

RAILWAY SERVICE ROAD (MAIN EAST COAST ROAD).

This road has been formed from the western drain as far as Awakeri, a distance of 160 chains, but is not yet open for traffic. The road has been pumiced in all the soft portions, and formation, &c., is in splendid order. Another portion of this road—viz., from the Awaiti Road towards the Tarawera River, a distance of 50 chains—has been in use for some considerable time, this portion of formation being completed first.

Drains have been cut on the wet portions of the Railway Road between the Rangitaiki River and the Awaiti Road, all spoil being thrown into centre of road-line, and formation-work will be gone on with almost immediately. Arrangements have also been made to fence.

After this portion is finished a start will be made with the portion from Tarawera River towards Matata, but it will be very expensive formation, as, owing to the wet nature of the country, material will have to be carted for long distances.

The road will not be of much use to the public until the Tarawera and Rangitaiki Rivers are bridged. The work done on this road is paid for out of special vote.

BRIDGES AND CULVERTS.

The bridge gang has again been busily employed during the period, and the foreman carpenter is to be complimented on the finished work he has turned out. The goods-sheds at Matata were removed and re-erected in their new positions on the Tarawera outlet, and a small wharf erected in front of the new goods-shed on the Rangitaiki outlet. This will greatly facilitate the discharge of cargoes from trading-vessels, an item which in the past has caused a great deal of inconvenience.

A substantial bridge has been erected over the Kopeopeo deviation on the main Thornton-Whakatane Road, and also a large sill bridge over the same deviation near its junction with the Rangitaiki outlet. While the dredge was excavating cut across the main Whakatane Road a deviation to the north of the road was made entailing the erection of a large sill bridge, and on the return of the dredge up the cut this bridge was dismantled and re-erected on a deviation on the south side of main road. Another large sill bridge was erected across the Kopeopeo deviation in Section 51.

In addition to the foregoing a large number of smaller sill bridges and several flood-gates have been constructed.

During the latter portion of the period bridge-building operations have been considerably hampered on account of the difficulty in obtaining suitable timber.

DRAINS IN OPERATION.

The total length of drains in operation to date is as follows: Dredge-cuts, twenty-one miles; main drains, eighty-six miles; road-drains, seventeen miles.

The Jugo-Slav labour has made a great difference in the amount of work done during the year, and as a consequence the majority of main drains have been considerably enlarged and deepened. All drains are now in first-class order.

WORKSHOP, THORNTON.

During the period the workshop staff has been kept busily employed on repair work for the various dredges, launches, &c., used on the works, and much work which should in the ordinary way have been sent to engineering firms in Auckland is now dealt with in the local shop.

BUILDINGS.

A two-roomed whare used as store-shed on the west bank of the Rangitaiki outlet was dismantled, and the iron and timber used—in conjunction with fresh supplies—to erect two sheds on the east bank of the outlet near the headquarter's building. The house occupied by Dredge-master Strong was moved to a site adjacent to the Rangitaiki Ferry, and the house was improved by the addition of one small room. Otherwise the buildings are the same as last year, the total number now being nineteen.

FLOATING PLANT.

This consists of two Priestman dredges, two ferry-pontoons, one snagging-barge, one towing-barge, three oil-launches, and various small punts, boats, &c. The timber in the pontoon at the Tarawera Ferry is in very poor condition, but as the Whakatane County Council has now made a start with the bridge over the Tarawera River there is every prospect of this ferry being done away with. The Hammond dredge was put out of commission and dismantled. The remainder of the plant is in good condition.

SURVEYS.

The survey staff have been engaged during the period mostly on engineering work, such as running trial levels, laying out new drain-lines and dredge-cuts, and work of a similar nature. Several small surveys were also made. Altogether a total of forty miles of levels were taken during the period.

SUMMARY.

Excavation by dredges	...	...	...	229,659 cubic yards.
New outlet drains	...	...	...	11 miles.
Deepening and widening outlet drains	...	...	...	23 miles.
Cleaning outlet drains	...	...	...	47 miles.
Roads formed (new)	...	...	...	4½ miles.
Levels taken	...	...	...	40 miles.

General improvement and maintenance to existing works, together with numerous other minor services.