

The building of the piers of the first bridge over the Ongarue River has been begun. A contract has been let for the supply of the steel girders required for the bridges over the Ongarue River.

Taumaranui Section (76 m. 55 ch. onwards).—A start has been made constructing service roads, clearing bush, and other preliminary work as far as 83 m.

Three contracts have been let for the supply of ironbark timber for bridges. A contract for supply of cast-iron cylinders for the Ongarue bridges is nearly completed. A contract has been let for the erection of the bridge over the Wanganui River. A telephone-line has been erected along the line to Ongarue.

South End.

Makohine Section (22 m. 40 ch. to 33 m. 40 ch. ; length, 11 miles).—Trimming the formation to prepare for platelaying is in progress. The formation for the station at Mangaweka is in progress. About thirty thousand sleepers have been delivered, and a large quantity of rails are now on the ground ready for platelaying.

Makohine Viaduct.—The piers have been completed. The manufacture of the girders is almost completed, and the erection of the girders will be begun shortly. A large portion of the staging has been put up, but this work has been much retarded by the bad weather of the last few months.

Mangaweka Section (33 m. 40 ch. to 40 m. 40 ch. ; length, 7 miles).—The formation is almost complete. Of the five tunnels on this section, one is completed ; the headings have been driven through all, and the work of enlarging and lining these tunnels is now in progress.

Mangaweka Viaduct.—The excavations for the foundations have been partly done, everything is ready for putting in the concrete. A large quantity of the steel for the superstructure has been prepared ready for drilling, and this work will shortly be undertaken with the plant at Makohine.

Paengaroa Section (40 m. 40 ch. to 50 m. 70 ch. ; length, 10 miles 30 chains).—All the earthworks are in hand on this section, and many of them are well advanced. A large drive to divert Otaihape Creek is nearly completed. The approach cuttings to the two tunnels on the section are not yet sufficiently far advanced to enable the tunnels to be taken in hand.

Turangarere Section (50 m. 70 ch. to 61 m. 40½ ch. ; length, 10 miles 50½ chains).—All the bush-felling and clearing have been done on this section, and the location of service roads is in hand. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in getting carriage in the summer for supplies to enable men to work all the winter when the roads are impassable. As many of the earthworks as it is possible to start have been begun.

Contracts have been let for the steel superstructure of the bridge over Toitoti Creek at 37 m. 54 ch., and for the main span of the bridge over the Hautapu at 51 m. 12 ch. All the steel and iron required for the bridges up to 85 m. 49 ch. has been ordered from England.

STRATFORD-WANGAMOMONA.

The formation-works on this line have been completed for a length of four miles and a half, and are well advanced up to 6½ m. A start has been made with the erection of the bridge over the Patea River. The works are in progress up to Toko, six miles and a half from Stratford, and it is expected that the line will be ready for traffic up to this point by the end of the year.

MIDLAND.

Tadmor Section (30 m. 58 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch. ; length, 10 m. 27 ch.).—Formation-works on this section were started in March, and considerable progress has been made, as the works are light. A deviation of the line between 31 m. and 33 m. 40 ch. has been surveyed : this will be an improvement on the line as first located. Other minor deviations from the line may be necessary to get a better crossing of the Motueka River and effect other improvements. A contract has been prepared for the bridge over the Motueka River.

Otira Section.—The works on this section were completed during the year, and the line was opened up to Otira Station on the 13th November. It has been necessary to repair flood-damages to the protection-works beyond the opened line since the line was opened.

Mount Torlesse Section (6 m. to 18 m. ; length, 12 miles).—Good progress has been made with the works on this section. The cuttings and banks on the first four miles and a half are nearly complete, and the tunnels on this length are about two-thirds completed. Some of the tunnel-work not in solid rock has proved to be very expensive, and some of the tunnels are in very hard rock. The alignments of the tunnels in some cases have had to be altered to insure that they pass through solid material. The material to be tunnelled through is either solid rock, loose *débris* from the hills in the worst cases, or river shingle and boulder deposit, and it is advisable to avoid the loose material wherever there is the least chance of future movement.

A contract was let during the year to Messrs. Scott Brothers, Christchurch, for the erection of the Patterson's Creek Viaduct.

A considerable amount of work was necessary to maintain the service roads during the year. These have been extended up to 13¼ m., and a horse-track formed across Staircase Gully.

Owing to the very heavy nature of the works, a considerable amount of relocation-work has been done, and improvements have been made in the direction of getting a safer and cheaper line.

PICTON-WAIPARA.

North End.

Awatere Section (28 m. 38 ch. to 33 m. 60 ch. ; length, 5 miles 22 chains).—All the formation-work has been practically completed up to Seddon Station-yard, but some cutting remains to be done beyond the station. The Dumgree Station has been partly completed, and a Stationmaster's