

I will now give as concise an account as I can of the present position of each of the railways under construction, of what has been done on each of the lines during the past year, and what is proposed to be done during the current year.

KAIHU EXTENSION.

Formation-works on the extension of this line were completed during the year, but four small bridges have yet to be erected and some culverts put in before the rails can be laid to the end of the line. Timber for the bridges is arriving, and the current year should witness the completion of the extension.

The expenditure on this line during the last financial year amounted to £6,171, and for the current year a vote of £15,000 is proposed.

KAWAKAWA-HOKIANGA.

During the year earthworks were completed, rails laid, and ballasting practically finished up to Ngapipito Station, seven miles from the junction point at Otiria. Formation over a further section of eight miles and a half is approaching completion, but several small bridges have yet to be built. Temporary structures are being provided to carry the rails, which are expected to reach Otuhi Station during the coming summer. Formation-work was not carried quite up to Kaikohe, pending a final decision as to the site of the Kaikohe Station-yard.

The expenditure on the line during the last financial year amounted to £50,527, and for the current year a vote of £40,000 is asked for.

KAWAKAWA-GRAHAMTOWN.

The final section of this railway between Whangarei and the new wharf at Grahamtown was opened on the 2nd October, 1911, and has been carrying regular traffic since. An oil-engine to operate the lifting span of the Whangarei Bridge was installed, and several details in connection with station buildings attended to.

The expenditure during last financial year amounted to £11,647, and for the current year a vote of £3,000 is provided to meet the expenditure which has come to charge since the 31st March last.

NORTH AUCKLAND MAIN TRUNK.

The construction of the section to Kaiwaka, nearly nine miles beyond the Te Hana terminus, was completed in June last, but, owing to the probability of slips in the clay cuttings during the winter months, the section was not handed over to the Railway authorities. Goods and passengers are being carried over it, however, by the ballast-train. Formation is practically completed up to Otamatea, and is well in hand as far as Maungaturoto, seven miles beyond Kaiwaka. There are two tunnels on the last five miles, one of which is more than half-way towards completion, and the more important one, 24 chains in length, is making good progress. A steel bridge over the Otamatea tideway is being erected by contract. The contract time has already expired, but it will, I fear, be some months before the bridge is completed. The same contractor has the erection of a railway-wharf at Otamatea in hand, and is making fair progress with the work. Beyond Maungaturoto a short length of formation is in hand, and from Kaikohe, where the line will ultimately join the Kawakawa-Hokianga system, about two miles of light formation-work has been carried out. The Kaipara tidal waterways have been utilized to some extent for the transport of heavy materials to the sites of construction-works.

During last financial year the total expenditure on this line amounted to £78,622, which is the largest on record for this line, and for the current year a vote of £80,000 is proposed.

HUNTLY-AWAROA.

This line has been located for a distance of five miles and a half, and construction-work over the first three miles has been in progress during the year, but much of the country traversed is low-lying, and progress has been interfered with to some extent by the water in the swamps. Trial surveys have been run over the remainder of the authorized line and as far as the Waingaro Saddle, the latter part of the route running through rough and difficult country. The contractor for the erection of