

At the south end the formation has been completed to Mina Station, near Mackenzie Township, which is as far as the line is authorised at present, and rail-laying has been started. A contract has also been let for the important combined road and railway bridge over the Waiau River. This bridge will be 2,312 ft. in length, and is to be completed by 19th November next. The contract sum is £20,467. It is desirable that the extension of this line, at any rate as far as the bridge, and to a convenient station-site beyond it, should be authorised, and provision for this will be made in the Railways Authorisation Bill.

The expenditure on the whole railway last year amounted to £36,761, and for the current year a vote of £45,000 is proposed.

MIDLAND.

At the Nelson end of this railway the section between Tadmor and Kiwi, which was nearly finished when last year's Statement was delivered, has since been completed and handed over to the Railway Department, and the section between Kiwi and Tui is now approaching completion, the rails being laid as far as the north end of the Tui station-yard. The further section between Tui and Hope Junction authorised last year has been taken in hand and satisfactory progress made with it. I am in hopes that this section will be complete and ready for traffic about the end of the summer of 1911, at which date it is probable that the Reefton-Inangahua Railway will be completed to Inangahua Junction, thus reducing the coach journey between Nelson and the West Coast to about fifty-two miles, and enabling the through journey between Nelson and Greymouth to be accomplished in one day.

At the Reefton end of the line good progress has been made with the section between Cronadun and the Inangahua Landing. The larger bridges are finished, the earthworks are nearing completion, and rail-laying will be resumed shortly. The short section between the Landing and the Inangahua Junction will be taken in hand without delay, and every effort made to have the railway completed to that point by about February, 1911.

On the Canterbury-Westland Section of the railway very important works are in hand, and considerable progress has been made during the year. The chief work, of course, is the summit tunnel at Arthur's Pass, for which a contract was let to Messrs. John McLean and Sons, in August, 1907. Considerable progress has been made with this work, the "heading" having now been excavated for a total distance of about a mile. Enlarging to full size is also in hand, and the concrete lining is following up. It is evident, however, that progress in the future must be much greater than hitherto if the contract is to be completed by the date stipulated—namely, 1st August, 1912.

At the Canterbury end of the line, Mr. Fraser's contract for the steel viaduct over Sloven's Creek has been completed, and rail-laying resumed. The formation being practically finished as far as the Cass, there will be nothing to prevent the rails being laid to that point without interruption. As soon as the line to the Cass is ready for traffic it will be handed over to the Railway Department for regular working, thus shortening the coach journey between the east and west coasts to about twenty-five miles, and making the performance of the through journey in one day quite an easy matter, even during the winter months.

The expenditure on the whole railway last year amounted to £124,402, and for the current year a vote of £170,000 is asked for, made up as under:—

	£
Nelson-Inangahua Section	25,000
Reefton-Inangahua Section	15,000
Otira Station to Tunnel Section	5,000
Arthur's Pass Tunnel Section	65,000
Broken River to Bealey Section	60,000
Total	<u>£170,000</u>