

snags removed from the reaches between the rapids. The number of snags to be removed is very great. From some of the rapids from three to eight hundred snags have been removed; and at one rapid a reef of "papa" rock had to be blasted and broken up, 60ft. long, 30ft. wide, and 3ft. deep; in other places boulders weighing from three to four hundredweight up to a ton had to be lifted and moved. The work has progressed as far as Kaiwhaika, forty-six miles above Wanganui. The object has been to obtain about 2ft. of water on the various rapids at the ordinary summer level, although a few of the shingle bars may have less than this, viz., from 15in. to 18in.: these, however, it is proposed to improve so as to obtain the necessary depth. Some of the long flat reaches have not more than 2ft of water in them during the summer. It is expected that by about May or June the snagging will have been completed as far as Pipiriki—that is, to where the road to the interior, described above, will begin.

Mr. J. T. Stewart, District Engineer, who inspected the river, in October, 1885, from Taumararui downwards, made a special detailed report on it, accompanied by sketches illustrative of the nature of the falls and rapids, and of the varied and striking scenery on its course. This report is very interesting, and is attached hereto.

A private company in Wanganui has built a stern-wheel steamer, intended to navigate the river, and to carry material for the railway when required. She has, however, been only a partial success: she has navigated the river as far as Pipiriki; but her limited power and speed (about seven miles per hour) will prevent her being usefully employed in carrying heavy cargo as intended. This will be obvious when it is stated that some of the rapids, in their swiftest portions, have a speed of seven miles an hour. A vessel, to make good headway and to surmount these, should have a speed of at least twelve or thirteen miles an hour in still water. I should recommend that at least two stern-wheel steamers of the most improved form should be ordered from England at an early date: there are firms there who have made the construction of such vessels a speciality, and who, on the requisite information being supplied to them, would send out exactly what would be required.

NELSON-ROUNDELL RAILWAY.

The present railway is opened to Belgrove, 22 miles; and a formation contract (Wai-iti) was completed last year for 2½ miles further, beyond which no further work has been done this year.

PICTON-HURUNUI RAILWAY.

The *Dashwood Contract*, 3½ miles long, formation only, is the only work in progress at this end of the line; it begins at a point 22½ miles from Picton. The work has proceeded slowly during the year, and is as yet only half done; it is calculated that it will take at least fifteen months yet to finish it. The contractor has been urged to expedite the work.

Picton Wharf Extension.—This is a contract for lengthening the Picton Wharf 100ft., a work much needed to accommodate the steam vessels calling at the port; it is expected to be finished in about a month.

Surveys.—Land surveys and plans have been made for the Wai-iti section, and the land has been taken by Proclamation. Land survey plans for the Vernon section have been made, and the land has been taken by Proclamation. The survey for land and plans for the Dashwood section is not yet done, but will be attended to soon.

Number of Men employed in Nelson and Marlborough Districts.—This has averaged 141, of which 125 have been employed by contractors, the rest by Government.

GREYMOUTH-HOKITIKA RAILWAY.

A contract for laying the permanent way from 0 miles 9 chains, in the Town of Hokitika, to 4 miles, near the Arahura River, was entered into early in the year, and the work was completed in December last. This portion, it is believed, will be found useful in conveying sawn timber to the port.

During last month a number of unemployed men were sent from Canterbury to work on this railway (about one hundred): they were set to work on a section between the 5th and 7th miles, immediately north of the Arahura River. A small number of local unemployed were also set to work between the 16th and 17th mile pegs, the rate of pay being limited to 5s. per day of eight hours.

The bridge-site at the Arahura River has been re-surveyed, with a view of preparing plans of the bridge and calling for tenders for the work. This will be done shortly.

Work has been done in the proposed Greymouth Station yard, in the way of levelling and filling up, about 7,000 tons of quarry-rubbish having been deposited there.

WESTPORT-NGAKAWAU RAILWAY.

No additional works have been carried out on this open line during the year.

The Westport Harbour Board have opened out two quarries near Cape Foulwind Lighthouse, one of granite and one of limestone, both good in quality; and a railway has been constructed thence to the southern or main breakwater, on which a beginning has been made. It is expected that by the beginning of May the Harbour Board will be in a position to begin the work of construction in good earnest. The half-tide training-wall in the river on the north side has been completed for some time, and with good effect.

GREYMOUTH-BRUNNERTON RAILWAY.

Some additional moorings have been fixed to the Johnston Street Wharf, at Greymouth; and a footway has been constructed on the top of the Grey Gorge Bridge at Brunnerton: this was considered necessary to insure the safety of foot-passengers.