

course of construction, the whole of the works covering a length of over seven miles beyond Whangamomona. The broken nature of the country to be traversed between Tahora and the Ohura Valley involves examination of several possible routes, and careful trial surveys of different suggested lines have been made during the past two or three years. The most favourable route appears to be via the Raekohua Stream, across the Tangarakau River, then through the Maraekowhai Block to the Haeo Valley, and the line will probably be located along this route.

At the eastern end, where construction-works were commenced in November, 1911, considerable progress has been made. As the country traversed for the first few miles from the Main Trunk line was not roaded, a service road nearly eight miles in length had first to be made across a broken range of hills. This has now been completed and metalled. The railway-formation is in progress for one mile and a half, and a contract has been let for the construction of the Okahu Tunnel, 74 chains in length, at a cost of £97,000, which also covers the formation of about a mile and a half of line in addition to the tunnel. Four small contracts have been let for formation-works which will carry the line into the Ohura Valley, six miles from the junction, and it is proposed to let further contracts of similar nature and extent as the work progresses.

The expenditure on this line during the past financial year amounted to £72,843 at the western end, and £22,448 at the eastern end. For the current year a total vote of £85,000 is proposed.

MOUNT EGMONT BRANCH.

Trial surveys have been made to locate the most favourable line to the proposed quarry, and tests made to determine the extent of the rock at the suggested site. Three small bridges have been built, and some bush-clearing done adjacent to the line.

Expenditure during last financial year amounted to £4,657, and for the current year a vote of £15,000 is proposed.

OPUNAKE BRANCH.

Since April last surveys to determine the most favourable route for the recently authorized branch line to Opunake have been in progress, and the line has been located for a distance of about ten miles.

The expenditure on this survey was debited to the vote for surveys of new lines, but for the current year a special vote of £15,000 is proposed, to permit of construction-work being commenced.

OHAKUNE-RAETIHI BRANCH.

This line had to be relocated for the first two miles in consequence of an alteration in the junction-point. On the completion of the resurvey a small amount of formation-work was done over the first mile. Twelve small contracts are now being let, which will carry the line about half-way to Raetihi, and if the results are satisfactory further contracts of the same nature will be arranged.

The expenditure during last financial year was only £2,022, but for the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

MANAWAPOU DEVIATION.

The earthworks for the Manawapou deviation improvements on the Wanganui-New Plymouth line are finished as far as practicable, pending completion of the viaduct. The construction of the latter is in hand. The expenditure out of last year's vote was £4,007, and for the current year £1,000 is asked for.

FEATHERSTON-MARTINBOROUGH.

This line was included in last year's Railways Authorization Act, to serve the large area of settled land of which Martinborough is the centre, and it has been decided to commence its construction this year. A vote of £5,000 is accordingly provided.

Trial surveys of alternative routes have been made, and the location survey of the adopted line is nearing completion. This railway will be of comparatively light formation, with easy curves and gradients, the bridges over the Tauherenikau and Ruamahunga Rivers being the chief items in construction.