

INVERCARGILL—KINGSTON AND BRANCHES, INCLUDING WESTERN RAILWAYS.

On the MARAROA BRANCH the platelaying has been extended for a further distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, making about 4 miles in all from its commencement; beyond this point the line is formed for a further distance of about 2 miles.

On the OREPUKI BRANCH RAILWAY a further length of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles has been opened, and the platelaying is in progress on the remaining portion. This, with the exception of stations, which are not yet let, will complete the whole of the line to Orepuki, a distance in all of about 18 miles.

SURVEYS.—Good progress has been made with these in both Islands.

In the North Island three lines have been examined as probable routes for the main trunk line between Wellington and Auckland, viz., one from Napier by way of Taupo; one from Marton by a line west of the Rangitikei River, Ruapehu, and Taupo; and one from Stratford by a line inland about 15 miles from the coast. In addition to the reports already before honourable members on this subject, further and fuller reports have since been prepared and supplied to the Committee appointed to inquire into the question of the most suitable route to be adopted.

In the Middle Island the principal surveys are those for the proposed East and West Coast Railway. Four main routes have been surveyed in detail: the Cannibal Gorge, Hurunui Pass, Arthur's Pass, and Lake Lyndon routes, and a reconnaissance survey has been made of a fifth by the Amuri Pass. Reports, with maps and sections, giving the result of these surveys, will be laid before you.

ADDITIONS TO OPENED RAILWAYS.

I shall now briefly refer to a few of the works which have been executed on the lines of railway which were open for traffic previously to the 31st March, 1883, outside ordinary repairs and renewals, to which I shall presently allude. And here I would wish to record my opinion that a very large amount of the works executed on these opened lines has been done much earlier than there was any real necessity for, and also that the unnecessarily increased accommodation given in some instances is causing very great pressure to be put upon the Government for similarly unnecessary expenditure in other places.

KAIPARA—WAIKATO.—Various works have been executed on this line of railway, with the view of improving the facilities for traffic at the different stations, and for providing better accommodation for the repairs of rolling-stock, &c. This latter will be accomplished by the erection of new workshops at Newmarket, which are now nearly completed, and the erection of the necessary machinery is in progress.

Provision has also been made for increasing the convenience of passenger-traffic in Auckland, where a new passenger-station building is now in progress under contract, opposite and parallel to Customhouse Street, on the reclaimed land.

WESTPORT—NGAKAWAU.—On this railway some minor improvements have been carried out during the year, and also some additions to the plant and rolling-stock.

GREYMOUTH—BRUNNERTON.—A few additions and improvements have been made on the open line, and an extension of 450 feet to the Greymouth wharf is under contract, to be completed in about two months.

HURUNUI—WAITAKI AND BRANCHES.—The works on the opened portions of these lines during the past year consist chiefly of numerous extensions and improvements at workshops and stations, and large additions to rolling-stock.