

bridge over the Taieri River. I anticipated that this bridge would have been completed early in the current year, in which case the whole line to Ranfurly would have been ready for opening by August last. I regret to state, however, that the bridge has only recently been completed, so that it will now be impossible to open the line to Ranfurly until the middle of November next.

The formation of the section between Ranfurly and Wedderburn has been put in hand, and the work is now in active progress.

The expenditure on the Otago Central Railway last year was considerably less than it would have been if the delay in the construction of the Taieri Bridge had not hindered the work. As it was, it amounted to £21,281, but liabilities existed at the close of the year to the amount of £8,371. This year we ask for a vote of £30,000.

#### HERIOT EXTENSION.

Subject to a suitable area of land in this district being obtained for settlement, it is proposed to make a start with the section of this railway extending as far as Edie's, six miles and a quarter beyond Heriot. The formation on this section will be of an easy and inexpensive character, and the line, when completed, is expected to yield satisfactory results. The vote of £2,000 proposed for the work will meet the requirements of the current year.

#### SEAWARD BUSH.

The works on this railway were greatly delayed by the bad weather and the slow progress of the contractors for the Mataura Bridge. The bridge was finally completed in May last, and all the other work in progress is now being pushed on as rapidly as possible, and the whole line is expected to be completed to Waimahaka by about the end of the financial year.

The expenditure last year amounted to £7,819, the liabilities existing at the close of the year being £4,257. This year we ask for a vote of £10,000.

#### FOREST HILL.

The work of converting the old tramway into a substantial railway, according to present standards, has been proceeded with. The bulk of the rails required are now on the ground, and the remainder will be delivered shortly. A large number of sleepers has already been procured locally, and efforts are being made to obtain the remainder. The laying of the permanent-way is about to be put in hand, and the line is expected to be opened for traffic right through to Macdonald's by February next. The expenditure on the line last year amounted to £2,551. This year we propose a vote of £5,000.

#### MIDLAND.

A considerable amount of work has been done on this railway. At the Greymouth end the whole of the unfinished formation between Jackson's and Otira has been in hand, and some platelaying and a good deal of river-protective work has been done in addition. This section should be well on towards completion by the end of the financial year. At the Nelson end the formation and bridging between Belgrove and Motupiko has been completed, and the laying of the rails is also nearly finished, and the ballasting of the line has been begun. The railway will probably be available for regular traffic about Christmas next, but we shall be in a position to carry wool and other produce by the 1st November. The promised survey of the Tadmor Valley route for the extension of the line has been put in hand, and is now proceeding.

Work at the Springfield end of the railway was commenced in March last. The first work was the construction of service-roads to give access to the line, but now the actual railway-works are well in hand, and proceeding very satisfactorily.