

APPENDIX IV.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF CHIEF AND ROAD SURVEYORS ON THE WORKING OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SYSTEM FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1900.

AUCKLAND NORTH.

DURING the past twelve months 292 co-operative contracts were let and completed. The works, with the exception of some on the Tokatoka Swamp, have been carried out by local settlers, who have worked amicably, and generally completed their contracts in a satisfactory manner.

I am adhering to my plan of putting up notices at the nearest post-office or local store asking settlers anxious for employment to form themselves into gangs, and to apply for the work on a fixed date at the price stated in notice, the plans and specifications for which are exhibited for examination at the store or post-office. If more men apply than are needed a ballot is taken before a Justice of the Peace, or some responsible person, so as to avoid all appearance even of favouring. In many cases the wages earned seem low, but settlers, having ample time to do the work, only work when convenient for them to get away from their farm-work. In nearly all cases settlers provide their own tools.

The average daily wage earned per working-day of eight hours was 5s. 10d.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.

AUCKLAND CENTRAL.

During the year 154 contracts have been completed on the co-operative system. The average amount per contract is £95 10s. 5½d. The average wage earned per working-day of eight hours throughout the whole district is 7s. 11d. Considering the high prices which the men had to pay for stores, &c., I do not consider this a high wage. The men have been allowed to choose their own mates in all cases where it was possible, and the works have gone on very smoothly, with very little grumbling, and on the whole the work has been well done. In some cases where high wages were made the men worked from twelve to thirteen hours per day, and a few gangs of Natives who were only working at odd times made poor wages.

T. BURD, Road Surveyor.

ROTORUA.

The number of contracts completed under this system during the year was sixty-six, of which twenty-eight were undertaken by Europeans and thirty-eight by Natives. The average number of men on each contract was 5.5, and the character of the work was bushfelling, stumping, clearing, and road-construction.

The average wage per working-day of eight hours for the whole district was 6s. 3d.—that is, for the European contracts. As in previous years, no attempt has been made to keep a record of the Native earnings, as they carry out their work in such an erratic manner. In the Okoheriki Block the earnings on the road is as low as 3s. 8d. This can be accounted for in this way: The men were quite new at bushwork, and quite inexperienced. After being at the work a while they earned a better wage and were satisfied.

I am happy to say there have been no complaints on the co-operative system since my arrival in the district.

I regret having to report that a Native was killed near Te Whaiti, on the Rotorua-Galatea-Waikaremoana Road. He with several others was hauling logs out of the bush when one rolled on him and killed him.

A. C. TURNER, Road Surveyor.

HAWKE'S BAY.

The number of contracts completed during the year under this system was 264, the maximum number of men employed in one week being 280, and the minimum 181, giving an average of 230 throughout the year.

The average wages earned is 8s. 8d. per working-day of eight hours.

Generally the works have gone on smoothly, and have been carried out in a satisfactory manner. Very few complaints have been made by the men during the year, and those that have been made are of a trivial nature, and generally come from men who are quite unsuited for the work.

I regret to have to report that we have had three accidents, two of them being fatal, the two fatal ones being on the Waikaremoana roadworks. One of them was caused by a fall of rock, and the other occurred during blasting operations. The one on the Napier-Wairoa Road also occurred while blasting. Both casualties, in my opinion, might have been avoided had the men carried out the instructions given to provide against such accidents.

ERIC C. GOLD SMITH, Chief Surveyor.