

WESTLAND.

Poerua Estate Road.—The work done was in forming and gravelling about 20 chains, 14 ft. formation and 10 ft. gravel. The side drains along original road-formation fell in at a number of places, caused through scour by flood-water from Slaty Creek. These places I have secured with stakes and scrub, and brought the road up to its original formation, but it will always be subject to scour by flood-water from Slaty Creek. I have also cleared and stumped about 30 chains of Road Drainage Reserve, 33 ft. wide, which will give access to Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6. When further funds are available I intend to continue forming and metalling Crooked River Road, as it is of much benefit to the settlers on the northern portion of the estate.

Hokitika-Christchurch Road.—The maintenance of this road extends from the borough boundary of Kumara to summit of Arthur's Pass, being a distance of forty-two miles. During the year there has been a deal of local floods, which has damaged certain portions of the road considerably, chiefly in Otira Gorge and the upper river fords. The large slip below the upper hut has been a continual source of trouble, as on almost every occasion when heavy rain falls large quantities of stone and gravel slip down and cover up the road-way; and, moreover, there is no means of avoiding this, as it is the only place that the road can be taken. I have therefore continually to be getting extra labour, which increases the cost of maintenance. Last July there was a deep fall of snow on the saddle, which kept the large mail-coaches from running for a week; but the mails were taken through by wagonette and four horses, so that very little inconvenience to the public traffic took place. The fords have also had to be renewed after every flood, as no crossings of a permanent nature could be made on account of the large quantity of moving shingle from the mountains deposited with every flood in the river. The pier of the lower bridge in gorge, which was damaged last year, has been built up with stone in cement, and the bridge raised to its proper position and strengthened with struts in place of trestle, which was carried away by flood. A strong stone wall in cement has been built at the bluff immediately above the upper bridge to protect the road at a sharp bend from the onslaught of the river, where nothing less would stand the force, and I am glad to say that so far it has stood the test. Three new bridges are in course of construction at Rocky Point, and will shortly be completed, so when weather permits and the timber gets seasoned it will be necessary to give them three coats of tar. In my last year's report I mentioned that three deviations of the road were urgently required—viz., at Rangiriri Flat, top of moraine, and at Peg-leg Creek. Funds have not yet been available for these works, so they still remain to be completed. A three-stalled stable has been erected at the gorge, which has been found to be exceedingly useful, as the horses now are comfortably housed, instead of being out in cold nights. A cottage for the workmen has also been erected, which is found to be of great convenience, as formerly they had to live in the hotel. The general maintenance of road throughout has been exceedingly well kept, and now that the heavy cartage of material for the Midland Railway Company between Jackson's and Goat Creek is a thing of the past I will be able to make a reduction in labour along that portion of road. The above works were under the supervision of Mr. McIntosh, and reflects credit for the manner in which they were all carried out.

Kanieri Forks.—This expenditure was incurred in connection with an authority issued to the Westland County Council, being for repairs to main road between Kokitika and Lake Kanieri. The work has been faithfully done, and I have certified to the sum of £91 8s. 5d. having been expended.

Hokitika Flat Road.—This road passes through the settlement between Kokatahi and Hokitika Rivers, and was regravelled for a distance of four miles. Six new culverts were also put in, and about 16 chains of new dray-road made, the original track being 5 ft. wide. There still remains about 40 chains of dray-road to make before reaching the Hokitika River. This work is urgently required, so as to enable settlers to get their produce to market.

Great South Road (Main Road).—This road was originally a 5 ft. bridle-track, and the sum now expended has widened it to a 10 ft. dray-road as far as Okarito, which was very much required, being part of main road from Hokitika to Okarito and glaciers. The works were under the charge of Mr. Purcell, and good progress was made during the time at work. Five miles dray-road have been improved.

Whitcombe Valley Track.—The condition of this track has not proved very satisfactory. The country through which it passes is very bad standing-ground and continually on the move, so that in places where the track is made and rain sets in the 18 in. wide benched line is nowhere to be seen, and has therefore to be gone over again. The track is now benched 18 in. wide for a distance of about three miles beyond Price's Flat, and, with the exception of one or two places, it has stood fairly well. A party of six men, under charge of Mr. Fleming, is now at work benching, and will soon reach Cave Camp, from whence to top of the pass (distance, four miles) the work will get easy, especially the last two miles, which I think are comparatively easy. The wet weather experienced in that locality is very detrimental to the progress of the work, and the small mountain streams when in flood become impassable, which causes delay. The wire rope at the cage over the Hokitika River has been renewed, as the original one, which was placed there some fifteen years ago, was getting unsafe.

Waitaha-Kakapohahi.—This is a deviation of the Great South Road at Waitaha River, for the purpose of carrying new line to bridge-site at the gorge, the present route being some three miles up river, where the fords are exceedingly bad and unfordable for days after flood. The deviation constructed is 12 ft. wide metal, with bush-clearing 33 ft. wide. The work was done under the supervision of Mr. Hudson.

Slaty Creek-Waiho Road.—This is part and parcel of the Great South Road, and the work of widening to a 10 ft. metal road is now being done.