

partly ballasted, and formation-work is in progress to the Papatowai Station site, and progress is satisfactory considering the difficult nature of the country and the unfavourable weather-conditions which have prevailed during the year. Slips have been frequent, in one instance necessitating a deviation of the line to avoid moving ground. A service tramway has been laid ahead of the works for the transport of plant and supplies, as service-road construction in this locality would be difficult and expensive. A temporary goods service is carried on from Houipapa to Puketiro for the convenience of settlers and workmen until the section can be opened for regular traffic. The line has been located up to the end of the present authorization in the Tahakopa Valley.

A contract has been let for the erection of a bridge to carry the railway over the Maclellan River, at a cost of £3,121.

At the Waimahaka end a few minor works to complete the recently opened Tokonui Section were attended to, and a further length of nearly seven miles beyond Tokonui was located. Five miles and a half of the new section was authorized by the Act of last year, but it is not intended to resume construction-work at this end during the current year.

The expenditure on both ends of this line during last financial year was £52,688, and for the current year a total vote of £50,000 is proposed.

LAWRENCE-ROXBURGH.

The excavation of the Big Hill Tunnel has been in progress during the year. The bottom heading is through, and enlarging and lining are being carried on from both ends. Formation-work is in hand for two miles beyond the tunnel, and the line has been located up to the Beaumont Township.

The expenditure during the last financial year was £15,964, and for the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

OREPUKI - WAIAU EXTENSION.

On last year's appropriations there was a vote of £5,000 for the extension of the railway from Tuatapere, and a line through Orawia to the Wairakei River was authorized. Representations were, however, made to the Government in favour of the adoption of an alternative route from Waikouro, on the Nightcaps Branch, to serve the Orawia and adjoining districts, and it was decided to make a trial survey of the latter route before any construction was begun. The survey has recently been completed, and the result is under consideration. There was no expenditure out of last year's allocation.

WINTON - HEDDON BUSH.

Last year also a branch line thirteen miles in length was authorized, from Winton to Heddon Bush, a fertile agricultural district, and a vote of £10,000 provided for commencing its construction.

There was no expenditure out of the allocation, but a vote of £8,000 is proposed for the current year.

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR RAILWAY-CONSTRUCTION.

In addition to the votes already mentioned, an appropriation of £100,000 is required for permanent-way materials for all lines; also £1,500 for land claims and other liabilities on account of votes of previous years which have not been renewed; also a vote of £5,000 for surveys of projected new lines: making a total proposed vote for railway-construction purposes of £847,500.

OTHER RAILWAY WORKS.

During the year under review the sum of £134,892 was spent in providing signals and interlocking, lock and block and tablet installation, telegraph and telephone extensions, purchase of land, bridge-work, sidings, wharves, weigh-bridges, turn-tables, water services, additions to workshops, station buildings and dwellings, electric-light and gas installation, deviation of line, reduction of grades, and improvement of curves. £227,302 was spent on rolling-stock, tarpaulins, motor rail-car, pneumatic coaling-cranes, workshops machinery, and the new steamer for Lake Wakatipu.