

NORTH ISLAND LINES.

It is expected that the section of railway between Huarau and Portland, over which traffic has been run for a considerable time, will be handed over to the Railway Department before the end of the year. The cause for the delay in actually handing this section over has been already remarked upon by me.

On the Kirikopuni Section it is hoped to have the line fully laid and ballasted to Pukehuia Station, on the Wairoa River, and also to complete the balance of formation work from the Wairoa River to the terminal station at Kirikopuni.

The heaviest work north of Pukehuia is the completion of the Wairoa Bridge. The material for this work is to hand, and an early start of cylinder-sinking will be made. This work, and platelaying onward to the terminus, will be vigorously pushed on. It is expected that the completion of the railway to Kirikopuni will be effected before the end of next year.

A trial line has been run for the railway to be constructed from Kirikopuni to Dargaville, and at the Dargaville end about 3 miles have been pegged out. At the Kirikopuni end the trial line has been run as far as Tangowahine, but the investigations in this connection are not complete. The trial surveys should be completed shortly, when the final location will be decided upon.

In connection with the extension of the railway beyond Rangiahua, trial lines between Rangiahua and Mangamuka have been run and a number of routes investigated, but further investigation is necessary before a final decision is arrived at.

Auckland-Westfield Deviation : This important work was commenced just prior to the 31st March last, and has been vigorously proceeded with. This deviation is nearly 10 miles in length, and a double track will be provided for the whole distance. The maximum grade will be 1 in 132, and the sharpest curve of 30 chains radius. Formation from 1m. onwards is being carried out by the Public Works Department. Reconstruction of the Auckland station-yard, 0m. to 1m., is in the hands of the Railway Department. It is hoped to complete this work within three years. A full description of this deviation will be found in the Engineer-in-Chief's report.

On the East Coast Main Trunk Railway from Waihi to Taneatua, the Athenree Section was available for traffic in December, 1924, and a further length, to 11m. 50ch., was available in March last. Under present conditions it will take some time to complete the Athenree Section, but in the meantime the line is safe for passenger traffic to 11m. 50ch.

When the Tuapiro Bridge is completed goods traffic can be carried to Tahawai Station—probably by April next.

From Tahawai to Te Puna (14m. to 35m.) the contractors, Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, & Co. (Limited), are making fair progress, but it is not likely that any portion will be available for traffic during the coming year. From 35m. to Tauranga the main work has been on the Waikareao Bridge, which is now nearing completion. Formation from Wairoa to Tauranga will be finished in a few weeks, and the line should be available for goods traffic from Wairoa Bridge to Tauranga at an early date.

From Tauranga to Taneatua the line is open for traffic to Pekatahi. The Whakatane Bridge is finished, and the permanent way laid thereon. This line would have been practically ready for traffic to Taneatua now had not floods to some extent delayed the works. It is expected that traffic will be running to Taneatua in September next. The whole section of railway constructed directly by the Public Works Department should be completed in about two years' time.

On the Napier-Gisborne line the concentration of work on the Tutira Section continued, the work being of an extremely heavy nature. By the end of the current