

WORKS ON OPENED LINE.

Rangitikei Bridge (reconstruction).—This work was completed and locomotive engines were again run over it on 22nd June, 1883.

At Foxton Station a new water-supply has been established, the water from the first supply being bad; and various improvements to increase the facility of working have been made.

At Palmerston also several additions to sidings and buildings were found necessary, and the work is well in hand; when finished the station will be convenient and commodious.

Improvements have also been made at Terrace End, Feilding, Halcombe, Turakina, Wanganui, Waitotara, and Waverley Stations, a footpath has been erected on the Oroua Bridge, and a water service has been established on the Whenuakura Bridge to prevent chance of accident by fire.

PATEA-NEW PLYMOUTH SECTION.

Manutahi Platelaying Contract (7 miles 38 chains).—This work was completed on the 28th August, 1883, and, the buildings on this section having been completed before this date, a portion of the main line extending over it and the Whenuakura Contract and the Patea Station Section was opened for traffic from Waverley to Manutahi on the 28th August, 1883, the length respectively being as follows, viz.: Whenuakura Contract, 8 miles 31 chains; Patea Stations, 1 mile 19 chains; Manutahi Platelaying, 7 miles 38 chains; being a total of 17 miles 8 chains, extending from 29 miles 17 chains to 46 miles 25 chains from Wanganui (Aramoho) northwards.

Manawapou Contract (2 miles 67·32 chains, formation and platelaying).—This work was contracted for on the 14th May, 1883, to be finished on the 14th January, 1884, and proceeded with until November, when work was discontinued by the contractor. After the usual notices the work was taken out of his hands, and on the 2nd January the work was begun again under the department. It is now being pushed on vigorously.

The contract for a large concrete culvert within the limits of the above contract was completed on the 16th July, 1883.

Tongahoe Contract (6 miles 38 chains, formation and platelaying).—Extends from the above contract to Hawera Station, and fills up the gap in the railway line mentioned in last year's report. The contract was let on the 26th November, 1883, and the contractor is making fair progress with the work, which should be completed on the 26th October, 1884.

New Plymouth Passenger-station Contract.—This was completed on the 18th May, 1883, and the new station-yard opened for traffic on the 14th June, 1883. Several minor works have also been added to this station, which is now conveniently accessible, and is a great improvement on the old one.

Works on Opened Line.—Improvements have been made at Inglewood, Waipuku (water-supply), Waitara, Sentry Hill, and Grant Road Stations.

Rolling-stock.—There was completed, during the year, at East Town Workshops, the following amount of rolling-stock, viz.: eighteen timber wagons, six low-side wagons, one horse-box; and there are in progress three brake-vans, ten cattle-trucks, twenty sheep-trucks, twenty high-side trucks, twenty low-side trucks, ten timber-trucks; also four timber-trucks at Sentry Hill Workshops.

SURVEYS.

Extension of Railway Line, New Plymouth, to Breakwater.—This survey was completed and plans and estimates were prepared during the year; length, 2 miles 40 chains.

Survey of completed Line, New Plymouth to Hawera.—Nothing has been done to this, the staff being fully engaged on other works.

Land Plans.—The surveys, New Plymouth to Waitara, are completed, with the exception of portions around Waitara Station and wharf, and a portion of New Plymouth Station. Sentry Hill to Waiongona, survey and maps completed; Hawera to Manutahi, 6 miles from Hawera, survey and maps completed; and 3 miles next Manutahi, field-work done, but maps not yet finished.

SURVEYS FOR MAIN TRUNK LINE THROUGH NORTH ISLAND.

As explained in last year's report, the explorations for the above had been commenced, and the work has steadily proceeded since that date. The results will be a report, with plans, on each of the three routes over which the explorations have been carried, viz.: The first from Te Awamutu southwards through the Waipa Valley, the Upper Mokau, and by a line generally about twenty-five miles distant from the sea-coast to Stratford, where it would join the main line of railway. This has been the joint work of several engineers and surveyors, the result of whose labours will be embodied in a report by Mr. R. W. Holmes, Resident Engineer, and a plan by Mr. M. Carkeek. It is expected that these will be finished by the end of May. The second route, from Te Awamutu southwards, by way of Waipa Valley, Upper Mokau, Ongarue River, Wainmarino, Murimotu, Hautapu River, and Rangitikei River, to Marton, on the main line of the West Coast Railway, has been explored by Mr. John Rochfort, who has sent in his plan and report. The third route, from Hastings, on the Wellington-Napier Railway, by way of the Ripia Valley, Lake Taupo, and River Waikato, to Te Awamutu, has been explored by Mr. G. P. Williams. It is expected that his report and plan will be finished before the end of May.

All these reports and plans will be prepared for your information, as well as a report by the Inspecting Engineer on the engineering aspects of route No. 2, and some other reports by the individual surveyors engaged on alternative lines on No. 1 route. Attached to this report is a map of the North Island, showing railway lines, &c.

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JOHN BLACKETT,
Engineer in Charge, North Island.

The Hon. the Minister for Public Works.