

APPENDIX No. 4.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF CHIEF SURVEYORS AND ROAD SURVEYORS ON THE WORKING OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SYSTEM FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31st MARCH, 1897.

AUCKLAND.

DURING the year, with the exception of some large bridge contracts and jobs done by day-labour, all works have been undertaken under the co-operative system.

On reference to my co-operative return, you will notice that there is not much difference between the maximum and minimum wages earned, except where caused by men working longer hours. The average wage earned throughout the year by all parties is 7s. 0½d. per day of eight hours. I attribute this to having employed local settlers, and allowing them to select their own parties. As a rule, there are always some men in these parties who have a knowledge of road-making. In nearly all cases the men have had to supply their own tools, tents, &c., and I have hired to them screw-jacks if required. There is no doubt that the co-operative system has considerably increased the work of the road branch—in the office owing to the multiplicity of accounts and vouchers for individual workers, and in the field owing to the much greater number of inspections which are required.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.

NORTH ISLAND CENTRAL.

DURING the year fifty-three contracts were completed, averaging £56 9s. each. They include bush-felling and clearing, earth and rock excavation and embankment, and sawing timber for culverts.

The highest wage earned per day of eight hours was 9s. 10½d.: this was on a small bush-felling contract of £24, and the men were exceptionally good at that kind of work. The lowest wage per day was 1s. 8½d., but these were Maori men and boys, and they only worked three and a half hours per day. The average wage on all the work for all weathers was 5s. 1½d., which is at the rate of 10d. per hour for the time actually worked, or 6s. 8d. for a day of eight hours.

The loss of time through wet weather was about one-ninth, which is nearly double that of last year. This, I think, is accounted for by the very wet weather experienced during the last three months, which are generally the finest in the year.

The workmen have been very well behaved, and appear satisfied with the work. There has been no grumbling, and no complaints have been made, either by the men or by the storekeepers who supply them.

Applications for work have been much more numerous during the last month than for the previous year. Nearly all who have applied to me for work have just come from the Thames and Coromandel mining districts, and from what they say they are likely to be followed by large numbers who cannot obtain work in the mining districts.

C. W. HURSTHOUSE, Road Surveyor.

ROTORUA.

SIXTY-FOUR contracts were let, employing an average of about a hundred men throughout the year. At present there are 212 men employed in the district. It has been found expedient, in constructing roads through Native lands, to employ as many Natives as Europeans on the works. I find that Natives as road-makers are quite equal to Europeans as to the class of work they do. They are satisfied with less pay, and give less trouble, and their employment is of considerable relief to them. Only Natives are employed who have an interest in the land through which the road is being taken. Committees are elected for the selection of the men to be employed and for the settlement of troubles connected with the work. I find it is not possible to limit or regulate them as to numbers or time of working, so that no records have been kept as to their average hours or daily earnings, more especially as I did not think the information was required in connection with them. You will therefore understand that all such information in table of "Co-operative contracts let" refers to Europeans only.

The contracts were let on the Rotorua-Te Teko, Rangitaiki, Ruatoki-Waiotahi, Waiotahi Block, Papamoa Block, Rotorua-Galatea-Waikaremoana, and Ngongotaha Roads.

The highest average earnings were 10s. 1d. per day on the Rotorua-Te Teko Road, where the men were good workmen, and worked long hours. The lowest average was 4s. 5d., on the Rangitaiki Road.