

*Wellington to Napier.*

On this section the maintenance for the greater part of the past year has been performed by contract in four sub-sections, namely, Wellington to Masterton, Masterton to Castle Point, Tenui Junction to Porongahau, and Porongahau to Napier. The plan, however, has not given satisfactory results, and in future contracts for construction, the provision for repair and maintenance will be dispensed with. It was originally adopted under the impression that, if a contractor was bound down to keep a line in order for twelve months after he had constructed it, he would be more likely, in order to save himself from future expense, to erect it properly in the first instance. There may be some force in this argument, but it is not sufficient to outweigh the objections to the plan; and I think that, by adopting a system of careful inspection whilst lines are in course of construction, all chances of work not being faithfully executed may be avoided.

The interruptions on this section during the past year have been few and of short duration. The place where the most casualties have occurred is the Taueru. There the line passes through bush, and from the nature of the country it is not possible to wholly provide against these interruptions. The line runs along the side of a steep hill, the upper side of which is covered with bush, and is subject to land slips in wet weather; so it will be readily seen that the difficulty to be contended against is therefore a very serious one. To render the interruptions, however, as short as possible, precautions have been taken to have spare poles and wire so placed as to be immediately available for repairs.

The only other weak point on this section is at Akiteo. There the line, from its necessarily exposed position, suffers much from the strong winds which prevail at certain seasons of the year. Here precautions have also been taken to render interruptions as few as possible. The poles have been strongly stayed along exposed points, and everything has been made as secure as circumstances would permit.

As the fern in some portions of this section created considerable danger to the poles from fire during the season for burning off the runs, the precaution has been taken to have the sods removed for a radius of three feet round each pole where such a step appeared to be required. Experience has shown the benefit of this precaution, for shortly after the work was completed a heavy fire swept across the line, near the Tenui Junction; and I am told that this clearing alone saved a mile or more of the line from considerable damage.

Four Linemen are stationed on this section; namely, at Greytown, Castle Point, Waipukurau, and Napier. The Napier Lineman will do duty on the line north, as well as south, of Napier.

The crossings at the Waipukurau and Waipawa rivers gave some trouble lately, during a remarkably heavy flood. These crossings have now, however, been made perfectly secure, and no further trouble may be expected at these points.

The other sections of the New Zealand Telegraph, namely, that between Greymouth and Westport, and Blenheim and Christchurch (both in the Middle Island), call for no further comment, as they have been fully dealt with in the first part of my Report.

*Auckland and Waikato Line.*

This line, from the very bad description of timber used for the poles, has been a constant source of trouble and annoyance during the past year. The amount expended on its maintenance has been out of all proportion to the revenue derived, but the Government make large use of it. During the ensuing year the greater part of the line will be renewed, and as I trust we may in that time be able to open telegraphic communication between Auckland and Napier *via* Taupo and Tauranga, I anticipate from this extension of communication, and the improved condition of the northern section, more satisfactory financial results than it has yet furnished.

In Appendix B. will be found the cost of each section of the line.

Instructions were given by the late Telegraph Commissioner, about twelve months since, for the extension of the telegraph from Auckland to the Thames Gold Field, and steps were taken without delay to give effect to these instructions. It was found, however, that no satisfactory line could be obtained without crossing the land of some Native tribes whose relations with the Government and the European settlers rendered it necessary not to attempt such a proceeding without obtaining their consent in the first instance. To obtain such consent the services of Mr. Mackay, of the Native Department, were called into requisition, but up to the present time no satisfactory result has been obtained. This is the more to be regretted, as telegraphic communication between Auckland and the Thames Gold Field would not only be a great advantage to the inhabitants of those important localities, but would, in all probability, be a source of considerable profit to the department.

## COOK STRAIT CABLE.

The tests for insulation which are periodically made still give the same satisfactory results as last year. The No. 2 wire has improved considerably, but the No. 3 wire still gives the highest results. For purposes of comparison, I append the tests (see Appendix O.) of the year 1867-8 in parallel columns, month for month where practicable, with those of the past year.

It has not been always possible, during the past year, to take the tests at regular intervals, owing to the unsettled and boisterous state of the weather. The extreme delicacy of the instruments used for testing the cable renders it necessary that the weather during the operation should be quite calm, as any vibration of the building during the time of testing would render it impossible to take accurate readings.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

The registered number of complaints made by the Public during the past year is nine, and may be classified as follows:—

Six late delivered, three with errors in wording.

Each of these complaints was strictly investigated, and the offender punished by a severe fine or otherwise.

When it is taken into consideration that the number of telegrams transmitted during the year