

the combined railway and road bridge which will carry the line over the Waikato River is proceeding with his work, but the time fixed for the completion of the bridge has already expired and a good deal still remains to be done.

The total expenditure on the line, including the bridge contract, during last financial year amounted to £7,819, and for the current year a vote of £20,000 is asked for.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK.

A section from Waihi to Athenree, nine miles in length, was authorized last session, and construction-work commenced on the 11th March last. Formation has since been in progress over a length of about four miles, and the line is located to within a mile of the limit of its authorization. There will be some heavy rock-work on this section, and, as it is not likely to be revenue-producing for quite a considerable period, the Government has decided to suspend operations for the present.

On the Maunganui - Te Puke Section the permanent-way has been laid up to the Te Puke Station. The swamps on the Te Puke Section are giving considerable trouble, and are still not showing much sign of final settlement. After examination of several rock-deposits in the locality it was decided to obtain ballasting-material from Moturiki Island, and a branch line half a mile in length has been laid from the terminal station at Maunganui to a suitable quarry-site, where a complete crushing plant has been installed and in operation since February last. The formed line is now being ballasted with material from this source, which also supplies suitable metal for concrete culverts and other purposes. In order to complete the ballasting as quickly as possible another quarry is to be opened at Te Puke, so that the work may be proceeded with from both ends. Between Te Puke and Paengaroa the line has been located, and formation is in progress over the first two miles, and is within measurable distance of completion.

A trial survey has been made over the country from Tauranga westward to the Wairoa River, and a route selected for this portion of the line.

During the year considerable surveying-work has been done to ascertain whether a route from Pongakawa, the end of the present authorization, *via* Lake Rotoma, to Te Teko would be more favourable for the main line than the previously suggested route along the sea-coast. Plans have been prepared and are still under consideration.

A trial survey has also been made of the country between Rotorua and Paengaroa, *via* Okere, with a view to selecting a route for a line to connect the East Coast Railway with the existing terminus at Rotorua, and a suitable route with fair grades has been located.

At the Gisborne end the important steel viaduct which carries the railway over the Otoko Gorge was satisfactorily completed under contract, the line ballasted up to the Otoko Station, and the section from Waikohu to Otoko, nearly eight miles in length, opened for regular traffic. The opening took place on the 8th April last. Beyond Otoko formation is complete, and the rails laid to Rakauora, but frequent slips in the heavy cuttings have at times to be dealt with. Three bridges have been erected, a fourth is approaching completion, and a tunnel eleven miles beyond Otoko has been excavated. The pit at Te Karaka, from which ballast for this line has hitherto been obtained, is exhausted, and a new pit is about to be opened at Te Puha, two miles further on. The gravel still has to be conveyed a considerable distance, but no more suitable source of supply is available at present. Bushfelling is in progress beyond Matawai, and formation-works are following as rapidly as weather-conditions and difficult roads will permit. The foremost formation parties are located beyond the Matawai Station-yard, forty-five miles from Gisborne.

The section of railway to connect Gisborne with Napier has been located for a distance of eighteen miles from the junction point at Makaraka, and the trial line has been continued to a point opposite Tiniroto, forty-six miles from the junction. Formation-work was commenced at various places up to the ninth mile in April last.