

Taneatua Section (91 m. 40 ch. to 100 m. 6 ch.; length, 8 m. 46 ch.)—A further 184 chains of fencing was erected, and formation of Kiwinui yard completed. 9,200 cubic yards of earthwork was shifted by steam-shovel, while 10,727 was removed by hand labour.

The Mission Flat bridge, at 95 m. 38 ch., consisting of three 20 ft. reinforced-concrete spans, was completed.

The erection was completed of the Whakatane Bridge, at 98 m. 30 ch., consisting of two 30 ft. and nineteen 60 ft. steel-plate girder spans. The work undertaken during the year included driving 90 linear feet of temporary piles, erecting 36,000 square feet of staging, driving 5,935 linear feet of permanent concrete piles, stripping 202 pile-heads, and concreting piers A, D, and W. The total amount of concrete placed was 1,063 cubic yards, while 300 cubic yards of earth was excavated. The girders were riveted together at The Mount shops, conveyed to site on a UB wagon, and swung into position by means of derrick and wire ropes. The total weight of steel in the plate girder spans is approximately 460 tons. The pile-driving and pier-work was somewhat delayed by continuous floods, but excellent time was made with the girder-erection.

All piles for bridge at 98 m. 65 ch. have been driven and girders forwarded to site. Pile-driving is in hand for bridge at 99 m. 5 ch., and girders have been riveted-up at The Mount. The overbridge at 99 m. 17 ch. has been completed, and formation of approaches is in hand.

The railhead has been extended from 98 m. 30 ch. to 98 m. 65 ch., and 18 chains of siding laid in the Pekatahi yard.

A ballast-pit was opened in the Whakatane River at Pekatahi, a siding laid, and a steam-shovel installed. 21,200 cubic yards of ballast has been removed; 3,145 cubic yards of this was sold for roadworks, and the balance placed on various sections of the railway. The Awakeri Section has had 9,410 cubic yards of ballast placed, and the bottom lift is finished to the railhead.

A cableway drag-line scoop is being erected to work a further pit in the Whakatane River. This will also help in preventing erosion on the opposite side at an acute bend.

Stock-yards, platform, and loading-bank have been erected at Pekatahi, and a commencement has been made with the station-buildings there and at Kiwinui.

This section has been opened for goods traffic throughout the year as far as Pekatahi, and it is hoped to extend to Taneatua for all traffic in about two months.

A heavy flood, which occurred in the Whakatane River late in May, 1925, washed away a small amount of filling at 98 m. 65 ch. This was hardly repaired when a further flood—the highest for many years—happened on the 24th June, and washed out the bank again. This flood rose to within 3 ft. 3 in. of the bottom of the bridge-girders. Repairs are in hand. The bridge is 1,200 ft. long and 24 ft. above the river-bottom.

Mount Branch (0 m. to 4 m. 7 ch.; length, 4 m. 7 ch.)—This section was open for traffic, and usual maintenance was undertaken. At The Mount shops a large amount of work was performed for the Department in the Tauranga district and elsewhere, and for other Departments, local bodies, and Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co., railway contractors. Rolling-stock used on the several sections of railway, including 226 wagons, four passenger-cars and locomotives were kept in good repair. Twenty-five new piles were driven in the Railway Wharf, and about 38,000 C.B.M. of timber was machined, chiefly hut-lining. All huts in use on the works are now lined. Two 105 ft. steel truss spans were fabricated for Kirikopuni Bridge over the Northern Wairoa on the North Auckland Main Trunk Railway. A steel dredge hull, 70 ft. by 30 ft. was fabricated together with part deck-house, gantry-arm, and cutting-arm, and launched on the 1st December, 1924, and towed to Paeroa by the Northern Steamship Company.

Traffic.—Goods and passenger service has been maintained between The Mount and Tauranga to Awakeri, and goods traffic to Pekatahi. The time-table is a suitable one, and trains have run well to time. The total revenue was £26,800 (approximately).

General Works akin to Railway.—Atuaroa dredge cut: Widening in hand, now practically complete. A total of 11,260 cubic yards was removed during the year.

GISBORNE - NAPIER RAILWAY (NORTH END).

Ngatapa Section (0 m. to 10 m. 40 ch.; length, 10 m. 40 ch.)—The bridges were repaired and painted, and platelaying and ballasting completed from 5 m. to 10 m. 40 ch., and the whole section generally cleaned up and handed over to the Railway Department on the 15th December last.

Waikura Section (10 m. 40 ch. to 16 m.; length, 5 m. 40 ch.)—Little or no work has been done on this section during the period under review, owing to the decision to abandon the route via Waikura and Hangaroa in favour of one by a route nearer the coast, only such work as was necessary to render the work done safe has been done.

NAPIER-GISBORNE (SOUTH END).

Tutira Section (10 m. 56 ch. to 28 m. 20 ch.; length, 7 m. 44 ch.)—Fencing has been erected on the left from 15 m. to 22 m. 12 ch., and on the right from 15 m. 40 ch. to 15 m. 60 ch., and 20 m. 35 ch. to 20 m. 75 ch.

The formation work on this section is exceptionally heavy, but owing to a vigorous and concentrated construction policy very good progress has been made with the culverting and earthworks. An average of seven steam-shovels has been engaged during the period. Most of the culverts, other than sub-formation pipes, have been completed, thus enabling the earthwork to proceed without delay. Nineteen water-drives, seven pipe culverts, one flume, and two retaining-walls were constructed.

The formation, including the two large embankments at 15 m. 20 ch. and 15 m. 40 ch., on either side of the Waipunga station-yard has been practically completed to 18 m. 5 ch., with the exception of a large cutting at 16 m., which is not quite finished, but rail communication has been provided round it.