

is being done out of the balance of loading excepting as settlers desire particular parts to be improved.

Kaupokonui Block.—Auroa Road. The Waimate Road Board spent £30 of the loading money in improving about 40 chains of Auroa Road at its upper end.

Rangiwahakaoma Block.—No expenditure.

Kaitangihewenua No. 2 Block.—Rawhitiroa Road. This expenditure includes also that from vote 91, item 406. 4 miles 51 chains of the road has been felled, stumped, and cleared; four miles and a half has been formed as a 5 ft. bridle-road, and 37 chains as a dray-road; fifty culverts, of a total length of 756 ft., and three bridges, of a total length of 131 ft., have been constructed; and eleven miles of road has been maintained. 1 mile 16 chains of engineering survey was made to complete that in hand the previous year. These works are in addition to any shown under the heading of "Anderson's Roads and Bridges."

Opaku-Kapara Block.—One mile of engineering survey, 20 chains of felling, stumping, and bridle-road forming, and the clearing of slips on the Upper Okahutiria and Lower Mataimoana Roads, comprises all done on this block during the year. One contract for felling and formation is now in hand, and will give access to the last section selected in the block.

Rawhitiroa Block.—No expenditure.

Whenuakura Block.—No expenditure.

Makahu Block.—No expenditure.

GENERAL.

The total number of contracts let during the year was 399, in addition to the thirty-eight in progress on the 1st April, 1897. With the exception of twenty-six, all of these are completed. All were on the co-operative principle, excepting three, one for metalling Ball Road, one for general carting on Ohura Road, and one for Purangi Bridge.

G. F. ROBINSON, Road Surveyor.

WELLINGTON WEST.

Pipiriki-Waiouru Road.—This road suffered considerably during last Easter flood. The Makotuku Bridge, 60 ft. span, was partially destroyed. Here a good ford has been made for traffic. The Toanui Bridge, 30 ft. span, was undermined, but has since been repaired. The Mangawhero Flats have also had to be extensively repaired. Maintenance, consequently, has been very costly during the period, amounting to over £650, of which the cost of repairs of damages caused by the Easter floods is responsible for about £370. A large amount of metalling has been done, extending over five miles. The metal consists of 2,800 cubic yards of gravel and grit, and 3,002 cubic yards of broken shell-rock. Two small contracts are still uncompleted. When done there will be continuous metalling from the Huikumu Saddle to the west side of Waipuna, and from the east side of Waipuna to Toanui—a total length of twenty-one miles, of which a net length of 11 miles 43 chains is metalled, and 1 mile 45 chains in progress. The shell-rock makes a splendid road, but, owing to heavy stripping and long cartage, is very expensive. Besides metalling, 21 chains of manuka fascines were laid down at Toanui, and 12 acres of bush felled around the Mangaetoroa metal-pits. The worst parts of the road are now done. There is no doubt, however, that as the traffic becomes heavier the whole road from Pipiriki to Ohakune, twenty-four miles, will require metalling. To prepare for this, shell-rock breaking should be started during the winter at Huikumu and Waipuna.

Raetihi-Ohura Road.—Except parts that do not require metalling this road is now metalled up to the Makotuku Valley Road Junction, a distance of 180 chains, of which 146 chains has been metalled with grit this season. Beyond that only maintenance has been done. A contract is now in hand for bridging the Mangaone Creek at 8 miles 30 chains.

Waimarino.—This includes several branch roads, on which work has been done as follows: Mokotuku Valley, 109 chains dray-road, 22 chains bridle-track; Waipuna Ridge, 62 chains bridle-track; Ameku Ridge, 48 chains bridle-track, 162 lineal feet culverts; Middle Road, 40 chains bridle-track; Pipipi Road, 20 chains dray-road, 24 lineal feet culverts. The Mokotuku Valley, being part of a future important road along the west of the mountains, is the one most requiring improvement. It is now a good bridle-track throughout. The Middle Road requires extension to give access to some sections. The other roads mentioned are fairly well completed as bridle-tracks for the present.

Huntermville, 1, 2, 3.—Considerable progress has been made in bridle-track extension during the past year. The work done comprises 865 chains engineering survey on various roads, 365 chains bridle-track on the Mangamahoe Road, and 73 chains on the Karetu Road. The Mangamahoe Road is now being extended to within a mile of the Panemango Junction, and contracts are ready for letting on the Karetu, Taheke, and Mataiaiponga Roads.

Huikumu.—Beyond maintenance of the part of road already made no work has been done except one mile of engineering survey, but contracts for 120 chains bridle-track will shortly be let. The Huikumu Road will open up a large extent of country across the Manganuiateao River.