

The Tahora station-yard was cleared of slips and otherwise repaired on the 13th October last, and this section was handed over to the Working Railways Department on the 21st of the next month. A room to provide for the post-office was added to the Tahora station-buildings.

Rackohua Section (47 m. 40 ch. to 50 m. 60 ch.; length, 3 m. 20 ch.).—The principal work on this section was the construction of a tramway from the railhead, 47 m. 60 ch., to the Tangarakau Flat, 50 m. 50 ch., where a main camp is to be erected for working the Heao Section. 127 chains of bush-felling and clearing were completed on the main line, tramway, and jig line. The railway-cutting was taken out full width from 47 m. 73.50 ch. to 47 m. 76 ch., and 8 ft. wide to 48 m. 1 ch., and the bank built 8 ft. wide to 48 m. 6 ch. (This chainage, 48 m. 6 ch., is 0 m. 0 ch. on the tram-line.) The tram formation was completed to the Tangarakau Stream, 3 m. 10 ch., and across the stream, 3 m. 12 ch., to 3 m. 17 ch., and slips on the tram-line, as the result of heavy rain, were removed. 3,850 sleepers were split in the district and delivered on the works: 300 were transferred from Te Roti, 1,200 were obtained from mills; and 800 hardwoods were received. Three miles of rails and fastenings were delivered, and 1 m. 6 ch. of platelaying completed. 2,043 cubic yards of ballast was received from Te Wera and dumped in convenient places along the line for construction-work ahead. The tram-line was ballasted for 66 chains.

The telephone-line was extended from Tahora to Tangarakau Flat, and a water-supply was provided by means of a water drive, 154 ft. long, to the proposed camp there. Sixty huts and ten washhouses are ready in sections for this camp, and a similar number is being constructed. No bridges were erected during the year, but timber and ironwork have been received for four road-bridges.

Heao Section (50 m. 60 ch. to 57 m.; length, 6 m. 20 ch.).—The surveys of deviations of the permanent line from 50 m. 40 ch. to 54 m. were completed, including preparation of plans. The permanent-line survey from 54 m. to 56 m. has been completed, and plans are in hand, and the trial-line survey from 56 m. to 57 m. is in hand.

Te Wera Quarry (21 m. 60 ch.).—Operations were recommenced at this quarry on the 5th August last, when flood damage had been repaired on the open line. Additional stripping was undertaken to keep the face clear of slips. The quantity of metal crushed during the remainder of the year totalled 19,457 cubic yards, and averaged 86.8 yards per working-day. The Public Works Department used 3,288 yards of this metal on its own works, 4,907 yards were sold to the Railway Department, and 11,262 yards to local bodies. Washhouses, baths, and stoves were provided for married quarters, and all buildings were maintained in good repair.

OPUNAKE BRANCH RAILWAY.

Kapuni Section (0 m. to 7 m.; length, 7 m.).—The only earthwork carried out on this section during the year has been the widening of the Kapuni station-yard, which is now complete, and the third lift of ballast throughout the sidings. The permanent sleepers have been laid on the Mangatoki Bridge at 1 m. 49 ch. and on the Kapuni River bridge at 4 m. 69 ch. The erection of a passenger-platform and station-buildings have been completed at Matapu, Duthie Road, Palmer Road, and Kapuni Stations, and approach roads metalled. This section was open for goods traffic throughout the year. The track is being put in first-class order, gates hung, fences repaired, and the metalling of the Palmer Road and Kapuni station-yards is being completed in readiness to hand this section over to the Working Railways Department at an early date.

Auroa Section (7 m. to 12 m.; length, 5 m.).—Three sets of cattle-stops were constructed, and the permanent telephone-line was erected between 9 m. and 12 m. Girders were placed on Dunn's Creek No. 1 at 7 m. 41 ch., Dunn's Creek No. 2 Bridge, at 7 m. 62 ch., and on the Mangawhero River Bridge at 9 m. 41 ch. The laying of permanent sleepers on the last-mentioned bridge was also completed. Platelaying was completed on the main line from 11 m. 37 ch. to 12 m., and the first and second lifts of ballast from 11 m. 37 ch. to 12 m., and the third lift from 11 m. 25 ch. to 11 m. 37 ch. The erection of a passenger-platform and station buildings was completed at Mangawhero Road Station, and station buildings at Auroa Road. Goods traffic has been run on this section from the 1st March last.

Pihama Section (12 m. to 16 m. 40 ch.; length, 4 m. 40 ch.).—All formation work in this section is now complete. All banks were brought up to full width throughout the section, and the batters of all cuttings have been completed. 39 chains of permanent telephone-line was erected, as well as cattle-stops at 16 m. 39 ch. The concreting of the piers of the Ouri River Bridge at 16 m. 10.50 ch. was completed, and girders were placed in position on that bridge as well as on the bridge over the Oeo River at 15 m. 64 ch. The approaches to the overhead bridge at 13 m. 53 ch. across the main road were completed and metalled. Platelaying of the main line from 12 m. to 16 m. 40 ch. was also completed, and the first siding of the Pihama station-yard. 4 miles 40 chains of first-lift ballasting was completed on the main line, and 2 miles 66 chains of second-lift, and also the first lift of the first siding of Pihama station-yard. Goods traffic was run on this section from the 1st June last, and a passenger-train was run on one special occasion.

Opunake Section (16 m. 40 ch. to 23 m.; length, 7 m. 40 ch.).—During the period the main-line formation and the majority of the station-yard excavation was completed. The most important piece of earthwork was the completion of cutting at 21 m., which is practically a mile in length, the spoil from which was run to bank between 21 m. 75 ch. and 22 m. 20 ch. A steam-shovel was utilized in the cutting to load into muck-wagons for transportation to the bank. Very good progress was made with this shovel. During the year 6 miles 62 chains of fencing was erected. Three 6 ft. flat-topped and one 4 ft. arch culvert were constructed.