

HUNTLY—AWAROA.

The desirability of a bridge over the Waikato River at Huntly for both railway and road traffic, and the construction of a branch line of railway to open up the extensive coal-deposits in the Awaroa district has been strongly urged upon the Government, and the putting in hand of about three miles of this line, including the bridge, is considered to be a very necessary and promising work, and provision for its construction will be made in the Railways Authorization Bill of the present session. With the exception of the bridge, the works on the branch will be of a very simple and inexpensive character. The line will also be easy to work, and is expected to yield a remunerative traffic.

The vote proposed for the current year is £20,000, and, as the plans and specifications for the bridge are already prepared, tenders for its erection can be invited as soon as the appropriations are passed by Parliament.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK.

The section of this railway between Maunganui Bluff (Tauranga Harbour) and Te Puke was authorized in last year's Act, and construction-works have since been started, and are now well in hand. It is proposed during the present session to authorize a further section of the line—namely, between Te Puke and Paengaroa. The construction of the railway to this latter point presents no special difficulties. Beyond Paengaroa, however, the question of the best route to be adopted is at present open to some doubt, and further surveys will require to be made in order to definitely decide the point. These surveys will be undertaken during the coming recess, so that full information may be available next session to admit of the construction of a still further portion of the line being sanctioned. The works on the section now in hand are very light, and will soon be completed.

On the Gisborne—Motu division of the railway a considerable amount of work has been done. On the Otoko section the line has been practically completed as far as the Otoko Viaduct, where a temporary goods-shed has been placed, and ballast-trains are being regularly run up to that point, and are also conveying goods for the settlers, as well as carrying a number of passengers. A contract for the erection of the steel viaduct at Otoko was let to Messrs. G. W. Griffiths and Co. for £11,773 in February last, the date fixed for its completion being the 12th May, 1911, and the work is now in hand. Beyond the viaduct earthworks have been started for several miles and are making satisfactory progress, and survey-work on the remainder of the line to Motu is proceeding.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £67,630, which is by far the largest sum spent on the line in any single year since its construction was commenced.

Having in view the great importance of completing railway connection between Auckland and Wellington by the East Coast route, it is proposed to provide in the Railways Authorization Bill of the present session for the construction of the first portion of the Napier—Gisborne section of the line.

The votes proposed on the current year's estimates for the different sections are as under :—

	£
Tauranga—Paengaroa	25,000
Gisborne—Motu	80,000
Napier—Gisborne	5,000
Total	£110,000

STRATFORD—MAIN TRUNK.

A very large amount of work has been carried out on this railway during the year. The section between Huiroa and Te Wera, about seven miles in length, was handed over to the Railway Department for regular working in June last, and the further section to Pohokura—rather over nine miles—is approaching completion, the rails having been laid over the whole length, and ballasting being in progress. It is expected that this section will be ready to be handed over for regular traffic in January next. The section between Pohokura and Whangamomona is in hand, and is progressing very satisfactorily.

Last year's expenditure constituted a record, having amounted to £93,235. For the current year a vote of £100,000 is proposed.