

powers to enable the negotiations for the purchase of the railway to be proceeded with, such purchase not to be completed until the terms and conditions have been settled in and finally approved by Parliament next session.

The proposals submitted by the shareholders and the directors will be found annexed to this Statement.

#### ROADS, ETC.

##### ROADS AND OTHER WORKS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MINISTER OF LANDS.

During the past year the works executed out of votes placed at the disposal of the Minister of Lands include the construction of 581 miles of dray-roads and 349 miles of pioneer tracks; 85 miles of dray-roads and 44 miles of bridle-tracks widened, and otherwise made more passable for traffic; and 2,833 miles of road maintained and kept in good order for ordinary traffic. There have been built 137 road-bridges, over 30 ft. span each, besides over 3,000 culverts of all sizes under 30 ft. span.

The distribution of the expenditure was largely in favour of the North Island, the amount drawn for the North Island being £200,809, and for the Middle and Stewart Islands £67,906.

The great number of different roads or works to be operated on required extensive arrangements for laying out and controlling them, and could not all be done in the few remaining months of the financial year.

The number of works intrusted to local authorities was 542, the departmental control consisting of revising plans and specifications and inspecting the work while in progress and on completion, in order to certify to payments, while 786 works were intrusted to Government officers.

The principal operations of the year have been:—

In Auckland, the roading of the country between Te Awamutu and Kawhia selected during the past year; the completion of the formation of the Awakino—Te Kuiti Road; the further prosecution of the works for draining and lighting Rotorua, and the embellishment of the recreation-grounds. The road through the Urewera country *via* Ruatahuna and Waikaremoana has been further advanced, and the road to the lake from Gisborne finished. A large number of short roads north of Auckland have received contributions in assistance to settlement, and the main north road from Auckland by the East Coast has been practically wholly maintained by the Government.

In the Hawke's Bay District the new road from Napier to Wairoa and from Wairoa *via* Nuhaka to Gisborne has been advanced so far that when three or four bridges are built the whole distance will be fit for wheeled traffic. The extensive area of forest land disposed of near Dannevirke has also required a large expenditure to make it accessible to settlers.

In Wellington the principal expenditure was in forming new roads and tracks and widening and metalling those already existing in the newly settled belt of country extending from the Puketois to the Wanganui River. The great extent of country and the numerous settlers to whom the roads are a necessity has made this work a most arduous one. Settlement has taken place in country so difficult to construct and maintain roads in that the progress has been much slower than the needs of settlers require.

In Taranaki the Ohura Road, to open for settlement the country between Stratford and the Waikato, has been advanced so far that there is hope that a passable track may be completed this year. The close settlements east and west of it have also been further developed by improving and extending their roads or subsidising loans raised by the local authorities.

In the Nelson, Marlborough, Westland, and Canterbury Provinces small votes have been expended on local roads, but the chief work has been the maintenance of the main roads.

In Otago and Southland the Tautuku Forest country, the Seaward Forest, and the Longwood Forest, where settlers are located, have had the roads extended and improved, although they are still capable of much further improvement. The tourist routes to the picturesque West Coast Sounds have been further explored and made more passable, comfortable, and efficient.