

dray-road. At about a mile and a half from Ohura Road a branch road is laid off to run down Putikituna Stream to Tangarakau, and this road will, when made, give access to Tangarakau Stream about two miles nearer Wanganui River, and avoid some difficult rapids.

*Putiki*.—This road branches off Mimi Road, near Tongaporutu Stream, and runs up the latter. When opened it will give access to Okau, Mangatawa, and Greenland Improved-farm Settlements. 91 chains of road has been felled, stumped, and cleared, and this is being formed as a bridle-road. Work is still in progress.

*Huiroa Township (Bushfelling)*.—As the survey of the township had been completed before this vote was granted, and the felling and burning the bush would have destroyed the survey-pegs, no action has been taken towards felling the bush, and the vote will not be required.

*Autawa and Pita Roads*.—The vote includes also Pukemahoe Road. On the above roads 32 chains has been felled, stumped, and cleared; 42½ chains has been formed as bridle-road; and 56 lineal feet of culverts has been constructed.

*Denbigh Road (Subsidy)*.—This road is under control of Manganui Road Board, who have raised a loan of £1,000 for metalling the road from railway-line towards Derby Road, and draining and forming parts of the road in Block XVI., Egmont. The subsidy will be spent in conjunction with the loan, though specially for draining and forming. Through delay in letting the work it is not yet in progress.

*Anderson Road and Bridges*.—The Hawera County Council have let two contracts for metalling on this road (which is now named Rawhitiroa Road), one of four miles and three-quarters in length, starting at Eltham, to be of machine-broken metal laid 11 ft. wide by 8 in. deep, value of contract £3,363; and one of two miles and a half in length, to be of shell-rock, laid 11 ft. wide by 9 in. deep, commencing at Pukengahu Road and extending to Mangamingi Road, value of contract £1,050. Of the former contract, four miles and a quarter has been completed, and the whole contract would have been finished but for the recent wet weather. Of the latter contract, about 40 chains only is completed. Tenders were invited for gravelling about three miles and three-quarters lying between the above contracts and including the portion of road crossing the ridge between Ngaire and Mangamingi Block, but those received were too high, and were declined. Five miles of this road were maintained for the greater part of the year.

*Mangamingi*.—During the year 63 chains bridle-road formation was made on Wingrove Road, including 128 lineal feet of culverts. Part of the expenditure under this heading was for work completed the previous year.

*Huiroa Roads*.—This is referred to under the heading "Toro Block."

*Mangaotuku Road*.—8 chains of the road has been felled, stumped, &c., 12 chains of bridle-road formed, 37 lineal feet of culverts constructed, and about four miles maintained. The balance of vote is being retained for building a bridge (now in progress) over Mangaehu and Mangaotuku Streams at their junction on Mangaotuku Road.

*Ohura*.—This vote was for metalling Ohura Road onwards from the end of the present metal for a distance of nine miles and a half from Stratford, as a subsidy of £1 for £1 on a loan to be raised by the Stratford County Council. Through disagreements amongst the settlers interested the loan was not raised, and consequently no metalling was done. About four or five miles of metalling, in sections, in continuance of that completed last year, is urgently needed, as the traffic increases yearly, and the earth road remains good for a period barely exceeding five to six months.

*Ngaire*.—With the exception of about 45 chains now in hand, the whole of the draining of Ngaire Swamps is completed, the total length of main drains being eleven miles and a quarter, and of circuit drain sixteen miles and three-quarters. Of these, ten miles and a quarter has been dug this year. Thirteen miles has also been maintained, and some of the main drains deepened. This latter is a heavy and expensive work, as the bottom of the drain is usually a mass of timber, which has to be blown out by dynamite. Fortunately, but a moderate amount of this work has to be done in the parts where the subsidence is greatest. Though it is yet early to judge as to the full beneficial results to be derived from the drainage, yet the benefits already achieved are very encouraging. Where previous to the draining there existed only a wet quaking morass there is now fairly firm and dry ground, on which (where the surface-growth has been burned and grass-seeds have been sown) luxuriant pasture is growing, maintaining small herds of young cattle and small mobs of sheep. What is now required is that each settler should (as some are doing) cut their boundary drains—the water from which will flow into the main drains—burn off the surface-scrub and rushes, sow grass-seeds, and stock the land with young cattle or sheep. From the results already attained, I have no doubt that if the settlers act quickly, and with judgment, the whole of the swamp-lands will be firm and luxuriant pasture within four years. The average cost of cutting the main drains 13 ft. wide at top, 6 ft. wide at bottom, by 7 ft. deep, has been £4 15s. 4½d. per lineal chain, or 7·08d. per cubic yard; and for cutting the circuit drains 8 ft. wide at top, 2 ft. wide at bottom, by 6 ft. deep, £2 12s. 2½d. per lineal chain, or 8·94d. per cubic yard, the higher relative cost of circuit drains being in consequence of the excessive amount of timber we had to cut through. The surface has not subsided as much as was anticipated, the greatest subsidence being where the drains are free from timber. In no instance will the subsidence affect the good results derived from the drains. In addition to draining the swamps, and in connection with the vote, 211 chains of service-roads has been felled, stumped, and formed in the block, and 92 lineal feet of culverts constructed.

*Central Patea Valley*.—No work has been done on the Maben or Ball Roads leading into this valley, but £73 17s. has been expended in compensation for lands taken for roads. Road-felling and formation will probably commence in spring.

*Kaimanuka and Rawhitiroa*.—The expenditure was on the maintenance of sixteen miles of road.

*Mangamingi Township*.—Forty-three acres have been felled and burned, and will shortly be sown in grass. This township is situated at the junction of Anderson and Mangamingi (now Rawhitiroa) Roads, and is sufficiently level for the purpose required.