

The construction work on the whole length of the Tokirima Section is now fairly well advanced. The work is heavy, and includes six tunnels aggregating just over $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Two tunnels have been completed; the third is being lined; in the fourth the bottom heading has been driven; and in the fifth (732 yards long) the bottom heading has been driven 149 yards; the sixth is now being manned.

On the Heao Section all work is being rapidly opened up.

On the western end the work was mainly devoted to the tunnels, these being the factors governing the completion of the line and the early establishment of through traffic. No. 2 Tunnel (55 chains long) is nearing completion, No. 3 Tunnel (64 chains long) is well in hand, and the approaches to No. 4 Tunnel are being formed. A tri-weekly passenger and goods service was maintained between Tangarakau and Tahora, which connected with the New Zealand railway service. Large quantities of coal have been carried. The workmen's accommodation has been well maintained.

Palmerston North Railway Deviation.—Four steam-shovels, seven construction locomotives, and two caterpillar tractors were employed on formation. The main-line formation was completed to within 42 chains of the northern junction with the Main Trunk Railway.

On the 18th April last the work was closed down, and most of the men and plant were transferred to other works.

Wellington - Tawa Flat Deviation.—The railway-bridge across the Hutt Road and the bridge over Ngahauranga Gorge are complete. No. 1 Tunnel has been pierced; 40 chains of heading have been done during the year. This tunnel was exceptionally wet, and four shifts of six hours each per day have been necessary throughout the work. Plant necessary for the most rapid progress practicable in this tunnel has now been installed. At No. 2 Tunnel the approach cutting was completed. The heading has been driven for 19 chains at south end and 18 chains at the north end. This tunnel is also being worked from a shaft 53 chains from the north end, the heading being driven 17 chains northward and 15 chains southward. The necessary plant is now ready for enlarging and lining, and much greater speed should be made with these sections of the work.

Midland Railway.—The formation of this railway has now been completed to Gowan station-yard, a distance of approximately 4 miles, and line has been laid and ballasted. All the station buildings at Gowan have been erected. Settlements and movements due to the earthquake of the 17th June will necessitate further ballasting-work.

Formation is now in hand for 5 miles beyond Gowan. An additional 250 men were engaged on this railway during the last six months.

Westport to Inangahua Railway.—On the Cascade and Hawk's Crag section of this railway the formation is complete for a distance of 5 miles, and is in hand over further 3 miles. Two large fillings and two tunnels on this portion are in hand.

South Island Main Trunk Railway.—A start has been made with the formation at Wharanui, on the north end, cleaning up the portion that was formed thirteen years ago. The erection of workers' accommodation is in hand.

RAILWAYS.

ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The net expenditure out of the Public Works Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1929, amounted to £213,405 2s. 3d. This sum covered the provision of new rolling-stock, motor-vehicles for road service, improvements and additions to station buildings, water-services, cranes, weighbridges, and other operating plant, train-control lines and instruments, additional dwellings, and purchase of land.