

would be to reduce the wages to be earned by co-operative contractors somewhat below current rates.

10. Any suggestions as to the settlement of the unemployed upon lands as to enable them to provide for themselves and families in the district in which they are at work, &c.—Referring to this district, to induce the unemployed to settle on the land, the system prevailing of locating them on twenty- or thirty-acre village settlements will not suffice. As there are no employers of labour to help the settler to eke out a livelihood, and the land will not keep him, I would suggest that nothing less than 80 to 100 acres be offered to him, and that of fair quality and accessible. Supposing you put a dozen of these men with their families on one block to enable them to live till the land was self-supporting, I would adopt the following means:—

First, the Government would fell and log up the road-line right through to the furthest section, and make the road passable by culverting, &c., for a pack-horse. The unemployed settlers could be put on to do this, or it could be done before they were put on the land, and I would make the time that they took possession of the land the beginning of the summer season. Having built their huts or erected their tents, as may be, give them work to form the road; say, contracts that would keep them employed from October till the end of March. They would earn a cheque sufficient to provide them in food and clothing during the winter months. Give them no work during the winter, but let them devote their time till October again in felling bush and improving their sections. I may here state that the winter season is the time a settler should be at home felling bush for the burning season. Work given him in the winter time, owing to so much broken time, does not do him half so much good as it would if given during the summer months. During the six or seven months the settler would be at home he would fell ten or twelve acres of bush single-handed, and do other improvements besides. Repeat this for two or three seasons at the most, and the settler would have something like thirty to forty acres of grass, and be independent of outside work in a great measure. I may state that I have spoken on this subject to a number of our workmen settlers, and they all agree that if they had a year or two's work on the lines indicated they would not trouble the Government for any further work. The system of doing the work during the winter months retards this idea, because it takes two months to do six weeks' work, if not longer, and the money is pretty well eaten up as soon as earned, and the work done is more costly to the department. It would be necessary that the settlers get the work on road-lines near their sections, if possible, to be at home every night, so that, if it came a wet day, they could do a little work at home when they could not on the roads. So far as the settlers unemployed are concerned, all at present looking for work would be off the books in a year or two's time, and might even be able to give a little employment themselves to outsiders. Their leaving the labour market would make room for others, and so on. To facilitate the independence of the settlers, I would suggest that the department turn its attention to the metalling of the main roads as a means of enabling the settlers to cart on them summer or winter, and as there is a prospect of a dairy factory being established here it is essential that the settlers have every facility for bringing in their milk. Another source of income to many poor settlers if the roads were metalled would be the sale of posts. Mine-props and even hewn railway-sleepers could be had in considerable quantity by the Railway Department when the railway comes up a little closer to the settlement. At present the timber is going to waste that otherwise would be a source of income. The unemployed from outside the district would, I have no doubt, take up the land if work was given them on the lines indicated, and become as steady and hard-working members of the community as the settlers already here.

A. Cross, Inspector.

#### SOUTHLAND.

Work on the co-operative system has been considerably extended in the Southland Land District during the past financial year, and, in addition to the construction of the Waikawa-Catlin's Road, work has been done on the Lillburn roads, Waiau Bush Road, Longwood Roads, Kisbee-Wilson's River Tramway, and a small amount of work on the Waiau-Preservation Inlet Road.

*Waikawa-Catlin's Road.*—Good progress has been made, and a substantial road has been constructed for a length of 10 miles 58 chains. Fifty-one co-operative contracts have been completed, and there has been an average of five men engaged on each contract. In addition to forming a cart-road 18ft. wide, portions of it (altogether 1 mile 35 chains) have been metalled. Also log culverts, 151 lineal feet in the aggregate and bridges over the Long Beach Creek, Chasland, and Little Chasland Rivers (130 lineal feet altogether) have been built. Fascines have also been laid on short lengths, 23 chains altogether. The minimum daily wage earned per man has been 4s. 4d., and the maximum 9s. 2d., making an average of 6s. 9d. The average number of hours worked per man per day, all weathers, has been seven, and the total average loss of time by bad weather per man has been thirty days. About 37 chains of formation are in progress, and should be finished about the end of April; and about 33 chains are still untouched up to the fifteen-mile peg, or sixteen miles from the junction. The bridge over the Tautuku River is well in hand. Considering the amount of traffic on this road, which is a bush-road, and mostly of clay formation, the road has stood wonderfully well.

*Lillburn Roads.*—Work was begun on these roads in June last, and has been continued up to the present time. The road has not been formed continuously, but only those portions which were too swampy to carry traffic have been drained and formed, and side-cuttings have been made at the terraces. Twenty-five co-operative contracts have been completed, and the average strength of each gang was three men. The total amount of formation completed is 4 miles 20 chains; and 6 miles 74 chains of ditching has been made to drain swamps. Two small bridges, one 10ft. and one 13ft., and log culverts aggregating 900 lineal feet have been built. The minimum wage earned per man per day, all weathers, was 2s. 2d., and the maximum 10s. 8d., giving an average of 6s. 5d. The