

next three miles and a quarter—viz., to the first crossing of the Manuherikia River—is more than half done, and for a further distance of eight miles a large amount of work has been executed. The driving of the first tunnel in the gorge has been completed, and work on the second is in hand and more than half done. Two of the piers for the Poolburn Viaduct are practically finished, and the steel superstructure is in course of delivery by the contractors, and the cylinders of the Manuherikia Bridge are being sunk.

As already stated, the total expenditure on the line last year was £103,273, or, exclusive of the value of the permanent-way materials, £93,779. This year a vote of £100,000 is proposed.

HERIOT EXTENSION.

The formation-works on the first two miles and a half of this railway are nearly finished.

After carefully considering the question of the route to be followed in the construction of this line, it has been decided to adhere to that already approved by Parliament—namely, by the Anquilla Stream to Edie Vale.

The vote for this line last year was £5,000, and £4,056 was expended. For the current year we ask for a vote of £6,000.

CATLIN'S RIVER—SEAWARD BUSH.

Further progress has been made with the formation of the extension of this line at the Catlin's end, the work being well advanced over the whole length.

At the Seaward Bush end further survey-work has been undertaken, which shows that the proposed route *via* Tokonui is three miles longer than the Waimahaka Valley route, and would be more costly to construct. The gradients and curves and the total height to rise and fall on the former route also compare unfavourably with the latter. Still further survey-work is necessary, however, before finally deciding on the precise route to be adopted, and it is proposed to place a survey party on the line again as soon as the winter is over.

The appropriation for this railway last year was £12,000, but only £8,001 was expended. This year a vote of £15,000 is proposed.

RIVERSDALE—SWITZERS.

A contract for a combined road and railway bridge over the Mataura River was let to Mr. A. Shaw, of Dunedin, in May last, and the bridge is to be finished within twelve months of that date. The contract does not include the road approaches.

The vote for this railway last year was £1,000, but only £23 was expended. This year a vote of £3,000 has been provided.

OREPUKI—WAIKAI.

Considerable progress has been made with the formation-works on this railway, the expenditure last year having exceeded the vote by £4,456. All the culverts are finished on the first four miles and a half, and the earthworks for the same distance are nearing completion, so that rail-laying can be taken in hand shortly. The expenditure on the line last year was £16,456. This year an appropriation of £15,000 is proposed.

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR RAILWAYS.

In addition to the sums already specifically mentioned, smaller appropriations, totalling to £4,000, are proposed for old land-claims and surveys of new lines, and £76,000 for permanent-way materials, thus bringing the total appropriations for railway-construction purposes up to £743,000.