

RAILWAY-CONSTRUCTION.

The net expenditure as shown on graph was £3,005,811, being £33,729 less than that of the previous year. The total length of all lines under construction over which goods and passenger traffic has been run during the year was 48 miles, and these services have been well maintained.

The work for the year on the several lines in course of construction is fully set out in the Engineer-in-Chief's report, and may be summarized as follows:—

North Auckland Main Trunk Railway.—The Rangiahua Section was closed down in January last. During the early part of the year three large slips were shifted and the line consolidated where the country was very unstable. Two bridges were erected, and the platelaying was proceeded with for a further distance of 1 mile 5 chains. Ballasting has practically been completed to the rail-head at 35 mile 45 chain peg.

The ballast was obtained from the Okaihau Quarry, which delivered 26,274 cubic yards of crushed metal and 2,474 cubic yards of spalls for the period.

Dargaville Branch Railway.—During the period three steam-shovels had been operating on this line, and the construction was proceeding rapidly when works were closed in December last. The railway has practically been completed to 16 miles 23 chains peg with the exception of two small sections where subsidences have occurred, making it necessary to construct temporary deviations in the meantime. Three permanent bridges were erected, totalling 395 ft. in length.

Goods traffic was commenced in December, 1929, and a passenger service was inaugurated between Kirikopuni and Tangowahine, a distance of 10 miles 10 chains, in September, 1930.

On the works closing down some of the men were transferred to Arapuni hydro-electric works and others were absorbed in various road works in the vicinity.

There are still 1 mile 50 chains of light formation, 3 miles 70 chains of plate-laying, 7 miles of ballasting, three bridges, and the necessary station buildings to complete this line.

Gisborne-Napier Railway.—The construction of this railway between Waikopu and Gisborne was discontinued in January last. Up to this date formation was in hand on the Gisborne Section (14½ miles), Wharerata Section (10 miles), and Kopuawhara Section (11 miles). Co-operative contracts were in hand over the greater portion of these sections.

On closing down, some of the workmen were transferred to Galatea road-works and others to Arapuni.

The Putorino Section, 26 miles 59 chains in length, was completed and handed over to the Railway Department on the 6th October, 1930, and from that date maintenance and control was carried out by that Department.

Work on the Wairoa Section has progressed steadily, and it is expected that the line will be completed to Wairoa about September, 1932.

The following bridges were completed during the year: Waihua River Bridge; Ohinepaka Stream Bridge at 64 miles 7 chains; Ohinepaka Stream Bridge at 64 miles 47 chains; Hurumua Stream Bridge.

The following major works are in hand:—

Kotemaori Tunnel: This work has suffered by various stoppages due to labour disputes, but it is confidently expected that it will be completed in six months' time. The bottom heading was pierced in September last, and 11½ chains on the south side and 14½ chains on the north side have been enlarged and concrete-lined. There is still 7½ chains of enlarging and lining to complete the tunnel.

Mohaka Viaduct: Very good progress has been made with the foundations, and they will be completed in about three months' time.

Maungaturanga Viaduct: The steelwork is nearing completion, and this viaduct will soon be ready for traffic.

Station buildings have yet to be erected; 10 miles of platelaying and 15 miles of ballasting have yet to be completed.