

STRATFORD MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY—EAST END.

Matiere Section (0 m. to 10 m.).—This section is practically finished, and the work of the year included general maintenance and a small amount of construction to complete station-yard facilities and private crossings.

Ohura Section (10 m. 0 ch. to 19 m. 10 ch.).—The section is now practically completed. Ohura station-yard was finished during the year with the erection of the station buildings, stationmaster's house, engine-shed, ashpit, loading-bank, and latrines. Five platelayers' cottages were built, and a water-supply installed, including dam, 10,000 ft. 4 in. pipe, 6,000-gallon water-vat, 2,000-gallon feed-vat, and 2,000-gallon washout vat.

Passenger-, goods-, and work-train services were maintained on this and Matiere section.

Tokirima Section (19 m. 10 ch. to 29 m. 70 ch.).—Activities during the year have been concentrated on this section, and formation of the whole length has been vigorously pushed ahead. The formation is fairly heavy, including considerable road-access works and road-deviations. Two station-yards are included in the length, but the really heavy expenditure is in the construction of six tunnels aggregating a length just over 1½ m.

No. 1 tunnel, at 19 m. 48 ch. (length, 170 yd.), has been completed.

No. 2 tunnel, at 20 m. 54 ch. (length, 170 yd.), is also completed.

No. 3 tunnel, at 23 m. 60 ch. (length, 488 yd.): Bottom drive has been completed, the north-end portal built, and lining commenced.

No. 4 tunnel, at 24 m. 38 ch. (length, 61 yd.): Bottom drive is complete.

No. 5 tunnel, at 25 m., is 732 yd. long. At the north end the portal is in place, the bottom drive is in 149 yd., and lining completed for 44 yd. At the south end very heavy ground necessitated the concreting of the floor of the tunnel and the use of lining 30 in. thick. It is anticipated that better country will soon be reached and the work speeded up. The portal is complete and 21 yd. of lining.

No. 6 tunnel, at 28 m. 62 ch. (length, 583 yd.), is now being manned. The north approach is in hand. Formation on the section is manned to full capacity and is now 75 per cent. complete. The formation is ready for platelaying to 22 m. All road-alterations, new access roads, and stream-diversions are complete.

Fencing is well in hand.

The heavy culverting programme is complete, and forty-one have been placed, ranging in size from 10 ft. in diameter to 12 in. pipes. A 10 ft. subway bridge has been placed at 19 m. 70 ch.

Several district roads have to be metalled in order to transport construction material. In all, 6½ m. have been metalled, with considerable benefit to the district.

Permanent-way is now laid to 20 m. 34 ch., and ballasting is in hand to 19 m. 63 ch.

Heao Section (29 m. 70 ch. to 31 m. 70 ch.).—The Heao Station access road, 2 m. 70 ch. long, has been formed and metalled to connect the railway-construction works with the Stratford-Taumarunui Main Highway, and will be used for transport of all material. This road taps the railway at 30 m., and from there a tramway is being built to serve the heavy formation and two tunnels in the Heao Valley.

All work on this section is now being rapidly opened up.

STRATFORD MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY—WEST END.

Raekohua Section (47 m. 40 ch. to 50 m. 60 ch.; length, 3 m. 20 ch.).—This section was not prosecuted very vigorously during the previous period and for the first six months of this year, the main effort being directed towards the prosecution of the tunnels further ahead, these being the factors governing the final completion of the line and the establishment of through traffic between New Plymouth and Auckland. During the last six months, however, the opening-up of the Egmont Colliery Co.'s works and the desirability of providing suitable rail access for their coal traffic has necessitated the expediting of this section and the number of men employed has been increased to enable this to be done. The objective is to open the permanent line as far as 50 m. 40 ch. for coal traffic by September of this year.

The formation is well in hand and only about 24 ch. yet remains to complete.

The bottom heading of No. 1 tunnel on this section, at 49 m. 6 ch., 7 ch. in length, has been driven right through and breaking down has commenced, while tunnel No. 2, at 49 m. 74 ch., 10 ch. long, has been lined and completed, together with portals.

The following bridges have been completed: At 48 m. 15 ch., two 25 ft. and one 30 ft. spans; at 48 m. 24 ch., one 45 ft. span; at 49 m. 16 ch., one 25 ft., one 30 ft., two 40 ft., and one 60 ft. spans; at 49 m. 63 ch., two 30 ft. and one 40 ft. spans. The piers of these bridges were completed during the previous period, but the steel girders for the superstructure were assembled, erected, and the permanent sleepers laid during last year.

Four concrete culverts with a total length of 293 ft. were constructed, and the permanent fencing erected on the right from 49 m. 62 ch. to 50 m. 3 ch. and on the left from 49 m. 37 ch. to 49 m. 67 ch.

A start has been made with platelaying, and rails have been laid from 47 m. 56 ch. to 48 m. 54 ch., the first and second lifts of ballasting being placed from 47 m. 60 ch. to 48 m. 34 ch.

A tri-weekly passenger service was maintained between Tangarakau and Tahora, where it connected with the New Zealand Railway service, and during the year 13,000 tons of goods were hauled over the section.

The workmen's accommodation at the main camp at Tangarakau was well maintained during the period.

At the beginning of 1929 the Egmont Colliery Co., whose property is about 4 m. up the Tangarakau Valley, commenced building operations, and a start was made on the earthworks of their siding.