

Christchurch to Hokitika and Greymouth.

From thirty miles east of Hokitika to Greymouth, this line has undergone extensive repairs, and is now in excellent condition.

The section between the Bealey and Christchurch may require to be poled during next summer. One or two severe casualties have happened on the Bealey to Hokitika section during the last few months; but otherwise the maintenance of the line has been within the ordinary cost. Occasionally this line does not work well, owing to the presence of atmospheric electricity on the wire. The line for the most part runs over very high country, and its general direction is east and west.

Greymouth to Westport.

This section has been several times injured by falling trees; but, except in repairing such or similar damages, only ordinary expenditure has had to be incurred. But little deterioration is apparent, and, apart from it, the section seems in as good condition as when it was opened.

Christchurch to Blenheim.

From Christchurch to Woodend, fourteen miles, has been re-poled, thus completing the reconstruction commenced by Mr. Blake, in 1868. From Woodend to Blenheim, little beyond cost of maintenance has been required. At the River Waiau, floods have frequently caused accidents, such as it is hoped have now been rendered almost impossible; the line having been secured by an iron-tube pole, driven twenty feet into the shingle bed of the river. Details of the cost of maintenance, including reconstruction between Christchurch and Woodend, are stated in Table L.

Blenheim to Nelson.

From Blenheim to Picton fourteen miles of new totara poles have been erected, and the wires have been thoroughly repaired. The Picton to Nelson section has not required repair. The reconstruction of the portion between Havelock and Nelson was completed shortly after the date of the last report. A short distance, between Picton and Havelock, will require to be re-poled during the summer. This part of the line being very difficult of access, it is intended in the reconstruction to use built poles, of picked heart of totara. Such poles do not cost more than 12s. each, and being extremely light they are eminently adapted for places where it would be almost impossible to use ordinary poles.

Tokomairiro to Queenstown.

On December 1st, 1869, this line was bought from the Provincial Government of Otago; and the transference of the telegraph throughout the Colony was thus completed. The price was settled by arbitration; Mr Logan acting for the Provincial Government, and Mr Bird for the General Government. The price as settled for the line, buildings, instruments, &c. was £2,384 2s. 6d. New material imported by the Provincial Government, including 1,120 iron poles, was taken over at invoice price, with charges added (£2,047 18s. 10d.), making the total purchase money £4,432 1s. 4d. Owing to the bad condition of the line, immediate reconstruction was deemed advisable, and is now being carried out under the supervision of Mr Logan, the iron poles being used. Up to date, the work has been carried as far as Alexandra.

Wellington to Napier.

The casualties on this section during the year have been very few. One great source of trouble, the falling of trees on the line in the Tauera Bush, has been removed; the lineman having, in the course of the summer, cut down all doubtful trees that would, by falling, have been likely to cause injury. The cost of this work has been amply repaid, no interruption having since occurred in the bush. At the Hutt River two large poles have been erected, and the one on the Wellington side (because of the constant encroachment of the river) has been placed some chains back from the bank, and may now be regarded as out of danger.

The station at Castle Point has been converted into a lineman's station. The arrangement answers well and saves at least £150 per annum. At the Hutt, a station has been opened and the duties of Telegraphist and Postmaster are performed by one officer. Details of the expenditure for the maintenance of each section, will be found in Table L.

COOK STRAIT CABLE.

The tests for insulation have been more regularly taken this year than they were last year. Nos. 1 and 3 wires, as will be seen from Table M, still give satisfactory results; but No. 2 is not so good as could be wished.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Six complaints by the Public have been recorded during the year, namely:—Three, of late delivery; one, of breach of confidence; one, of wrongly taking down; one, of failing to deliver a message. Each complaint was strictly enquired into, and measures were taken to avoid cause for similar complaints.

The number of telegrams transmitted during the year was 185,423. Considering this large amount of work, it may fairly be said that the duties of the staff have been very satisfactorily performed.

Owing to the rapid extension of the Telegraph in the Northern Island, and to the general requirements of the service, the Learners' Gallery has been fully occupied during the year. Eighteen Cadets have been instructed and have been appointed either to fill vacancies caused by the opening of new stations or to enable the General Manager to provide for contingencies. During the current year, only a few such appointments may be made; their number depending to a large extent upon future extension of lines.