

by 53lb. steel in their turn. The ballast is scoria. A good deal of the line is a little bare of ballast—that is, the boxing-up and sleeper-ends are bare, other parts are well ballasted. The sleepers have been extensively replaced with puriri, and are generally in good condition, except in sidings where, as usual, renewals are not so urgent as in the main line. We observed large stacks of fine puriri sleepers at different places waiting to be put into the line.

Structures The bridges have undergone extensive renewals, and many are booked for same. In many of them the piles are decayed at ground-level, many beams and sills are partly rotten or severely sun-cracked. A number of bridges have been entirely renewed in concrete and ironbark. The large bridge over the Kaipara River is in very fair condition, the piles, being in mud and water, stand well. A few beams are partly decayed, and must be renewed soon. The open culverts are in good condition.

Fencing Usually in good condition, has a patch or two with rotten posts, and is being repaired. There are very few cattle-stops, and they are in fair condition. Gates and signboards in good order.

Stations The buildings are all in good condition, with the exception of a few unimportant parts a little decayed. Platforms are in good order, although there are some with the woodwork gone a little. Cattle-pens, tank-stands, water-supply, and loading-banks in good condition, although the cattle-pens and loading-banks have the posts of one and front piles of the other touched with decay in places. At Helensville the station and all its appurtenances are in very good order.

The wharf at Helensville is in good condition except the top planking, which requires continued repair. Stationmasters' houses and platelayers' cottages are all in good order and condition.

Helensville to Kanohi.

This part has been open about four years, and is therefore comparatively new.

Formation and drains are in good condition, and well kept. One cutting is troubled with slips.

Permanent-way The road is kept in good running order, rails are 53lb. steel. The ballast—earthy gravel—is not overabundant, which is partly owing to the rails having been lifted where banks have subsided, which leaves the sleepers somewhat bare. The sleepers are in very good condition.

Structures All the bridges are in good condition, and nearly new, all culverts are also in good condition.

Fencing Fences are in excellent condition, as are the cattle-stops, gates, and sign-boards.

Stations All station-buildings are in good order, and nearly new. The wharf at Mount Rix is in very good condition. The embankment leading to it is liable to be damaged by the waves, and the stone pitching on the slopes is damaged in places, fascines being provided to protect it. The siding and gate leading to this wharf is in good condition.

LINE NORTH OF AUCKLAND.

Whangarei Railway

This line commences with the wharf and station at Opau, on the Whangarei River. The wharf is in very fair condition, and will require few repairs for some time. The planking, however, is rapidly going, and must have continual repairs.

At Opau the sidings are in good order, the angle weedy, shelter-shed and its platform in good condition, platelayers' cottages very good, and surrounded by good fences, weighbridge in good order.

From Wharf to Whangarei.

Formation The banks over swamps are well pitched, but drains are much overgrown.

Permanent-way: The line is a little irregular, down at joints, and slightly kinked, but nothing of consequence. The rails are 53lb. steel. The line is well ballasted with earthy gravel, and a few places with scoria, and at the time very weedy. Sleepers are mixed kauri and puriri, many of the kauri are gone at ends.

Structures The bridges have totara piles in good condition. We noticed many beams and other pieces which were somewhat decayed, one or two considerably so, and, although still serviceable, they must be renewed soon, in general, the bridges are getting very old and want repairs.

Fencing There is little or no fencing.

Stations At Whangarei the station-house is in very good order, and neatly kept, with asphalt platform, the timber front of which is getting old; goods-shed in good condition, except roof, which is rusty, engine-shed in fair order, though the roof has suffered from smoke, carriage-shed and workshop in very fair repair and condition, tank-stands very good; coal-store in good condition, spare crane in good order; privies and urinals good and clean; sidings in good trim, well ballasted with poor ballast.

Whangarei to Ruatangata.

Formation is in good condition, but near Ruatangata there is a troublesome slip.

Permanent-way. The line is not in the best trim, although some parts are good, in places the line is weedy. The rails are 40lb., but have been renewed in many places with 53lb. steel, the ballast is very inferior, except where the above renewals have been made it is better. Under the 40lb. rails the sleepers are old, and many have rotten ends, under the 53lb. they are good.

Structures: There is one overbridge in good condition, the planking of which is somewhat rotten.

Fencing Part of the fencing is in stone walls, the rest, post-and-rail, is in good order, cattle-stops are old but good, though there are three or four which have beams or sills partly decayed; gates are in good condition.