

Construction of the Hutt Valley railway duplication was authorized last session, and surveys have been carried out and the centre-line proclaimed. Preparatory works in anticipation of rapid prosecution of this very necessary work were put in hand, and the first sod for the new railway was turned by me in April last. Owing to representations by the local authorities, who were opposed to the construction of a ramp and bridges above the level of the main road, a number of consultations took place between officers representing the Public Works and Railways Departments and the local authorities, this delaying the work somewhat. The matter has now been satisfactorily settled. This will permit of works being vigorously proceeded with.

The Wellington—Tawa Flat deviation of the Main Trunk Railway, which will eliminate the heavy grades between Wellington and Johnsonville, was authorized by the Railways Authorization Act, 1924, and a permanent survey for its location is practically complete. Actual construction works have not yet been commenced, but matters are now in train to permit of their speedy prosecution.

SOUTH ISLAND LINES.

On the Glenhope—Murchison Section platelaying is in progress on the Kawatiri Section, and this should be ready for handing over by the end of November.

On the Murchison Section formation and clearing are in hand. The permanent location of the line has been completed to 73m., and trial survey is in hand to 81m.

On the Westport—Inangahua Section work is in progress from Te Kuha to Cascade Creek with the object of providing means for transport of coal from the mines in that vicinity now being opened up. Platelaying has been done up to 8m.

A telephone has been provided between Westport and Te Kuha, and the necessary buildings provided on the section for the accommodation of officers and workmen. The centre-line of railway beyond Cascade Creek has been relocated to 16m.

Otago Central Railway: A reconnaissance survey of another route for the railway from Cromwell northwards has been made, and the estimates for constructing the line (based on the original survey and that recently made) are being considered. Reports on the whole subject by the District Engineer, Inspecting Engineer, and Engineer-in-Chief respectively are attached as an appendix hereto.

On the Lawrence—Roxburgh Railway, Miller's Flat Section, goods traffic between Beaumont and Miller's Flat has been run since the 15th December last. It is expected that this section will be handed over to the Railway Department before the end of the year.

Orepuki—Waiau Railway (Orawia Section): All works on this section are practically completed, and a goods service has been run since September last. It is expected that this section will be handed over to the Railways Department in a few weeks' time.

EXPENDITURE.

The total net expenditure under all votes and accounts appearing on the public-works estimates for the financial year ended 31st March, 1925, was £6,258,952. Of this sum £4,373,370 was expended out of General Purposes Account, and the balance, £1,885,582, out of special accounts.

A brief summary of this expenditure, as well as the total expenditure since the inception of the Public Works policy to the 31st March last, follows in tabular form:—