

and will remain until the cutting is completed in about two months' time. The work is fully manned onward from 18 m. 5 ch. to 20 m., and by the time this portion of the formation is completed practically all other work should be finished to Waikoau at 23 m. 16 ch. The formation is also in hand over the remainder of the section.

Two tunnels, both 6 chains long, were completed during the year, at 18 m. 30 ch. and 19 m. 76 ch. respectively.

A total of 383,351 cubic yards of earthwork was shifted during the year, of which the steam-shovels were responsible for 142,604, the balance being dealt with by hand-labour and scoop teams.

The Esk River Bridge, consisting of nine 40 ft. steel spans on concrete piers, was completed in the early part of the year.

The foundations of the Waikoau Viaduct have been tested, and aggregate delivered in readiness for making a commencement with the construction of the foundations. An access road has also been formed to the north side. Tenders have been called for the erection of the superstructure, one span of 250 ft. and two spans of 100 ft.

The bridge at 11 m. 40 ch. still remains to be completed. The piers have not been replaced since the flood of March, 1924, but twenty-eight concrete piles were cast during the year, and the line is being carried on a temporary structure.

The permanent-way has been laid from 13 m. 30 ch. to 17 m., and at the present rate of progress it is hoped to have the railhead to Waikoau Gorge, at 27 m. 60 ch., by the end of 1926. Ballasting has been pushed on during the last few months, and is now practically complete to 16 m. A steam-shovel has been installed in the ballast-pit at 13 m. 60 ch., and is giving good service.

The Department's sawmill at the Makomako Bush has provided most of the timber required during the year. Some metalling has been done on the access road to the mill, and this should be completed shortly. The final plate-layer's cottage at Waipunga station-yard was completed early in the year, and two cottages were erected at Waikoau.

Arrangements have been made to utilize permanent steel block moulds for the cottages on this line, and it is proposed thereby to erect all remaining cottages of concrete blocks in preference to wood.

The service road has been maintained and metal put on where required. Telephone-line has been erected from 21 m. to 22 m., and is to be pushed on to Wairoa as the material arrives.

Special attention has been paid to accommodation for employees, and 119 huts, nineteen married men's houses, and four cookhouses have been erected, as well as a recreation-hall, which has been in use for about nine months. This latter has proved popular, and is well patronized and appreciated.

Putorino Section (28 m. 20 ch. to 37 m. 35 ch.; length, 9 m. 15 ch.).—Work was commenced on this section during the latter part of the year. Generally speaking, the formation is easier than that of the preceding section, and the work undertaken has consisted principally of culverting; but four water-drives have been constructed, and scoop teams have been employed on formation between 28 m. 20 ch. and 30 m. as the culverting was completed. As much of the formation as possible is to be done with scoops, but plant and men will be moved forward as they finish on Tutira Section. It is expected that earthworks on Putorino Section will be almost completed when the Waikoau and Matahaura Viaducts have been erected.

Mohaka Section (37 m. 35 ch. to 50 m. 56 ch.; length, 13 m. 21 ch.).—On this section the line again runs into heavy formation, and three tunnels, aggregating approximately 70 chains have to be driven, and there are also two large viaducts to be erected. With a view to getting these tunnels in hand an organization has been set up and camps erected between two of the tunnels at Chimney Creek, and it is hoped to commence these tunnels in a few months. The work undertaken to date consists of clearing at 46 m. 10 ch. and a water-drive at 45 m. 57 ch.

Waihua Section (50 m. 56 ch. to 58 m. 58 ch.; length, 8 m. 2 ch.).—Arrangements are being made to start work at the tunnel approach at 52 m. 70 ch., but very little has so far been done.

Wairoa Section (58 m. 58 ch. to 70 m. 14 ch.; length, 11 m. 36 ch.).—The approaches at each end of the Waihua Tunnel, at 60 m. 61 ch. to 60 m. 77 ch., are in hand, and materials for concrete culverts are being delivered to the sites. An access road, 20 chains in length, is being constructed to the Waihua Beach for the purposes of obtaining shingle for this tunnel and for culverts. Surveys have been made of alternative sites for a bridge over the Wairoa River, and borings are in hand to test the foundations.

WAIKOKOPU BRANCH RAILWAY.

Nuhaka Section (0 m. to 17 m. 12 ch.; actual length, 18 m. 65 ch.).—One 48 in. corrugated metal culvert, 30 ft. long, has been placed at 4 m. 6 ch. The Tuhara station-yard loop has been laid and ballasted, and the formation of the yard is nearing completion. The points for the loop at the Whakaki station-yard have been laid, and about 75 per cent. of the formation has been completed. The third lift of ballast is practically completed throughout. Permanent tops have been placed on five bridges, which is as much as the available bridge gangs could do in the period.

Waikokopu Sections (17 m. 12 ch. to 23 m. 28 ch.; length, 6 m. 16 ch.).—The main-line formation has been completed to the wharf approach, and the formation of the Waikokopu station-yard is also finished. The bridge at 21 m. 23 ch. is in hand, and the concrete piers have been erected. During the year 24 chains of permanent-way was laid, and the railhead is now at 23 m. 19 ch., where the approach to the wharf begins. Two loops have been laid in the Waikokopu station-yard. The ballasting is complete except for 1½ miles of third lift. Three pairs of 12 ft. hardwood gates have been placed at private crossings.

The stone approach to the Waikokopu Wharf is well in hand, and the timber approach is complete except for the bracing. The construction of the wharf itself has been pushed on, and it is now practically complete. It is expected that the permanent double line on to the wharf, and the scissors crossing, will be laid next summer. The Harbour Board shed is being moved to a suitable position to