

On the lines north of Auckland a repairing-party has been engaged for several months, and have, as far as the Port Albert Junction, completed all necessary repairs; about 7 per cent. of the kauri poles on this line had to be blocked with either blocks cut from the heart of totara or from puriri, where it could be found adjacent to the line. These lines will have to be gone over by a repairing-party every two or three years, until the whole of the kauri poles have been blocked. It is a noticeable fact that it is only in the rich and moist soil that the kauri poles have suffered decay, those erected in clayey soil being as sound as ever.

A lineman's station has been opened at Te Koporu, on the Dargaville line; and at Kamo, on the Bay of Islands line, a station is in course of erection, and will be opened shortly.

The office at Grahamstown has been amalgamated with the Post Office, and the Chief Postmaster placed in charge in order to carry out this arrangement. The Post Office removed its business to the premises occupied by the Telegraph Department.

The railway wires and stations in the Auckland District are also under the charge of this department.

FROM GRAHAMSTOWN TO TENUI (including the Branch Lines Napier to Gisborne, Maketu to Opotoki, and Waipukurau to Kopua)

The principal works performed in this section during the year are as follow: At Port Ahuriri the telegraph wires have been diverted from the old crossing and placed on the bridge. This alteration has given increased facilities for inspection and repairs. At Petane half-a-mile of the line, which intersected plantations, has been removed to the road, and a short advantageous alteration has been made in the line near Te Horoto.

On the Ohinemutu loop, the wires on examination, were found to be very much corroded, caused by the sulphurous exhalations from the ground in places; as a temporary measure they have been secured by fixing bridles at the insulators. Sufficient wire has been, however, left at the station for renewal of the loop; at present the corrosion has not reached that stage of decay as to warrant immediate renewal.

On the Tauranga and Katikati, line the wires formerly crossing the indentations of the harbour and also across fenced lands, have now been removed to the main road. These alterations have effected a great saving of time in the examination of the line for faults. The aggregate length of line diverted is about twelve miles.

On the Gisborne line, frequent defective and imperfect working, through loss of insulation, was experienced during bad weather. The faulty insulation has been localized by tests to the 30 miles of line between Wairoa and the Mahenga. The line between these two points runs in close proximity to the sea. In order to remedy the defect as much as possible that portion of the line has been reinsulated, Siemen's white porcelain insulators being used for that purpose. This line throughout its length has been overhauled, and, in addition to the ordinary operations incumbent upon an overhauling-party, has had the following works executed—viz.: The tracks through the bush between Mahia and Muriwai has been repaired and the bush cleared where found overgrown; four miles of line near Gisborne has been shifted on account of the road formations, and, at Wairoa, the mast on the right bank of the river has been re-erected in a safer position, and some few poles in the township removed to make room for footpath formation.

The other lines overhauled and repaired are—Napier to Tauranga, Maketu to Opotiki, Napier to Porangahau, and the branch line to Kopua. The line between Katikati and Grahamstown is now undergoing an overhaul, and is about half completed. The track over the bush ranges, between Waihi and Hikutaia Valley, is in course of repair, and all defective kauri poles are being renewed. Holding in view, however, the probable diversion of the main line round by Ohinemuri, the repairs in this line are being confined to those rendered absolutely necessary for maintaining its stability.

The lines from Tenui to Porangahau is also undergoing an overhaul, and will be completed about the end of April.

The office at Gisborne has been amalgamated with the Post Office, and placed under the charge of the Chief Postmaster; and the office at Katikati has been closed, and one opened at Uretara in premises leased for that purpose.

WELLINGTON TO NEW PLYMOUTH *vid* WANGANUI (including the Branch Lines to Palmerston North, Woodville, and also the North Trunk Line from Wellington to Auckland as far as Tenui and Castlepoint)

From Tenui to Wellington the line during the summer months has been carefully overhauled, all the poles being examined, and reset where necessary. The line between Kaiwarra and Petone has been placed in the inland side of the railway, and thus removed further back from the edge of the harbour. This was to a certain extent rendered necessary by the faulty insulation, and partly to suit the railway requirements. By the removal in some places the line has been placed at a greater height above the sea level, and in a measure placed out of the reach of spray from the sea, which used to affect the wires in heavy southerly weather. Owing to the number of casualties caused by the snow on the Rimutaka ranges, all the long spans have been shortened, and in order to locate faults with greater exactitude, all the wires have been looped into the railway-station at Kaitoke. At the Upper Hutt Railway Station the wires have also been looped in, and the telegraph office on the main road closed, the business having been removed to the railway-station, and the duties of telegraphist and postmaster amalgamated with those of station-