

The following lines, which were in course of construction at the date of the last report, have been completed:—

FOURTH WIRE, PALMERSTON TO DUNEDIN.

The erection of this wire, which was rendered necessary owing to the great increase of business at Naseby, and the consequent desirableness of placing that station in direct communication with Dunedin, was completed in the beginning of August, at a cost of £563 5s. 1d.

THIRD WIRE, GRAHAMSTOWN TO NAPIER.

This work was commenced on the 1st May, 1873, and completed on the 19th August. Whilst running this wire, the line was thoroughly overhauled, and strengthened where necessary. At different points, 138 double angle poles were placed, 65 angles were cut out, and 66 were laid over and timbered. In addition, 245 poles were shifted, so as to straighten the line and raise the wires at various road crossings. To facilitate the inspection of the line extending from Tauranga north to Kati Kati, several swamps were fascined and otherwise made passable for a lineman. This section is now capable of carrying a fourth wire, if necessary.

The cost of this work (and also of other works), shown under various headings, will be found in Table H.

MANUKAU LINE.

The erection of this line (36 miles in length) was completed, and an office opened to the public, early in September. As will be seen from the statement of cash receipts, in Table A, this station's subscription to the revenue is not great; but the early information of the arrival and departure of shipping afforded to the public, compensates for any slight loss in its maintenance.

LINES AND WORKS PROJECTED AND FINISHED DURING THE YEAR.

MAKETU TO OPOTIKI.

The increasing importance of the township of Opotiki called for some attention on the part of the department. The extension of the line south from Maketu was commenced in October last, and completed early in May. It follows the general course of the beach, but is set back from the sea to avoid, as far as possible, any saline deposit during the prevailing easterly winds. A lineman's station was opened at Opotiki on the 16th July.

CAMBRIDGE TO ALEXANDRA (RECONSTRUCTION).

Owing to decay of the poles, and the bad condition generally of this section, it was found necessary to remove the wires to new sawn posts. In consequence, however, of slight difficulties with the Natives, the old line was abandoned and a new one erected, passing through the Moanatuatua Swamp, thence to Kihi Kihi, and along the Punui Road to Alexandra. This work, together with the dismantling of the old line, was completed in December last.

SECOND WIRE, WELLINGTON TO WANGANUI.

The erection of this wire, which is at present only completed from Wanganui to Bull's, a distance of 26 miles, was commenced about the middle of March, and completed to Bull's on the 14th May. It is contemplated to complete this wire to Wellington at an early date. A deviation is also contemplated from the foot of the Paikakariki Hill inland, and thence to Manawatu, thus avoiding the bad effects of the sea air experienced upon parts of the present line, the opposition of the Natives to an inland line being now removed.

CLINTON TO TAPANUI AND SWITZERS.

The construction of this line was commenced in November, and was finished at the close of February. The section is about 50 miles long, and is constructed with black pine poles obtained from the Tapanui bush. Temporary offices were opened at Tapanui on the 16th, and at Switzers on the 19th May. Permanent offices are being erected.

REEFTON TO LYELL.

This section, 32 miles in length, was commenced in January, and completed, and an office opened at the Lyell, in April. The line passes through dense bush, thus making its cost amount to £6,064 15s. 9d. which is considerably above the average.

FOURTH WIRE, BLENHEIM TO CHRISTCHURCH.

The erection of this wire as far as Leithfield was completed in February. It is at present intended not to continue this wire further north until a decision respecting various routes from Blenheim, recently explored, is arrived at.

RAILWAY WIRES.

DUNEDIN TO TOKOMAIRIRO.

The erection of a railway wire between Dunedin and Tokomairiro was commenced in August, and finished in October.

HAMPDEN TO WAITAKI.

This wire was completed on the 19th May, and an office was opened at Waitaki on the 28th May.

LINES AND WORKS IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.

AUCKLAND TO BAY OF ISLANDS AND HOKIANGA.

The line from Auckland to Hokianga, including a branch from Kawa Kawa to Russell, will be about 236 miles long, 44 miles in all, at different parts of the line, being through bush. It is proposed to open offices at Riverhead, Helensville, Warkworth, Waipu, Wangarei, Kawa Kawa, Ohiva, Hokianga, and Russell. Starting from Auckland, the line will follow the course of the Great North Road to Brigham's Creek, and thence to the Riverhead terminus of the Kaipara Railway. From Riverhead, the