

PICTON TO HURUNUI RAILWAY.

Section, Picton to Awatere.—No further works have been undertaken on this railway during the year. A contract is, however, advertised for the formation of three and a half miles from the end of the Vernon section completed last year: this brings the line to about halfway to the Dashwood Saddle. The new section includes a small tunnel and rather heavy earthworks.

The land plans of this railway from Picton to Vernon are completed, and a detailed survey of Picton Harbour is in progress. The latter is for the purpose of determining a plan for increased wharfage and station accommodation.

HURUNUI TO WAITAKI RAILWAY.

Main Line Extension.—The portion of this line north of the Hurunui is, in the Public Works and Appropriation Acts, included under the preceding head—Picton—Hurunui; but I shall refer to it here instead, as it really belongs to the Hurunui—Bluff system.

The formation of the Horsley Downs section, which brings the railway to the terrace on the southern bank of the Hurunui, was finished early in the year, and the permanent-way and stations are well advanced.

The Hurunui Bridge has been carried out for a third of its length. The bed of the river, for the remaining distance, is found too hard to drive piles as originally intended; consequently it will be necessary to substitute cylinders.

A contract has just been entered into for formation, bridges, and station-buildings on the section from the Hurunui River to the crossing of the main road near the Red Post. This brings the railway to a very central position on the Amuri Plains—which also commands the whole of the interior traffic.

Main Line: Works on Open Lines.—These works have not been so numerous nor extensive last year as in the two or three years preceding.

The cliffs to the north of Timaru still require protection from the encroachment of the sea. About 3,700 cubic yards of stone have been deposited during the year, and a further quantity of 1,000 yards has recently been arranged for. The total expenditure to date on the Timaru protective works has been about £9,000.

The various works, in progress at Christchurch and Addington at the end of last year, have been completed, and a few minor additions carried out.

The new passenger-station at Timaru was finished and opened for traffic in May, and the goods-shed and other buildings in August. The improvements in Timaru are calculated to meet all requirements for many years to come.

The other more important construction-works carried out or in progress on the opened portion of the main line during the year are: Goods-shed at Ealing; cattle-yards at Waipara, Hook, St. Andrews, and North Waitaki; shelter-shed and platform at Norwood; refreshment-room at Rangiora; guard's house and men's huts at Waikari; weighbridges at Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Addington, and Ashburton; turn-table at Waikari; and crane at Timaru.

Old Branches.—Besides minor extensions and improvements, the following construction-works have been carried out or put in hand on these lines during the year:—Lyttelton Branch: General rearrangement and enlargement of station at Woolston. Southbridge Branch: Improvement of water-service at Ellesmere. Springfield and Whitecliffs Branches: Additions to sidings at Aylesbury and Whitecliffs. Albury Branch: Cattle-yards at Pleasant Point, and improvement to water-service at Albury.

Lincoln—Little River Branch.—Small additions have been made to the station accommodation at Birdling's Flat, the terminus of the open line.

The formation of the Lake Forsyth section, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which skirts the shore of the lake, was finished in December; and a contract for another section of the same kind, one mile in length, has just been entered into.

Ashburton Branch.—A few minor improvements have been made to stations on the opened portion of this branch. The last section of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which completes the line to 21 miles 53 chains, was opened on the 1st instant. The terminus is near the southern end of the road-bridge over the Ashburton River, opposite the Mount Somers Township.

Albury—Fairlie Creek Branch.—After considerable delay through the insolvency of contractors, damage by floods, and a difficulty in fixing the station sites, the line was finally opened to Fairlie Creek and Eversley on the 30th January. All the station-buildings at Fairlie Creek Township are not yet completed. The last contract—for the erection of engine- and coal-shed, stationmaster's house, and water-supply—expires on the 21st April, but the works will not be quite finished before the beginning of June. This contract completes all the works required on this branch till a further length is authorized.

Land Plans.—The land plans for 186 out of the 383 miles in the Hurunui—Waitaki Railway and branches are complete, and 20 miles more are well advanced.

CANTERBURY INTERIOR MAIN LINE.

The section extending from West Oxford to the Waimakariri River was finished on the 30th April, 1883, and the remaining link from thence to Sheffield on the 31st January of this year. The alterations to the Waimakariri Bridge that are necessary to adapt it for railway traffic are so far advanced that the line will probably be ready for opening early in June. The land plans for the Oxford—Malvern section are finished.

WAITAKI TO BLUFF RAILWAY, WITH BRANCHES.

Main Line: Works on Open Line.—The most important construction-works in progress on the main line during the year were the stations at Dunedin, Invercargill, and Bluff, and the workshops at Hillside.