

WELLINGTON.

WESTERN DISTRICT.

During my absence on leave, from 4th May to 17th December, 1894, the works in the Wanganui district were carried on by Messrs. H. J. Lewis and H. J. Lowe, the subdivisions of work being as below. The following were under the charge of Mr. H. J. Lewis: Pipiriki-Karioi Road, Manga-where-Murimotu Road, Raetihi-Parapara Road, Raetihi-Ohura Road, Makotuku Valley Road, Waipuna Ridge Road, Rangataua Road, Middle Road, Taumaranui-Ohakune Road, Momohaki Village Road, Huikumu Road. The remaining works were under the charge of Mr. H. J. Lowe: Ohingaiti-Tokaanu Road, Moawhango-Karioi Road, Mangawharariki Road, Mangaweka Township, Watershed and Murray's Roads, Rongoiti Road, Turakina Valley Road, Otaihape Improved Farm, Otaihape-Paengaroa Road.

It is satisfactory to note the very efficient and conscientious manner in which these officers carried out their respective duties, often under conditions of great difficulty.

Pipiriki-Karioi Road.—This road is now in excellent condition. There were comparatively few slips during last wet season, but, owing to the mud, the road was for some months almost impassable. Coaches have been running regularly since October, usually twice a week each way. This is becoming a favourite tourist route. Most of the wool from Murimotu now comes down this way to the coast. The new work done consists of one bridge, 30ft. span; 36 chains bushwork; 92 chains formation; 160 chains metalling; and 120 chains extra bushfelling, 3 chains wide, to allow of the free action of the sun and wind. There are 60 chains of metalling still in progress near Raetihi and at Huikumu Saddle; 24 chains of a dray-road has been formed, and a large shell-rock metal-pit opened out, and breaking started. Seams of shell-rock have also been discovered at other points. Next spring metalling should be started early and twelve miles of the worst places done. Till the road is metalled it cannot be depended upon for winter traffic. Totara mile-posts have been cut for this road. It is proposed to number the distances in miles on this road, as well as on the Tokaanu and Ohingaiti Roads, from Waiouru, as the most central and convenient initial point. This should in future be called the Pipiriki-Waiouru Road. Total expenditure for the year, £1,475 7s. 10d.

Ohingaiti-Tokaanu Road (to Waihohonu).—This road is also in excellent condition, though the traffic upon it is very heavy. The amount of wool traffic has been diminished by the opening of the Pipiriki-Karioi Road, but the amount of coach and general traffic has much increased. The new work done consists of 100 chains extra bushfelling, fascining, and creek diversions, Makohine; 285 chains metalling, and 163 chains more metalling well advanced towards completion. The whole road from Vinegar Hill to 31m. 40ch. in the open country at Matapouri is now metalled, or will be during next month. About two miles and a half has been coated with 12in. of sand, naturally mixed with hard nodules, which promises to answer well. Three small repairing contracts are at present in hand, depositing metal where most required over a length of ten miles. Next summer several more repairing contracts will be necessary, also about two miles of new metalling at Turangarere and Te Horo. It is to be regretted that so much valuable milling timber is being felled and destroyed by fire on the Hautapu flats. During last spring 30,000 young trout were liberated in the Hautapu Stream. Total expenditure for the year, £3,066 7s. 2d.

Moawhango-Karioi Road.—In future this road should be called the Moawhango-Te Horo Road, the part from Te Horo to Waiouru being already included in the Ohingaiti-Tokaanu Road; and the part from Waiouru to Karioi should be included in the proposed name Pipiriki-Waiouru Road. This road is in good condition, the only bad places in winter being the Turangarere and Te Horo Bushes. The new work done consists of 82 chains light formation in the open country, a 40ft. understrut bridge with approaches over the Hautapu River at Turangarere, and 23 chains metalling near Moawhango. Total expenditure, £613 1s. 7d.

Mangawhero-Murimotu Road (Field's Track).—The work done has been chiefly maintenance. It is at present in good order, and now remains so throughout the year, except from June to October. The new work comprises two rough bridges and eleven culverts. The traffic returns are steadily diminishing, owing to the opening out of other routes, and are as follows: Travellers on horseback, 2,215; packhorses, 1,384. The Taukora Bridge is again proposed for construction during next summer. Total expenditure, £747 9s.

Raetihi-Parapara Road.—The engineering survey, twenty-three miles and a quarter in length, of this road has been completed, and twenty miles of plans drawn, of which seventeen have been done during the year. The following additional work has been done: At the southern or Parapara end—629 chains bushwork, 114 chains of which being 3 chains wide on flats, 588 chains bridle-track formation, and 240 lineal feet culverts; at the northern or Raetihi end—364 chains bushwork, of which 186 chains is 2 chains wide on flats, 181 chains dray-road formation, 400 lineal feet culverts, and a 10ft. bridge. The total length over which bushwork has been done has been burnt off and sown in grass. There still remains a gap of ten miles and three-quarters in the centre on which no work has been done. On this part an 80ft. bridge over the Mangawhero River is required. If this were built a rough horse-track could be very cheaply put through, as most of the country is easy, and in many parts already traversed by old Native tracks. All work is at present stopped. Total expenditure, £1,265 2s. 11d.

Raetihi-Ohura Road.—A large amount of work has been done on this road during the year. The bushwork for the first four miles and the formation for the last two miles were very heavy. The road is formed throughout of standard widths, all work being on the co-operative principle, and unusually well finished. From forty to sixty men have been kept constantly employed on this road. The work done comprises the following: 460 chains bushwork, 500 chains formation, 35 running feet of bridges, and 825 lineal feet of culverts; besides, 60 chains of formation up to the 7-mile peg are now approaching completion. This road is of so much importance for developing the large tract of country between Raetihi and Ohura that it should be pushed on well ahead of settlement. Land is already taken up in associations for seven miles beyond the end of the formation. Total expenditure for the year, £2,913 0s. 6d.