

and look green; so that if a few spruces and larches were planted and acorns sown broadcast, I believe in the years to come the moraine would regain much of its pristine beauty. I scattered some seeds of the mountain ash, which I obtain from Mr. Matheson of Simons's Pass; the soil is rich and they may grow, but I feel certain that oaks, larches, and spruces would thrive well. The two latter varieties of tree have been planted near the Hermitage, and are in a most flourishing condition. Clarke carried some of the cocksfoot grass-seed to the Ball hut, and as it happened to be wet when I was there I sowed it in the paddock. It seems to be growing, and will no doubt increase the amount of horse-feed, a thing much to be desired, for the Ball-hut trip is now a most popular one—more people visit it every year, and, of course, that means the horses are more constantly kept there.

"His Excellency the Governor, Lady Ranfurly, and party visited the Hermitage in February, and the former went up to the Ball hut and on the Tasman Glacier. I am told he was very much pleased with the place and its management; but, unfortunately, I was at the other end of the district when his visit was made, so had not an opportunity of hearing his opinion. I, however, met many tourists, who all praised the Rosses and guide Clarke, and were full of admiration for the scenery. Much approval of the Government was expressed for having done so much to make the Hermitage comfortable and open up the place by improving the roads and tracks, and for building the huts; and the chimneys you directed me to have added to them were much appreciated."

*Tengawai Stock-bridge.*—I have notified the Mackenzie County Council that it has been granted a sum of £80 as a pound-for-pound subsidy in aid of this work; and in reply has informed me that, in the event of the Council accepting this amount, the bridge will be erected by the Railway Department, as it is proposed to be attached to the existing railway-bridge over the Tengawai River.

*Fraser's Road, Tengawai.*—£30 was granted the Mackenzie County Council as a pound-for-pound subsidy in aid of the construction of a part of this road, in order to give Mr. W. Fraser access to the wool-shed on his leasehold Section 36358. The work comprised formation, 18 ft. wide; the construction of two pipe culverts, one 12 in. and the other 9 in., and one chain of gravel spread 12 ft. wide over each; also a catchwater drain along the upper side of the formation for the whole distance. The balance of the amount was expended in acquiring from Mr. John Nixon 1 acre 3 roods 32 perches of land to give Mr. Fraser access to the western portion of his leasehold Section 36088, and for a like purpose a further expense has been incurred in acquiring 6½ acres of land from the National Mortgage and Agency Company. The payment, however, of this amount has been deferred pending completion of fence, to be erected according to agreement made. A further sum of £25 has been granted as a pound-for-pound subsidy in aid of additional improvements, but the work has not yet been put in hand.

*Clement's Road.*—Amount voted, £150. The Waimate County Council have notified me that they have purchased from the Waimate Estate 65 acres of land, being part of Rural Section 27828, at £2 10s. per acre, which will enable them to give Mr. Clement the required access to his section. I have requested the Council to furnish me with a plan showing the piece of land purchased, before approving of the amount voted being paid over.

*Nukuroa-Studholme Junction.*—Amount voted, £100, nearly all of which has been expended. The works were let in two contracts—No. 1 to four of the settlers on the co-operative-contract system, and comprised the preparation for gravelling of the half-chain road between the railway and Meikle's Road; No. 2 was let as an ordinary contract, and comprised shingling the 46 chains of the half-chain road between the railway and the main road, a width of 12 ft. and 6 in. in depth. An additional vote of £188 has been granted for further improvements to the above roads, £90 of which I propose expending in gravelling chiefly the road before mentioned east of the railway. On completion, I estimate that no further roadworks will be necessary in this settlement for some time to come.

*Pareora Bridge.*—The vote in aid of this bridge was £500, and the total cost, exclusive of engineering charges, £1,390 1s. The old Pareora Bridge, at the Main South Road Crossing, was a wooden and pile structure 800 ft. in length, in twenty spans of 40 ft., the width between the wheel-guards being 13 ft., supported by a great deal of complicated understrutting. It had fallen into such a state of decay as to be unsafe, and was closed to the public, who were obliged to use the ford a little below it. Several accidents occurred during flood time in consequence; so that the restoration of the bridge has been a great boon to the travelling public, as well as to the settlers of the thickly populated surrounding district. The work of restoration comprised the complete removal of three 40 ft. spans, the 20 ft. end-span, and sheet-piling at the southern end of the bridge; and the drawing of the piles, the removal of the decking from the whole length, and the redecking of it with new timber to a width of 14 ft.; the strengthening of each span by understrutting with four lines of strutting and girders, and the construction of an embanked approach at the southern end, and fencing the same. The water has been confined and directed under the new structure by the erection of training-walls protected by willow and wire fencing, thereby making altogether a substantial and durable job of it.

*Hokitika-Christchurch Road.*—The expenditure during the year on the Canterbury section of this road is in excess somewhat of the previous year's average, due to the unusual severity of the season. During the winter the road through the Bealey Valley to the top of Arthur's Pass was blocked with snow. A seven-mile pack-track was cut through, and then widened into a coach-track. This work was very laborious, and, owing to the scant accommodation in the Bealey Valley at such a time of year, the men suffered many privations. During the spring the floods caused considerable damage to the road at Broken River, Craigieburn, and Bealey Valley, causing landslips, scour, and other damage, rendering necessary new and extra work on various sections of the road; and during the summer months the north-west rains brought down many heavy floods, causing large landslips on the cuttings, more especially up the Bealey Valley, thereby giving a large