

Tauraroa Section (7 m. 60 ch. to 14 m. 67 ch. ; length, 7 miles 7 chains).—Work on this section has been confined chiefly to the removal of slips and the usual maintenance of the track. A high bank at 9 m. 75 ch., near Mangapai, has given a lot of trouble through subsidence, and several drives are now being put in to thoroughly drain the foundations. The large stone-crushing plant at Tauraroa has been running continuously, and has crushed 22,000 cubic yards. The capacity of the plant has been increased so as to provide for the large amount of ballast required on the North Auckland Main Trunk Railway. Tenders have been invited for the quarrying and crushing of the ballast.

Waiotira Section (14 m. 67 ch. to 19 m. 79 ch. and junction with North Auckland Main Trunk Railway at 107 m. 22 ch. ; length, 5 miles 12 chains).—A great many slips have been removed by steam-shovels during the year. Two deviations of the line were made to avoid as far as possible particularly bad places, and have saved a good deal of work. A drainage drive was put in the bank at 17 m. 10 ch. ; and has prevented further sliding of the bank. Large stone drains are being put in, and pipes laid in nearly all the cuttings throughout this section to drain the formation. A few further slips at 16 m. 30 ch. will have to be dealt with later when a steam-shovel is available. The line from 18 m. 27 ch. to 18 m. 60 ch. has been raised so that it will be above the level of the exceptional flood which occurred after the line was first formed.

All the culverts on this railway are now finished. The breaks in the permanent-way were laid, thus completing the rail-laying on the branch railway. The third lift of ballast was placed between 18 m. 40 ch. and 19 m. 67 ch., and only a short length of the whole section requires a final lift. A mechanical tamping plant, driven by compressed air, was used, and has given most satisfactory results. The fencing has been completed. Goods traffic has been run over the whole line throughout the year, and has been fairly heavy between Oakleigh and Waiotira. A wharf gang is continuously employed at the former place discharging and loading from steamers and scows.

WAIPU BRANCH RAILWAY.

Ruakaka Section (0 m. to 9 m. 20 ch. ; length, 9 miles 20 chains).—The only work that has been carried out on this railway during the year has been the banks across the mud-flats between 0 m. 15 ch. and 0 m. 76 ch. These banks, which are now completed, were made with material excavated from a borrow-pit by a steam-shovel. The material was good, and has been taken out at a very economical rate by the shovel.

WAIUKU BRANCH RAILWAY.

Glenbrook Section (5 m. to 8 m. ; length, 3 miles).—The third lift of ballasting was put on along this section during the year, and all other work completed.

Waiuku Section (8 m. to 12 m. 15 ch. ; length, 4 miles 15 chains).—The second lift of ballast was placed between 10 m. and 12 m. 15 ch. The final lift and the ballasting of the station-yards was done. Overbridges and the station buildings were all completed during the year.

This railway was handed over to the Railway Department on the 10th May last.

HUNTLY-AWAROA RAILWAY.

(7 m. 20 ch. to 10 m. ; length, 2 miles 60 chains.)

Heavy formation work has been in progress during the year on this railway. Three steam-shovels are engaged on this work, and, considering the difficult nature of the material to be excavated, have done good work. The big bank at 7 m. 25 ch. is practically completed, as well as the cutting at 7 m. 40 ch. from which the bank material is obtained. Formation has been completed from 7 m. 42 ch. to 8 m. 6 ch. An amount of 33,000 cubic yards has been taken out by one steam-shovel. The very large summit cutting, consisting of sticky pug overlying hard rock, is being excavated by a steam-shovel at each end. This cutting, the material from which is being used to make up the Glenafton Station, is the largest work on the railway, and is nearly half-completed. The selected position and character of the material to be shifted makes this a very difficult cutting. A road deviation from 8 m. 35 ch. to 8 m. 7 ch. was done, and an overbridge at 8 m. 45 ch. is in hand. A large concrete drain to carry water from a swamp and creek above the station-yard has been put in from 8 m. 27 ch. to 8 m. 37 ch.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

Waihi Eastwards—Athenree Section (0 m. to 8 m. 68 ch. ; length, 8 miles 68 chains).—The earth-work has been completed on this section except where material is required for bridge approaches, in which case the cuttings from which earth is available have been left until the bridges are completed. The widening of the Athenree station-yard is now in progress. Road deviations at 8 m. 13 ch. and 8 m. 62 ch. have been practically completed. Five culverts were put in, and an 8 in. arch culvert at 8 m. 5 ch. is in hand. Fencing was done on both sides from 4 m. 58 ch. to 6 m. 55 ch. The telephone-line was erected from Waihi to Athenree. The stone-crushing plant was removed from 8 m. 20 ch., and re-erected at 7 m. 25 ch. The concrete piers for the Mangatoetoe Bridge at 0 m. 3 ch. are completed. Most of the steel girders are on the site. The concrete piers for Adams Street Bridge and for the five bridges over the Waiau Creek are now all in hand. The overbridge at 8 m. 13 ch. was completed and open for traffic. The abutments for the subway at 8 m. 62 ch. were completed. Arrangements have been made for the steel superstructures for all bridges on this section.

Katikati Section (8 m. 68 ch. to 17 m. ; length, 8 miles 12 chains).—The formation on this section has been finished from 8 m. 71 ch. to 10 m. 29 ch. The formation is well in hand from 10 m. 29 ch. to 12 m., and has been started from 12 m. to 14 m. in various places. A culvert was built at 13 m. 17 ch., and two others have been started. Fencing was done on both sides for a distance of 2 miles. The permanent-line survey was completed to the Wairoa River at 35 m. 15 ch.