

Dargaville Branch Railway.—The construction of this line has made rapid progress. The formation is completed for 7 miles, with the exception of three bridge approaches along the route.

Ballasting has been completed for 4 miles, the stone being obtained from the Department's quarry at Tauraroa.

The country has been difficult to work, as the river-flats are not sufficiently strong to carry embankments. Station-yards are being constructed at Tangowahine and Wharau. Four steam-shovels are at work. Telephone-line has been erected for a distance of 10 miles.

Auckland-Westfield Deviation.—This double-track deviation, which will connect the new Auckland Railway-station with the existing line at Westfield, a distance of 8 miles 70 chains, is nearing completion. The formation, culverting, and heavy bridge work are completed. The portals of the Purewa Tunnel have been built, thus completing the work. A crushing plant has been in operation to supply metal and chips for concrete-work, ballasting the tunnel, and metalling approach roads.

Platelaying and ballasting is being carried out by the Railway Department. One track has been laid and ballasted throughout, and the rails have been laid on 2 miles of the other track. Six station buildings have been erected.

East Coast Main Trunk Railway: Waihi Eastwards.—The Tauranga to Taneatua section of the railway, 59 miles in length, was handed over to the Railway Department on the 2nd September, 1928.

The centre span of the Whakatane Bridge was widened to make a passing-place for motor traffic. The cattle-yards at Awakeri were extended for stock.

Rotorua-Taupo Railway.—On the completion of the East Coast Main Trunk Railway to Taneatua men and materials were transferred to Rotorua and a start made on the construction of the railway. Two miles of formation was completed, hutments and stores erected. On the 18th March last it was decided to discontinue the work and transfer the men and plant to the Gisborne-Wairoa Railway works.

Gisborne-Napier Railway.—The work on this railway was vigorously pushed ahead, and the rails were laid to Matahaura Station. Goods and passenger services were run from Eskdale to Matahaura. The formation of the Putorino Section is practically complete, and will be handed over to the Railway Department in a few months.

The distance from Eskdale to Putorino is 26 miles 50 chains.

The principal works completed during the year were as follows: Sandy Creek Bridge, consisting of three 60 ft. spans on steel trestles and concrete foundations; and Matahaura Viaduct, of two 60 ft., two 40 ft., and one 250 ft. span on steel trestles with concrete foundations and abutments. The latter structure is 213 ft. above the gorge.

On the Wairoa Section formation has proceeded satisfactorily. Tunnel-construction and bridge-erection are in hand. The formation is heavy, and ten steam-shovels have been employed during the year. Six and three-quarter chains of the bottom heading of the Kotemaori Tunnel have been driven, and the north portal completed.

Chimney Creek Tunnels, Nos. 1 and 2, and Waihua Tunnel, were completed. Bad conditions have been met with in the Mohaka Tunnel, in which $16\frac{1}{4}$ chains have been completed.

The Waikare Viaduct has progressed rapidly, and should be carrying the train by March next.

Extensive investigations have been made and bores put down to determine the best type of foundation for the Mohaka Viaduct, which will be the largest one on the railway. The Wairoa River Bridge is nearing completion.

Stratford Main Trunk Railway.—On the eastern end the daily goods and passenger service between Okahukura and Ohura (a distance of 19 miles) has been maintained throughout the year, and has been a great benefit to the district.