

MORRINSVILLE—ROTORUA.

Morrinsville to Putaruru (opened 1886.)

Formation clean and well kept.

Permanent-way Rails are 53lb. steel, and the road is in good trim; ballast is chiefly sandy gravel. For a considerable length of the line the ballast is scanty—that is, the boxing-up is deficient and sleeper-ends bare, other parts are well ballasted. The line is clear of weeds. Sleepers are mostly kauri, and have been extensively renewed with puriri and totara, there are a few which have rotten ends, but generally the sleepers are in good condition.

Structures The bridges have totara piles and trestles, and kauri beams and upper work. In many of the bridges the piles are already suffering at ground-level, though we saw nothing serious, and we noticed that they are carefully inspected. The beams and upper work are in every case in good condition, as a considerable number of renewals have been effected. The wooden box-culverts are all in good order, though some are getting very old.

The fencing generally is in good condition, cattle-stops, gates, and sign-boards, all in good order and condition.

Stations All the station-buildings are in good condition, tidy, and well kept, as are the cattle-yards, loading-banks, privies and urinals in good order and clean.

Putaruru to Rotorua.

Formation has steep grades of 1 in 35, but very good curves. The heavy part in the hills is not very well trimmed, slopes being somewhat rugged, and drains in cuttings often blocked with small slips. In places the cuttings have suffered many slips, and have been pitched with stone, and drained.

Permanent-way The rails are 53lb. steel, and the road is in very good running trim, and mostly clear of weeds. The ballast is gravelly sand on the first part, and pumice sand at the farther end. The ballast is abundant, and sleepers well covered, and the line clear of weeds. In consequence of the abundant ballast we could see nothing of the sleepers, but as the line is new the sleepers must be new also.

Structures The bridges are comparatively new, and are in good condition. They suffer from sun-cracks, and none of the bridges have been painted or tarred, which, we, think, impairs their durability. Most of the culverts are concrete, stone, or pipes, and open culverts mostly Stone walls and timber beams in good condition. Fences, cattle-stops, gates, and sign-boards in good condition.

Station-buildings, and all appurtenances to the stations, in very good order, privies and urinals clean.

The part of this line from Tarukenga to Rotorua was not quite completed at the time of our visit.

Lichfield Branch (five miles long)

This piece of line is in very good order, rails in good running trim, and clear of weeds, the ballast is sandy gravel, and abundant. The sleepers are not visible, but we were told that they are kept by renewals in good order and condition. Fences, cattle-stops, gates, and signboards are in very good condition.

Stations At Lichfield Station the station-buildings, yards, and engine-sheds, Stationmaster's house, platelayer's cottage, coal-store, cattle-pen and -yards, and platform, are all in good condition and well kept, the privy and urinal good and clean.

From Auckland to Helensville and on to Kaukapakapa (43½ miles):—

Auckland to Taupaki (opened in 1888).

Formation is well kept, and drains generally clean and clear of weeds.

Permanent-way The road is in excellent running order, the rails are 53lb. steel, and only two miles of 40lb. iron rails are now in the road. The ballast, of clean scoria, is generally abundant, though there are a few places where it is somewhat scanty. The sleepers are very good as far as we could see them, most of them have been renewed in puriri. The road is free from weeds.

Structures The bridges on this length have been extensively renewed, and this is going on now. There are about ten bridges on which there is much decay of sills and piles at ground-level, and two are in a condition that requires renewal as soon as possible, the others are good for two years or so. These bridges are booked for renewal, which is done one after the other, and meantime they are watched and repaired. Many bridges have been entirely renewed in concrete and iron-bark, and are in excellent condition. Most of the culverts are stone.

Fencing is mostly in good order. The first part of the line they are stone walls, after that post-and-wire fence. Cattle-stops are mostly in good condition, having been renewed, but there are some badly decayed. Gates and sign-boards in good condition.

Stations: The station-buildings are all in fair condition, with here and there a few decayed boards or sills. Some of the shelter-sheds are getting very old, and want painting, and a few of the piles on which they stand are decayed at ground-level. The platforms are in good condition, except that one or two have the timber fronts partly decayed. Cattle-pens and loading-banks in good condition, but a few of the front piles show decay at ground-level. Privies and urinals were in good condition, and, with one exception, clean.

Taupaki to Helensville North.

Formation is in good order, in places the grades and curves have been altered and improved.

Permanent-way The roading is kept in good running order, and clear of weeds. Up to Kumeu Station the rails are 53lb. steel, after that to Helensville the rails are 40lb. iron, with two miles or so of 53lb. steel in places. These 40lb. rails are somewhat worn, but are to be replaced