

been done up to 2 m. 9 ch., and rails laid to 1 m. 70 ch. Formation up to 5 m. 44 ch. is being pushed on, so as not to delay the platelaying. From 5 m. 44 ch. to 7 m. 22.5 ch. the formation-work has been let in five small contracts, of which three are progressing satisfactorily. The culverts are practically finished, and a drainage-drive at 6 m. 53 ch. is in hand. Fencing is complete up to 4 m. 40 ch. Bridges between 3 m. and 5 m. 44 ch. will be put in hand as soon as the Huntly Bridge extension is completed.

WAIUKU BRANCH RAILWAY.

Formation is in hand on the first three miles, three small contracts having been let, besides a short section which is being carried out by co-operative labour. Tenders are being invited for the erection of two cottages at Paerata Junction.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

Waihi-Tauranga.

Athenree Section.—The work on this section, which has been suspended since November, 1912, was resumed in May, 1914. The unfinished portion between 1 m. and 4 m. is being completed by co-operative contract, and good progress is being made. Small contracts covering a further 2 miles have been let, but little work has yet been done.

Tauranga-Opotiki.

Te Maunga Section.—In April last work was commenced on this section by co-operative contract, and satisfactory progress has been made.

Maunganui-Te Puke Section.—In September last, although portions of the line were not fully ballasted, it was considered advisable to open this section for traffic under the Public Works Department. Rolling-stock was accordingly purchased, and the formal opening took place on the 16th October, 1913, about one thousand six hundred persons being carried during the day between Te Puke and the Mount. Since then the line has not been as well patronized as petitions would have led one to expect, and the goods traffic has been rather disappointing.

Considerable trouble has been caused through embankments subsiding where they cross the swamps.

The station buildings at Otaimatua, Papamoa, and Te Puke are practically complete.

Early in the year it was decided to lengthen the tee of the service-wharf at Maunganui by 40 ft. It was found, however, that the existing birch piles had been completely riddled by the teredo, and the whole structure was therefore renewed, using totara piles. The wharf, with extension, is now complete, and the Northern Steamship Company's steamer calls regularly with passengers and mails, connecting with the trains.

Crushing at the Moturiki Quarry has been continued, and so far all the ballast on the various sections has been supplied from this quarry, besides broken metal for local bodies.

The Te Puke Quarry branch, 2 miles 60 chains in length, has been formed and laid, and partly ballasted. The quarry is being opened up, and part of the plant is at the site. The crusher has been placed in position and bins erected.

Te Puke-Paengaroa Section.—The earthwork on this section is completed except the long Kaituna bank. Piles have been driven for the bridge at 54 m. 44 ch. and a temporary superstructure put on. Temporary bridges have also been erected at 55 m. 40 ch., and at Kaituna River, to enable the Kaituna bank to be formed with locomotive and trucks. The bridge at 54 m. 78 ch. is completed. Rails have been laid to within a short distance of Paengaroa Station (59 m. 50 ch.), and the line partly ballasted.

Pongakawa Section.—Nine formation contracts, comprising the length from 60 m. to 64 m., were let in November last, and excellent progress has been made. Some of the culverts have been constructed, and material for the bridges is on order.

Gisborne-Motu.

Rakauroa Section (31 m. 45 ch. to 38 m. 25 ch.).—The work done during the year was mainly ballasting. The section is completed, with the exception of station buildings, which are well under way. Considerable damage was done to the line by very severe weather in May last, and the numerous slips and washouts are now being repaired.

Matawai Section (38 m. 25 ch. to 44 m. 10 ch.).—This section has been completely ballasted, but has also suffered considerable damage from floods. The country traversed is very unstable, and it has been deemed advisable to cut back many side slopes. The station-buildings contract has been delayed somewhat owing to difficulty in obtaining materials, but the various structures are now approaching completion.

A train service, under the control of the Public Works Department, has been maintained throughout the year. The goods and passenger traffic has been satisfactory, but a shortage of trucks has hampered us to some extent.

Motu Section.—This section commences at 44 m. 10 ch., and has been under construction up to 48 m. Formation up to this point is almost complete. The work on a portion of this length has been very heavy, some of the cuttings being in solid rock. All the culverts are completed, and rails have been laid to 46 m.

Gisborne-Napier (North End).

Ngatapa Section (0 m. to 10 m. 29 ch.).—The formation on this section is practically complete, and the rails have been laid to Ngatapa, crossing the Waipaoa River and other streams on temporary staging.