

of road maintained. If the road could be widened to dray-road width a creamery would be built.

Kohuratahi Block.—There has been 1 mile 33 chains of bridle-road formed; fifteen culverts, in length 287 ft., constructed; and three miles of road maintained, slips removed, &c. It is now proposed to widen the road to dray-road width, in order to enable the settlers to supply a proposed creamery.

Rimuputa Block.—Includes Rimuputa, Mangaowata, Maikai, and Tahora Roads. On these roads 2 miles 50 chains has been felled, stumped, and cleared; four miles has been formed as bridle-road; twenty-four culverts—424 lineal feet—made; 520 cubic yards of slips removed. Work is still in progress, but the vote is nearly expended.

Marco Block.—One mile has been felled, stumped, and cleared; one mile formed as dray-road, 1 mile 20 chains as bridle-road; one dray-bridge, in length 40 ft., erected; fifteen culverts made—347 lineal feet. Work is in progress.

Autawa Block.—Our vote being nearly expended, we could only improve the parts most urgently needing it. 62 chains of bridle-road has been formed, five culverts made, and two miles and a half of bridle-road improved.

Makahu Block.—Includes Makahu, Arnold, Matirangi, and Pohokura Roads. On these roads, during the past year, we have felled, stumped, and cleared 3 miles 20 chains; formed 40 chains of 8 ft. wide bridle-road; put in five culverts, 118 ft. in length; and provided timber and ironwork for a dray-bridge over Makahu Stream, near Ohura Road. The bridge will shortly be erected. Formation and culverting is still in progress.

Ross Block.—Tawhiwi Road. Slips were removed from off this road, but it is found that at one point the whole of the upper side of the road is sliding, and a deviation will be needed.

Mauku Block.—Maukau Road branches off from Whitianga Road. One mile has been felled, stumped, cleared, and formed as bridle-road.

Whenuakura Block.—Includes Mataiwhetu and Tahuri Roads, leading from Rawhitiroa Road down to Whenuakura River. 21 chains has been felled, stumped, and cleared; 28 chains formed as bridle-road; 380 cubic yards of slips removed, and 3 miles 60 chains of road maintained. Road-access is given to all sections at present occupied.

The number of contracts let during the year was 343, of which one was let by public tender for carting, the remainder being under co-operative system. In addition to these, forty-three contracts were in progress at beginning of year, or a total dealt with of 386. There remained in progress on the 31st March, 1900, thirty-five contracts, the number completed during the year being 351. In addition to these we inspected and reported on twenty-four contracts let by local bodies and subsidised by Survey Department.

G. F. ROBINSON, Road Surveyor.

WANGANUI.

Tangarakau River Clearing.—The clearing of the channel, with the intention of making it passable for steamer traffic in time of moderate floods, was completed in March, 1899, but some of the outstanding accounts are included in the expenditure for 1899–1900. No work has been done during the present year. The proposal to hand over the charge of this work to the Wanganui River Trust is under consideration.

Retaruke Valley.—The bridle-track has been extended from 2 miles 54 chains below the Kaitieke Junction to 6 miles 70 chains, and one contract is almost completed to 8 miles 70 chains, taking the track up to the Tarata Creek. The part from there to the Wanganui River—7 miles 70 chains in length—has been laid out for construction, but nothing further has yet been done on it, owing to want of funds. In order to open up the large areas of Crown lands in this district it is highly desirable that this track should be completed during the coming year. When this is done goods can be conveyed up the Wanganui River to the mouth of the Retaruke and thence packed over the surrounding country. About 15 acres of light bush has been felled and sown near the Tarata Creek as a paddock for horses. Another paddock should be cleared on the flat at the mouth of the Retaruke River, and a depot for stores established there.

Waimarino.—Under this item 136 chains of dray-road has been formed on the Makotuku Valley Road, and 26 lineal feet culverts constructed. On the Middle Road 18 chains has been cleared.

Waimarino Road (Metalling).—Fifty chains of metalling is now being done on the co-operative cartage system on the Makotuku Valley out of this vote. The Makotuku Valley Road is an important one, and should be formed to the Waimarino Plains as rapidly as funds will allow. Dairy traffic now comes down it from a distance of seven miles above Raetihi.

Rotoaira–Waimarino.—This road has been put into a fair state of repair from the Ohingaiti–Tokaanu Road to Papakai; beyond that it is open, but rough for wheel traffic, owing to ruts and growth of tussocks.

Wanganui.—On the Hukaroa Road 16 chains of engineering survey has been done, and 111·6 chains of bridle-track and 16 chains dray-road formed, also 26 lineal feet culverts, during the year, which completes this road up to the end of the settlements. Only 13 chains felling road-line and maintenance have been done on the Mangaetoroa Road. On the Mangateitei Road 18 chains of 8 ft. formation, with 80 lineal feet of culverts, has been done. On the Rata–Maire Road 100 chains of heavy bush has been felled, and an 8 ft. track cleared through it. A second contract, completing the felling on this road, is in progress, but even when done it will not be passable for horse traffic without a considerable amount of ditching and culverting, owing to the swampy nature of the ground.