

MOUNT EGMONT BRANCH.

Very little work was done on this railway during last year, the expenditure having amounted to £405 only. The necessary surveys for the completion of the line are nearly finished, so that construction-work can be resumed almost immediately.

The vote proposed for the current year is £15,000.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK.

The completion of this railway was mentioned in my last year's Statement, but, as a number of liabilities were outstanding, a vote of £20,000 was provided on the estimates to cover same. The actual expenditure under this vote amounted to £27,540, but credits in respect of lands acquired out of previous years' votes, sale of plant, &c., came to hand to a still larger sum, so that no expenditure whatever appears against the vote, but, on the contrary, a credit balance of £5. No further appropriation on account of the work is required.

SOUTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK.

At the north end of this line the section between Seddon and Ward has been practically completed, but, as a matter of Departmental convenience, is retained in the hands of the Public Works Department for the present. Goods and passengers are being carried to meet the requirements of settlers, however.

The new section from Ward to Mirza, authorized under last year's Act, has been duly commenced, and is making satisfactory progress.

It is proposed in the current year's Authorization Bill to provide for a further extension of about three miles and three-quarters—namely, to a point about one mile south of the Ure River.

At the south end the section between Domett and Mina—3 m. 63 ch. in length—has been completed, and was handed over to the Railway Department for regular working in August last.

The Parnassus section between Mina and the Leader Valley, authorized in last year's Act, has been commenced, and the works are proceeding satisfactorily.

The large bridge over the Waiau-ua River is approaching completion, and when finished will be available for road as well as railway traffic.

It is desirable that provision should be made this year for a further extension of the line, and the Railways Authorization Bill to be introduced shortly will accordingly provide for a further section, about six miles in length, up the valley of the river Leader.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £49,621, and for the current year votes totalling to £50,000 are asked for—namely, £20,000 for the north end and £30,000 for the south end.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

At the Nelson end of this railway the section between Kiwi and Tui has been practically completed, and will be ready for handing over to the Railway Department early in the new year, and the section between Tui and Kaka is nearing completion. The remainder of the works up to and including the large cutting at the Tadmor Saddle are well in hand, and a start has been made on the Hope side of the saddle. In my last year's statement I expressed the opinion that this line as far as the Hope Junction would be ready for traffic at the end of the approaching summer, so that the through journey between Nelson, Greymouth, and Hokitika might be accomplished in one day. It seems rather doubtful now whether this hope will be realized, but every effort is being made to push on with the works.

The expenditure on this end of the line last year amounted to £27,627, and for the current year a vote of £30,000 is proposed.

At the Reefton end the earthworks on the Cronadun-Inangahua Landing section are nearly completed, and the laying of the rails is in hand, so that there is not much doubt that trains can be running to the Landing by the close of the coming summer. Further work on the section between the Landing and the Inangahua Junction has been suspended for the present, pending the examination of a much shorter route which has been suggested for the