

part of the main line between Wellington and Palmerston North. Since the 31st March, 1895, three miles of bush have been felled and cleared, and 3 miles 56 chains of road have been formed 18ft. wide; thirty earthenware glazed culverts, varying in size from 9in. to 2ft., a total length of 960ft., have been laid; 26 chains of side-drains made, and 240 cubic yards of rock have been excavated. Owing to the insufficiency of funds, 36 chains of this section still remain undone: provision for completing this short distance will no doubt be made in due course. The continuation of this line through the Te Horo Riding, between the Waikanae River and Hadfield (a distance of four miles and a half), has been explored and reported upon by myself, and when it is formed the connecting-link on the main road from Wellington to Palmerston North will be complete, and will prove of great benefit to the settlers for stock-driving purposes, as at present cattle have to be driven round by the sea-beach.

During the year a very great quantity of work has passed through my hands. 93 miles 23 chains of engineering surveys have been made—24 miles 61 chains under Mr. R. H. Reaney, and 68 miles 52 chains under my own supervision. 108 miles 40 chains of dray-road, and 98 miles 30 chains of horse-road has been maintained, making a total of 206 miles 70 chains. Also, 565 contracts have been let, creating employment for 1,710 men. Thirty-one bridges have been erected, totalling in length 1,970ft.; 44 miles 40 chains of dray-road and 51 miles 10 chains of horse-road have been constructed, and 6 miles 20 chains of dray-road and 1 mile 71 chains of horse-road have been improved; 85,171 cubic yards of rock have been excavated; 1,056 culverts of various sizes, from 6in. in diameter to 5ft. by 5ft. box-culvert, have been laid, totalling in length three miles and a quarter. There were also a great quantity of slips removed, and other work done. The clerical and draughting work during the year increased considerably, mainly owing to the extra work entailed through Mr. Reaney's roads having been handed over to my charge; and, notwithstanding the fact that additional assistance was granted, a deal of overtime work had to be performed.

A. C. TURNER, Road-surveyor.

NELSON.

Nelson-Havelock Road.—A grant of £100 was made to the Waimea County, and has been expended in maintenance and repairs generally between Nelson and the Wangamoa Saddle, a length of thirty miles.

Belgrove-Westport-Reefton Road.—Last year has been the first since the department took over the road from the counties, and it has now been brought into good condition for tourist and other traffic. It was found that seven of the maintenance contracts had been taken too low, and had to be given up; when, by instructions, the work was carried on by day-labour. During the months of September, January, and March unusually heavy floods took place, each one of which caused a considerable amount of injury to bridges, river-banks, and road, especially to the latter, by heavy slips and washouts, causing heavy blocks, necessitating a number of extra hands being employed to open the road for wheeled traffic as speedily as could be done. The March flood was the heaviest known in the Buller River for ten years previously, the damage done by which extended over a length of eighty miles, the road for several chains near the Lyell having slipped bodily into the river; while the Ohika Bridge had 10ft. depth of backwater over it. Nineteen new bridges have been constructed, from 15ft. to 130ft. spans; and sixteen bridges, from 15ft. to 440ft. spans, have been repaired and mainly replanked. The number of open watercourses crossing the road rendered travelling by coach very rough and disagreeable, and forty-six box-culverts have been substituted, and the surface brought up to the grade. Fifty-six miles in length have been remetalled. A deviation 9 chains in length has been made near Longford, and several others are still required, to ease some very steep grades. Portions of the road having been continually cut up in winter by carting coal to several of the river-dredges in carts with narrow tyres, it became necessary to issue a Proclamation of by-laws by the Minister of Lands regulating the traffic. At the Waitahu Bridge approaches the last flood has washed away part of the river-bank, which will require protective-works; and at Larry's Creek Bridge much damage was done. In March a contract was accepted for the reconstruction of the Reefton Bridge, to the amount of £750.

Belgrove-Tophouse-Tarndale Road.—The Waimea County has expended a sum of £165 on the maintenance and repairs of twenty miles in length, £100 of which was granted by Government, and the balance came out of the county funds. From Tophouse to Tarndale the road is in the Amuri County, which has done nothing whatever to keep it in repair for some years, and for a distance of seventeen miles it is nearly impassable for dray-traffic. £100 has been granted, of which £58 8s. 9d. has been expended on protection work on the Buller River to preserve the road near the slips. A new bridge is required at Hell's Gate, Wairau Gorge, which will shortly be taken in hand.

Blenheim-Kaikoura-Waiatu.—A maintenance contract for the year of twenty miles in length was let for £144. In May a grant of £80 was made, and with this sum about 20 chains length of cutting into the Conway River was widened, and the roadway brought up to the level over four large culverts near the Whale's Back, a work that was much needed.

Takaka Roads and Bridges.—A grant of £200 made to the Collingwood County has been expended in making deviations on the East Takaka Road, and in widening a horse-track along the east bank of the Takaka River into a dray-road, thus avoiding two crossings of the river. This work extends over a distance of five miles, and £100 is to be expended in metalling. A new bridge, of 40ft. span, has been constructed over the Gorge Creek.

Ferntown-Pakawau Road.—The Collingwood County was granted £200 for this road, but work