

Reefton-Marua.—1 mile 2 chains of horse-track was converted into a dray-road by the Inangahua County Council.

Gravity Creek.—The Buller County Council, with a grant of £100 out of the vote, made 70 chains of dray-road.

Mud Flat, Karamea.—24 chains of a 6 ft. bridle-track was formed and metalled; the bush also was cleared 1 chain wide the whole length.

Wangapeka-Wanganui.—The expenditure on this road, and for a bridle-track of 1 mile 10 chains, was made at the Wanganui end. This was first cleared 1 chain wide, and after formation a 4 ft. strip of metal was put on it. The balance of the expenditure was at the Wangapeka end, on which four miles of bridle-track was made.

Seddonville-Mokihinui.—Part of this vote was expended by the Buller County Council in forming 25 chains of very necessary dray-road between the places.

Fairdown-Waimangaroa.—The Buller County Council formed a bridle-road of 50 chains, and generally improved the road.

THOMAS HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

Belgrove-Westport-Reefton Road.

The supervision of the maintenance of that portion of the Belgrove-Westport-Reefton Road between the Hope Junction and Westport and the Inangahua Junction and Reefton was transferred to me as from the 1st September, 1896, and since then the ordinary maintenance has been well attended to. Owing to the nature of the country through which the road passes necessitating crib-logging and a great number of bridges and culverts, the maintenance is very heavy, and the constant renewal of crib-logging and timber bridges and culverts, besides the building of extra culverts to carry off storm-water, makes the work more costly. In consequence of the extraordinary floods in March, 1896, when a great amount of damage was done to the road, a very heavy expenditure had been incurred before I took charge, and the bulk of the work of repairing damage caused by those floods had been finished. Since the 1st of September last several new pieces of crib-logging have been put in and several small bridges have been repaired and redecked, and the channels have been cleared of Larry's and Boatman's Creeks, and some protective work has been done at Larry's. Fairly good weather prevailed for six months, and no unusual work was rendered necessary until the beginning of this month, when the rivers were again flooded; and, on the 10th March, 1897, it was found that the road was damaged in places, though, as compared with that of March, 1896, it was trifling. Very few slips came down this time, but the damage was chiefly confined to bridges and bridge approaches. The centre pier of the Newton Bridge is partly swept away, one bridge at Husband's Creek is swept away, and the approaches to the others are damaged, and a small bridge at Hunter's sawmill is also damaged. At Landing Creek the crate which was recently built to divert the stream and protect the road is considerably damaged, and below the stream itself is choked with driftwood in two places. I estimate the cost of repairing the flood-damage at £500. During the year 1897-98 a considerable sum will be required for repairing bridges—viz., Waitahu Bridge, £400; Inangahua Junction Bridge, £400; Owen Bridge, £200; Matiri Bridge, £150; and sundry small bridges, £350: total, £1,500. For painting bridges £500 will be required. For widening the approaches to Reefton Bridge and fencing them, to guard against accident, about £100 will be required. For ordinary maintenance, including metalling, inspection travelling-expenses, and contingencies, £4,400 will be required: making the total required for the year £7,000.

I have not been able to go into particulars of the cost of constructing the bridges for which authorities have been issued, but so far as I can see the votes are not sufficient. For instance, at Landing Creek £200 is voted, and the road must be raised on either side of the bridge for several chains, and the bridge must be high enough to give a good water-way, and, owing to drift timber, a clear span of about 80 ft. will be required. The approaches to the other bridges will be a considerable item, and deviations will be required for coach-traffic while the bridges are being built.

Prospecting Track, Lyell to Larry's.—A start has been made from both ends, and a track has been cleared a few miles from the Lyell end towards the open country on the Brunner Range, and at Larry's end a track has been cleared through the bush from the open country to Larry's. If a pack-track is to be made a considerable sum will be required.

FREDERICK WITHER, Road Surveyor.

WESTLAND.

Stafford-Waimea.—The bushfelling, clearing, and formation has been completed for a further distance of 13½ chains on this road, and the culverts have been built, but no metalling has been done.

Lower Arahura Bridge (repairs).—This bridge was thoroughly overhauled and repaired, and should be safe for traffic for some years to come.

Mount Howe Track.—The authority for this work was issued to the Grey County Council, and about half a mile of bridle-track has been formed and metalled by that body.

Westland Ferry Service.—The amount voted has been issued to the Westland County Council, and has been duly expended by them in maintenance of the ferries over the various rivers in the county.

Whitcombe Valley Track (Kokatahi).—Mr. C. E. Douglas and party have explored and graded by clinometer a fairly good road, with a minimum slope of 1 in 10, through the worst portion of this valley, and there is no doubt about the successful issue of this survey.

Lake Mapourika.—We have a balance of £88 1s. 9d. still in hand for this work, and this we hope to expend at an early date in the widening of this road.

Haast Pass Track.—During the year a considerable amount of maintenance work has been done on this road, including the renewal of a number of small bridges and culverts. Rock-blasting