

At the Napier end the line has been authorized for about fifteen miles, located for about ten miles, and the light formation along the Western Spit was commenced in February last. Up to the present about six miles of formation have been completed, while work is in hand over another mile, and borings have been made to test the nature of sites for the bridge to carry the line across the Inner Harbour. As the work that has been in hand on this line will be useless until the bridge over the harbour has been built, and liable to deterioration by the weather and wandering stock, it has been decided to suspend it for the present. It can easily be resumed when the bridge is approaching completion.

The expenditure during last financial year on the different sections of the East Coast Railway between Waihi and Napier was as follows:—

Waihi to Athenree	..	..	..	..	£ 22
Tauranga to Paengaroa	..	..	..	..	26,740
Gisborne to Motu	..	..	..	..	78,614
Gisborne to Napier, north end	..	..	..	..	1,437
Gisborne to Napier, south end	..	..	..	..	294

For the current year votes are proposed as under:—

Waihi-Tauranga	..	..	..	..	5,000
Tauranga-Paengaroa	..	..	..	..	25,000
Gisborne-Motu	..	..	..	..	80,000
Napier-Gisborne, north end	..	..	..	..	15,000
Napier-Gisborne, south end	..	..	..	..	12,000
Total	..	..	..	..	137,000

STRATFORD—MAIN TRUNK.

Steady progress has been made during the year with the heavy construction-works at the western end of this line, although the nature of the country traversed and the weather-conditions prevailing during the greater part of the year handicapped the operations to an appreciable extent. The section from Te Wera to Pohokura, 8 miles 55 chains in length, has been finished, and handed over to the Railway Department for regular traffic. Beyond Pohokura the 30-chain tunnel through the Whangamomona Saddle was finished in March, the heavy formation-works up to Whangamomona practically completed, and the piers for a bridge between the tunnel and the township built in readiness for the superstructure, which is being manufactured under contract. Some smaller bridges have still to be erected before the township is reached. Slips in several of the heavy cuttings on this length have given trouble, and it is expected that further slips will occur owing to the liability of the papa formation to give way. Rails have been laid to within two miles of Whangamomona, and ballasting completed up to the tunnel, about a mile behind the rail-head. Beyond Whangamomona earthworks are in hand over a length of seven miles and a half, and temporary bridges have been built over most of the streams to facilitate the transport of materials, shingle, and cement. A tunnel through the Tahora Saddle, seven miles from Whangamomona, has been commenced. The country beyond Tahora is of an exceptionally difficult nature for railway-construction, and careful trial surveys are being made so as to ensure the selection of the best available route to carry the line into the Ohura Valley.

With the object of giving the settlers in the fertile Ohura district the benefit of access to a railway during the years which must elapse before the line from Taranaki can reach their settlement, it was last year decided to commence the construction of this line from the eastern end, and after investigation a good route was found, leaving the Main Trunk line about one mile and a half south of Te Koura Station, leading up the Okahukara Valley, negotiating the dividing-range by means of a 74-chain tunnel, running down the Otahu Valley to Matiere, and thence on to Ohura. This route is six miles shorter than the original one from Ongarue. The new line was authorized last year, and formation-work started in November last. A service-road, over seven miles in length, is being formed, which will, on completion, serve as a main road from the Ohura Valley to Taumarunui. The railway-route has been cleared from the junction up to the tunnel-site, and cuttings opened in various places