetamatea River. In addition to this, works are now in progress making a deviation of the track at Karangarua River.

Makawiho to Mahitahi and Jacob's River to Bruce Bay.—These two votes have been grouped, and the expenditure spread over the road between Hunt's Beach and Bruce Bay. The portion of the main road from Hunt's Beach to a point a mile south of the Makawiho River, which had been originally badly constructed, was put in thorough repair, and a new bridge erected across the Manakiaiu River. From the point above referred to it was deemed advisable to deviate towards Bruce Bay, leaving the unconnected portion of the main south road to be undertaken at some future time. This deviation, including a bridge across the Papakiri River, has also been completed. These new works, repairs, and bridges have cost a considerable sum, but the advantages to southern travellers and settlers more than counterbalance the outlay.

Lake Mapouriki to Franz Josef Glacier.—This vote has been expended on the construction of a tourist track along the south bank of the Waiho River to the Franz Josef Glacier. During the progress of this work a great flood occurred (the highest on record), which destroyed portion of the constructed track, necessitating a further outlay and a deviation from the original line. This road opens up the beauties of the glacier most easy of access in Westland, and will no doubt be used by many during ensuing seasons.

Haast Pass Track.—The works undertaken during the year have been limited to repairs of track, renewing culverts, clearing trees from track, and keeping it open for traffic. The expenditure necessary in connection with a new track round the Clark Bluff proved to be in excess of the money available from vote. I intend asking for a further sum for this necessary work.

Nelson, Westport, Grey, and Hokitika Road.—Towards maintenance of this road I have certified to the following expenditure, viz.: Grey County, £300 (vote £600); Westland County, £412 10s. (vote £450); Brunner County, £67 (vote £67): total, £779 10s. These roads I have inspected from the boundary of Inangahua-Grey Counties to Hokitika.