

*Richmond Brook Estate Roads.*—Roading on this estate was proceeded with in conjunction with the Starborough Estate roads, and, as there were very few lines of roads throughout the block where heavy work existed, only two co-operative contracts were let. The flat formation was completed with the road-machine; 2 miles 33½ chains of road formed.

*Wakamarina and Kaituna Bridge.*—The traffic-bridge over the Kaituna River on Blenheim-Havelock Road was redecked. Work carried out by Pelorus Road Board.

*Tua Marina-Kaituna.*—40 chains of road formed and gravelled, from main Havelock Road, Kaituna Valley, towards Tua Marina. Work carried out by Pelorus Road Board. Also five miles of road repaired, Tua Marina-Kaituna Road. Work carried out by Picton Road Board.

*Omakā Estate Roads.*—79 chains of road formed, 70 chains gravelled, 6 chains road fascined; pipes placed for culverts—128 ft. of 12 in., 42 ft. of 9 in., 66 ft. of 18 in.

*Mahau Sound.*—199½ chains of track formed 2 ft. in the solid. This track is on the north side of Mahau Sound, starting from Neame's and going in an easterly direction, and ending at schoolhouse. This track is formed to enable children to go to school.

*Picton-Grove Road (Mines).*—For the year ending 31st March, 1900, the following work has been completed on above track: 92 chains 16 links track formed, 6 ft. in solid; 2 miles 1 chain 90 links bush- and fern-clearing, 14 ft. wide; 2 chains of drains made; earthenware pipes placed for culverts, 50 12 in. and 182 9 in.; 9 miles 20 chains of track graded. The completion of this track to Picton will be of great service to the settlers in the Sounds. It will enable them to drive stock to the freezing-works at Picton; and when the track is widened for a dray-road the Nelson coach-proprietors intend running a coach from Havelock to Picton. This is one of the most important works we have in hand. Work has been started again on this road, and the formation of a dray-road from the end of present formed road near Shakespeare Bay is being made into Shakespeare Bay. No further work can be done in completing the track to the Grove until the owners of the Ngakuta Native Reserve agree to the exchange of roads.

*Havelock-Mahakipawa (Mines).*—The road from the mud-flat near Havelock for a distance of three miles towards the Grove has been widened, the curves on this line being very dangerous in places to drive a pair of horses. Twenty-two points have been widened, totalling 20 chains in length. Three more points are now under contract. A further grant for gravelling this road is included in this year's estimates.

Mr. F. S. Smith, District Surveyor, reports as follows:—

*Cribb Creek.*—This work was handed over to the Kaikoura County Council. 50 chains of road was formed and 50 chains of engineering survey done. The work has been completed, and has been well done.

*Kahautara-Conway.*—This is now called "Kahautara-Hawkswood," a section of the Cheviot-Kaikoura Road. Beginning at the south end of this road, Mr. Johnston has been for many months engaged upon the borings for a bridge-site over the Waiau River near Parnassus. He has now completed it, and his report will be forwarded to you by next mail. It would have gone forward herewith, but unfortunately Mr. Johnston has been unwell for the last few days. Mr. Johnston has completed the engineering survey of the portion of this road between Hawkswood Station and the Conway-Hundalee Junction, a distance of 7 miles and 2 chains *via* the Dip Creek deviation, or 7 miles 54 chains *via* the county road now in use. The approximate cost to complete this road from Hawkswood to the Hundalee confluence is £4,700 for a standard width road and culverts, &c., all complete, but does not include a bridge over the Conway River, because I think it will be hardly necessary to build a bridge over the Conway until the Waiau is also bridged.

The engineering survey of the portion between the end of the county road on the north bank of the Kowhai and the end of the new road on the south bank of the Kahautara has been completed the distance of 2 miles 65 chains. We have an authority in this office to expend £250 in improving this, but it is not to be expended until the other part round the Kahautara Bluff is completed.

The Pareitaha Tunnel has been completed, except the concrete facings. The stuff proved harder than the Raramai Tunnel. At this rate the men made 10s. a day for expert miners, and 8s. a day for labourers.

There have been 74·85 chains dray-road formed, 18 chains dray-road improved, 46 lineal yards of tunnel driven, 4,400 cubic yards of sea-wall built, and 18,071 cubic yards of slips removed.

The principal feature in the year's work on the Kahautara Bluff has been the enormous number of slips which have come down in unexpected places. There has been shifted in all on the Bluff 19,020 cubic yards of rock and 18,071 cubic yards of slips, or only 949 yards less slips than has been shifted for formation of the road. It is most difficult to make work come in with the estimate under such conditions; but, notwithstanding this, I believe the Bluff will be done within the estimate given, although so largely exceeded in the amounts of slips met with and the amount of sea-wall required, the original estimate for which was £550; but there was washed away two or three hundred pounds' worth of work in the big gales of last winter, which caught the walls before the backing was in behind them.

All the contracts are now let and in hand on the Bluff section, three in number—one of which will be completed about the end of April, and the other two about the end of May, by which time the road should be open, unless more large slips come down. We have twenty-three men now on this road: five of these are on the maintenance of the road between the Oaro and the Conway, fourteen on contracts, and four on the sea-walls; this number, I fear, cannot be reduced at present, because when the contract which will cut out about the end of the month is available I shall have to put them at clearing up the road which has been finished, but is blocked by small slips.

The road south of the Bluff to the Conway has cost £750 6s. 5d. to keep in order, and we shall have to keep a few men on it for some time yet. The labour used in that work is given to the settlers living on the road. There is a portion of this road between the sixteen- and seventeen-mile