

Pipiriki, 14 miles; thence to Turipo on the Native track to Ranana, 7 miles; from Ohakune northwards towards Waimarino, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles; from Waimarino southwards towards Ohakune, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; and from Ohakune southwards to the Murimotu Plains, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles: leaving a gap of about $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles to complete. From Taumaranui towards Waimarino some 21 miles are fit for pack-horses, leaving about four miles to complete the track through to the Waimarino Plains. The routes followed by these pack-tracks have been surveyed.

When these gaps are cut through we shall have a continuous pack-track from Taumaranui to Murimotu, which will represent a saving of sixty miles of travelling between Ohakune and Waimarino alone. Mr. Rochfort has also executed a compass survey of the Wanganui River from Taumaranui to Upokongaro, 129 miles; and has also reported on the suitability of the river for navigation. For the convenience of these inland surveys and explorations two plank-houses and two storehouses have been built at Taumaranui; at Wainarino one plank-house, and at Ohakune two plank-houses and one storehouse has been built. It is proposed to increase the number of these houses and stores from time to time.

THAMES VALLEY AND ROTORUA RAILWAY.—(PRIVATE RAILWAY PURCHASED BY GOVERNMENT.)

A portion of this work—(constructed by a company bearing title as above)—viz., 31 miles, from Morrinsville to Oxford, was inspected by this department, and passed as fit for public traffic on the 5th March, and on the 8th March it was formally opened. The Engineers for the work, Messrs. Stewart and Hunter, reported as follows, viz.:—

"Morrinsville to Oxford.—On the 8th March this portion of first section of the Thames Valley and Rotorua Railway was formally opened for traffic by the Working Railways Department. The works were not as fully completed at the time as we could have wished, but most of the shortcomings have since been rectified by the contractor, and station-buildings and other works fully completed."

"Oxford to Lichfield (12 miles).—The works are still in progress, the contractors being very much behindhand with contract. We hope, however, to have everything ready for handing over by the latter end of next month; but everything will depend upon the time occupied in constructing the Lichfield water-supply and tanks."

The second section of this railway, extending from Putaruru Junction, five miles north of Lichfield, is now under survey, and contract plans for the first eight miles are expected to be ready by about the end of April or beginning of May.

WELLINGTON-NAPIER RAILWAY—NAPIER TO WOODVILLE.

Tamaki Contract.—This extends southwards of Tahoraite (the end of the opened line) for a distance of 13 miles 43·28 chains, and includes formation and platelaying. It was let on 8th May, 1885, and the time for completion is 8th February, 1887. The contractor has made fair progress with his work: the earthwork is about two-thirds done, bridge-work about half, concrete work and culverts almost complete, platelaying not yet begun. This contract reaches to within a mile and a half of Woodville Railway-station, and for this distance it is proposed that a small formation contract will shortly be let. Woodville Station ground and the approach road to it has been partly formed by a number of unemployed sent from Napier: the number never exceeded thirty; many of them left as better work offered, and the last of them departed early in February.

Awapurua Bridge Contract.—This work was satisfactorily completed and the bridge opened for public traffic on the 9th July, 1885. Some extra protective works considered to be necessary at five of the piers at the north end of the bridge are still in progress, but will shortly be completed.

Works on Open Lines.—Sundry small works have been executed, and water-supplies, to be used in case of fire, have been constructed at the viaducts over the Manawatu and Makatoku rivers, and arrangements are being made to protect in the same way those over the Mangarangiara, Mangatewainui, Mangatera, and Whakaruatapu.

Erection of Rolling-stock.—Under an authority issued in 1883 the work of erecting three goods-brakes, three horse-boxes, ten cattle-trucks, five sheep-trucks, twelve timber-trucks, twenty low-side wagons, and twenty high-side wagons has been completed at the workshops, Napier.

WELLINGTON-NAPIER RAILWAY—WELLINGTON TO WOODVILLE.

Opaki Contract (8 miles 6 chains, formation and permanent-way).—The works described in last year's report as being in progress are now completed. Station-buildings are now being erected, in view of the opening of the line.

Kopuaranga Contract (8 miles 9 chains, formation only).—This work was satisfactorily completed on the 14th January. As a means of increasing the public convenience, it was decided to proceed with the extension of the platelaying over this latter contract as soon as that on the Opaki contract was finished, and the rails are being laid to Mauriceville, 12 miles beyond Masterton, with the view of making this a temporary terminus from and to which the coaches to Woodville and Napier will depart and arrive. Sufficient station accommodation will be provided (under contract) to meet this arrangement, and it is expected that this portion of the railway will be ready for public traffic sometime in May. Arrangements are also being made to extend the platelaying beyond Mauriceville to Mangamahoe, the end of the Kopuaranga contract, about four miles further, and to erect the necessary station-buildings, &c. This work may probably occupy a further period of three months.

Sleepers.—Contracts for 12,000 sleepers were entered into for the above sections.

Surveys.—The survey of the railway-line south of Woodville has been in hand for some time—eight miles have been located and pegged, and eight miles of trial survey have been completed. It is intended to complete the survey as far as Eketahuna, to which place it has already been made from the Wellington end, viz., about 89 miles in all.