

During the year a total length of 32 miles 11 chains of railway was opened for traffic. The following table contains particulars of the sections :—

Railway.	Section.	Length.	Date of Opening.
		M. ch.	
Helensville Northwards	Tahekeroa—Ahuroa	4 55	2nd September, 1903.
North Island Main Trunk	Poro-o-tarao—Taumarunui	27 36	1st December, 1903.
Orepuki—Waiau	Orepuki—Waihoaka	4 40	1st October, 1903.

Appended hereto is a coloured diagram showing the lengths of railway opened each year since the commencement of the public-works policy.

KAWAKAWA—GRAHAMTOWN.

Section (7 m. 16 ch. to 15 m. ; length, about 8 miles).—The earthworks have been finished up to the 15 m. point, but some slips have since occurred on the last half mile. These have now been practically overcome. The platelaying and ballasting have been completed up to the cuttings where the slips have occurred.

The construction of the earthworks for the extension to Grahamtown is in progress. The bridge over the Whangarei has been finished. Training-piles to guide vessels through the opening-space have been provided ; also extensive soundings and borings for the wharf at Grahamtown have been made and plans are being prepared.

HELENSVILLE NORTHWARDS.

Komokoriki Section (49 m. 54 ch. to 56 m. 30 ch. ; length, 6 miles 56 chains).—On the 2nd September last part of this section was handed over to the Railway Department and opened for traffic. Work is now in progress on the remaining portion of the section, from 54 m. 29 ch. to 56 m., but slips have hindered progress very much. The rails are laid up to 55 m. 30 ch. at the mouth of the tunnel, and the line ballasted. The tunnel is now pierced and being lined.

Kaipara Flats Section.—(56 m. 30 ch. onwards).—A start has been made on the earthworks, but only a little work has been done.

PAEROA—WAIHI.

Length, 12 miles 40 chains.—The line is finished up to the Karangahake Station, and goods traffic has been undertaken as required since the beginning of the year. The road and railway bridge over the first crossing of the Ohinemuri River was finished at the end of October last. The tunnel has been excavated for a length of 46 chains, leaving 8 chains to be done. The lining of the length excavated is nearly completed. A contract has been let for the erection of the steel superstructures of the bridges over the second and third Ohinemuri River crossings. The concrete-work for these bridges is in progress. Some minor timber bridges have yet to be built. The earthworks between the tunnel and the termination of the line are well advanced. A contract has been let to build a stationmaster's house at Waihi. It is expected that the tunnel will be finished by the end of the year.

GISBORNE—KARAKA.

Karaka Section (12 m. 65 ch. to 18 m. ; length, 5 miles 15 chains).—The Waipaoa Bridge is now nearly completed. Work has been proceeding slowly, being mostly concentrated in piercing the tunnel from 15 m. 31½ ch. to 15 m. 41 ch. The headings met in August last. The tunnel is now well advanced towards completion, the lining being about half-done, and it is expected that it will be nearly finished in about three months. The earthworks, &c., are almost completed up to the tunnel.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

North End.

The section from Poro-o-tarao Tunnel to Taumarunui Station, a length of about 27½ miles, was finished and handed over to the Railway Department in December of last year and opened for traffic.

Taumarunui Section (76 m. 55 ch. to 83 m. 23 ch. ; length, 6 miles 48 chains).—The Taumarunui Bridge was completed by the contractors, Messrs. Scott Bros., in January last. The earthworks on the section were nearly finished about the beginning of the year, but some heavy slips occurred. The rails have been laid to the end of the section, but two large slips, at 80 m. 50 ch. and at 81 m. 71 ch., are still giving trouble.

Whakapapa (129 m. to 119 m. (Marton chainage) ; length, 10 miles).—All the bush has been felled for the railway, and also for the service road ; very good progress has been made with the culverts and earthworks. The concrete piers for the Waitea Bridge have been finished, and the girders are in position. The concrete piers for the Kakahi Bridge are nearly finished. The rails have been laid to the Waitea Bridge, at 127 m. 45 ch. Some heavy slips have occurred on the section.

Owhango Section (119 miles to 111 miles ; length, 8 miles).—Bushfelling and the construction of the service road are now well forward. A contract has been let to Messrs G. Fraser and Sons for the manufacture and supply of all the steelwork for bridges between 128 m. and 97 m. 30 ch. Some of the girders have been delivered and are in position, and the work is now well advanced. The telephone line has been carried to Owhango. Goods and passengers were carried by the ballast-train over the unopened section to Taumarunui Station up to the time of the formal opening of the line. A sawmill is being arranged for at Kakahi to cut sleepers and other necessary timber.