

included in the estimates. This line will provide an outlet for a very large quantity of milling-timber as well as opening up a considerable area of agricultural land.

WAIMATE BRANCH EXTENSION.

Petitions have from time to time been presented to Parliament praying for an extension of the Waimate Branch Railway from its present terminus at the Waihao Downs to Waihaorunga, and it is considered that the time has now arrived for the work to be taken in hand. Provision for a suitable extension of the line will accordingly be made in the Railways Authorization Bill, and a vote of £5,000 has been included in the estimates to make a commencement with the work.

LAWRENCE—ROXBURGH.

The section between Lawrence and Big Hill, 7 m. 37 ch. in length, was handed over to the Railway Department for regular working in October, 1910. Work in the Big Hill Tunnel is now in hand, and the construction of the line to Beaumont is making satisfactory progress.

The expenditure last year amounted to £3,894, and for the current year a vote of £20,000 is provided.

CATLIN'S—WAIMAHAKA.

At the Catlin's end of the line the Papatupu section—3 m. 42 ch.—has been completed, but is retained by the Public Works Department for the present so as to facilitate the transport of ballast from the Houipapa Quarry to the sections of the line under construction. Further substantial progress has been made with the work on the Puketiro and Papatowai sections. The rails are now laid to Puketiro Station, three miles and three-quarters beyond Papatupu. So well are the works proceeding that it will be necessary to authorize a further section of the line during the present session, and provision will accordingly be made in the Railways Authorization Bill for a five-miles extension to near the confluence of the Back Creek with the Tahakopa River.

At the Waimahaka end the section from Waimahaka to Tokanui has been completed, and was recently handed over to the Railway Department for regular working. It is proposed to ask the House to sanction the construction of a further section of the line in the direction of Catlin's—namely, from Tokanui to Block XII, Mokoreta Survey District, a length of about five miles and a half.

The expenditure on the railway last year amounted to £56,592, and for the current year a vote of £80,000 is asked for—viz., £60,000 for the east end and £20,000 for the west end.

WINTON—HEDDON BUSH.

For many years past the Government has been pressed to connect the rich agricultural district of Heddon Bush with the railway system, and it is felt that this very reasonable request cannot any longer be denied. The line from Winton to Heddon Bush would be of very moderate length, and as the country is exceedingly favourable for railway-construction it is believed it can be built for less than £4,000 per mile. Provision for it will therefore be made in the Railways Authorization Bill, and a vote of £10,000 as a first instalment of the cost of its construction has been included in the estimates.

OREPUKI—WAIAMAU EXTENSION.

Even before the completion of the line to the Waiau (Tuatapere) an agitation arose for its extension to Waicola and Orawia, but as there was some doubt as to the best route for the extension the matter was allowed to remain in abeyance for a time. It is now proposed to extend the line to Orawia, and provision for such extension will be made in the Railways Authorization Bill. A vote of £5,000 for the line appears in the estimates.