

Plans have been prepared for the extension of the wharf at Greymouth, and tenders will shortly be called for its construction. It will be 650ft. long, and will be fitted with two 8-ton cranes, intended to lift the bodies of the coal wagons, containing 6 tons each, at one lift and deposit their load in one operation in the vessels hold.

The Greymouth harbour works have been carried on by the Harbour Board during the year with success. The southern or main breakwater has now nearly reached its intended limit, and the works on the northern side of the river have been begun. The effect of all these works on the bar is most marked, and there is little doubt that on their completion a steady deep-water channel over the bar will be secured. The works are standing the assaults of the sea very well, as the stones used are of great size and weight and very soon settle themselves into a permanent position.

Number of Men employed in Westland District.—These are as follows, viz., under contractors, 60; under Government, 19: total, 79.

HURUNUI-WAITAKI RAILWAY AND BRANCHES.

Hurunui Northwards.—The contract for the erection of the Hurunui bridge and a section of formation and permanent-way south of the bridge—1 mile $14\frac{1}{2}$ chains—was satisfactorily completed on the 23rd January; and the Culverden Permanent-way contract, extending from the last-named contract to Culverden, 9 miles 50 chains, was completed on the 31st December, 1885, the work having been done within two months. Both sections were opened for public traffic on the 9th February. The painting of the Hurunui bridge is now in hand under contract.

Works on Open Lines.—During the year 1,697 cubic yards of heavy stone-work have been tipped over the cliff at Timaru, to prevent encroachment of the sea. Further protection may yet be necessary, but the encroachment is not now so rapid as formerly. There have been 520 chains of single fence erected on the Upper Ashburton Branch. Water-services at Cust and West Oxford have been improved; and new water-services have been put in hand at Medbury and Culverden. A considerable amount of tree-planting has been done by the “unemployed” on the Canterbury railways.

Upper Ashburton Branch; Mount Somers Contract.—This contract—1 mile $47\frac{3}{4}$ chains—includes the formation of a bridge over the Ashburton River 1,204ft. in length, and was completed on the 30th March, 1886. Platelaying and ballasting have also been done as far as the south end of the bridge.

Mount Somers Extension Contract.—This work is now advertised for public tender. It includes completion of permanent-way to Mount Somers and the necessary station-buildings; length, 75 chains.

Lincoln-Little River Branch; Little River Contract.—This includes formation and permanent-way between Birdling's Flat and Little River—5 miles 38 chains—as well as station-buildings at Little River. It was finished on the 6th March, and opened for public traffic on the 16th March.

Oxford to Sheffield and Whitecliffs Extension.—The contract for the extension of the Whitecliffs Branch (24 chains), including a bridge over the River Selwyn, was completed on the 28th September. The rails have not yet been laid.

Surveys.—The trial survey of a proposed railway from Little River to Duvauchelles' Bay (Akaroa) has almost been completed, but the work has not yet been all plotted. The ruling gradient is 1 in 50, and the hill would require a tunnel of about 140 chains long to obtain this grade. The sections, so far, do not indicate any other very heavy work.

Land-plan Surveys.—The following have been made, viz., Birdling's Flat to Little River, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Culverden sections, Whitecliffs Branch extension, Upper Ashburton Branch extension.

Land Plans.—The following have been completed during the year, viz., Hurunui northwards, $10\frac{1}{4}$ miles; Kaiapoi, Eyreton, 20 miles; Lincoln, Little River, $22\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Upper Ashburton Branch, $23\frac{1}{4}$ miles: total, 76 miles.

Number of Men employed.—In the Canterbury District this has averaged as follows for the year, viz., employed by Government, 280; employed by contractors, 194: total, 474.

WAITAKI BLUFF RAILWAY AND BRANCHES.

Dunedin Goods Yard.—Several extra sidings, a coal store, ashpits, and a 50-ft. turntable were completed in this yard by the Public Works Department up to the 9th November, at which date the works were handed over to the Working Railways Department, to complete as occasion required.

Dunedin Station Overbridge Contract.—The materials for this contract did not arrive in the colony till long after the specified time, consequently the work is much behindhand. The contractor is now making fair progress with its construction. The filling-in of the approaches to this bridge, which did not form part of the above contract, was used as a means of providing work for the unemployed in Dunedin, and the western approach is now well in hand, and will probably be completed in three or four weeks. The unemployed were set to work on the formation and metalling of Cumberland Street from Rattray Street to Anderson's Bay Road, and this work will be completed in a week or two. They were employed in levelling and reclaiming the site of the old railway-station, which work is now nearly done; and also in the formation of half the width of Crawford Street, between Rattray Street and Anderson's Bay Road: on this there are about seventy to eighty men employed.

Reclamation North of Stuart Street.—This work was completed in October last.

River Protection at Balclutha.—This work, since its completion, has stood the action of two or three considerable floods without being injured, and the result may be considered satisfactory. The vegetation—gorse, willows, and other shrubs—planted along the face of the embankment have grown well and clothed the embankment from end to end.