

SURVEYS.

Waverley to Carlyle.—The survey for this section of railway is in hand. Two lines will be submitted for approval: one closely adhering to the original trial line, inland; the other taking a direction from Waverley towards the coast, then rounding the cliffs and entering the Patea Valley near the sea, and joining the new station now being constructed at Carlyle. It may be found that it will be better to adhere to the inland line, as being shorter, and lying within settled and improved lands, likely to give a much larger amount of traffic to the railway than the coast-line.

Bunnythorpe—Woodville.—The survey of this trial line has been completed through the Manawatu Gorge from 8 miles to 12 miles 30 chains, and the plotting is now in hand. It crosses the Pohangina River, a branch of the Manawatu, and then follows the north bank of the Manawatu, thus avoiding the crossing of that river.

Land Plans, Waitotara to Waverley.—These have been completed.

Palmerston to Horowhenua (25 miles 4·66 chains).—This trial survey has been completed, and plans and sections plotted. It is thought that some portion of this line may be revised with advantage to avoid flooded lands, and this work will be undertaken at a favourable time.

Foxton to Horowhenua.—A deviation to avoid a large extent of flooded land has been surveyed (5 miles 19·61 chains), and will be a great improvement.

The distances on these trial lines are,—

Foxton Station to Horowhenua Junction, by first survey, 11 miles 20 chains; by deviation, 13 miles 5 chains.

From Palmerston (making use of 4 miles 5 chains of the opened line towards Foxton) to Horowhenua Junction, 29 miles 9·66 chains.

From Palmerston *viâ* Foxton to Horowhenua Junction, by first trial line, 34 miles 50 chains; the same by the deviation above described, 36 miles 35 chains.

Foxton to Palmerston, by opened line, 23 miles 30 chains.

PATEA-NEW PLYMOUTH RAILWAY.

(SOUTHERN SECTION.)

Carlyle Station Contract.—This includes about one mile of railway formation and plate-laying, with bridge over the Patea River, the construction of a wharf or breastwork of 540 feet frontage, and the reclamation of sufficient ground for a railway-station: the latter will be on the south side of the Patea River, immediately below the bridge on the main line of road. The work was let on 29th September, 1880, and is rather more than half finished: the date of completion is 29th September, 1881.

Works Executed by Parties of Unemployed.—Several parties of these were sent from Wellington, commencing in July, 1880: these were divided into three camps, and set to work between Carlyle and Manutahi (a distance of about 8 miles), and were working up to the end of December. During this time they completed about two miles of formation, representing about 49,000 cubic yards of earthwork. Including wages, hire of drays, and all incidental expenses, the average cost of this was about 1s. 6d. per cubic yard, which, under the circumstances, may be considered a good result, the work being begun in midwinter, the men for the most part being unused to such work, and the average lead exceeding 15 chains.

Earthwork Contracts.—No. 1, 47 chains, and No. 2, 45 chains, are completed; No. 3, 6 chains, No. 4, 36 chains, and No. 5, in two pieces of 31 chains and 57 chains respectively, are in hand; three other contracts for bridges and large culverts are completed; and Earthwork Contracts Nos. 6 and 7 are now being advertised. These works, together with that done by Public Works labour (unemployed), will complete about 5 miles of formation, exclusive of 1 mile in the Carlyle Station contract. The earthwork under the "petty contracts" has cost about 1s. 1d. per cubic yard, the leads as a rule being long.

Beyond the above only one more culvert, 3-feet diameter and 230 feet long, will be required between Carlyle and Manutahi; and no other bridges beyond those already let or finished.

It is proposed shortly to prepare and advertise for public tender a contract for permanent way, stations, and other works necessary to complete this section (Carlyle-Manutahi, about 6 miles) for public traffic.

PATEA-NEW PLYMOUTH RAILWAY.

(NORTHERN SECTION.)

Mangawhero Contract (22 miles 20 chains to 29 miles).—About 3¼ miles of this was opened for traffic on the 27th September, 1880, and the remainder was completed on 30th November, the portion extending to 28 miles 20 chains (Eltham) being opened for traffic on 7th February, 1881. A road was opened through the bush from Eltham Station to the Mountain Road, about 40 chains, to render this station accessible.

Waingongoro Contract (29 miles to 33 miles 34 chains), *Formation and Permanent Way.*—This contract should have been completed by 31st March, but it will be some time longer; it is expected, however, that the line will be linked in and finished sufficiently in a week or two to allow of the passage of permanent-way materials for the extension of the line to Hawera, intended to be opened for traffic by the end of June.

The earthworks on the Waingongoro contract are the heaviest on this line, and demanded the most vigorous exertions on the part of the contractors to complete them within the required time.

Normanby Section (33 miles 34 chains to 37 miles 34 chains).—The formation of this portion of the line is completed.

Hawera Formation Contract (37 miles 34 chains to 40 miles 68 chains).—This should have been completed by 31st March, but some work still remains to be done.

Hawera-Normanby, Permanent-Way Contract.—This extends over the two last-named formation contracts. Its provisions are that the line shall be ready for traffic as far southwards as Normanby on