

The following brief reports on each line the construction of which has been authorized, will show the position of the work throughout the colony.

KAWA KAWA COAL RAILWAY.

The state of the mine does not yet warrant the construction of this line.

KAIPARA TO RIVERHEAD.

An agreement was entered into by the Government with Mr. Edgar, the contractor, to determine his contract on account of delays in procuring rails, for which the contractor was held to be not responsible. Rails of the 40lb. pattern were substituted for the 35lb. rails specified, and tenders were invited for finishing the line. That of Mr. D. Falloon has been accepted.

The change in the weight of rails, and the great increase in the price of iron since the original contract was signed, have increased the cost of the line, so that the appropriation will not be sufficient, and a further sum will be required.

RIVERHEAD TO AUCKLAND.

Instructions having been received from the Hon. the Minister for Public Works not to proceed with this line, it is now in abeyance.

AUCKLAND TO MERCER.

As above stated, the Onehunga branch has been opened, and the rest of the line is in a forward state, and will be finished by the contract date, if not sooner. A bonus of £500 a month has been offered to the contractors for completion earlier than the contract time.

MERCER TO NEWCASTLE.

The first section, 10 miles, is let by contract; the remaining 20 miles is being constructed by the Volunteer Militia, whose work has been done in a creditable and workmanlike manner.

The bridge over the Waikato will be advertised for tender immediately, the plans being prepared and copied, and the ironwork ordered from England.

NEWCASTLE SOUTHWARDS.

On this line I have written a separate report, which is attached hereto.

WAITARA TO NEW PLYMOUTH.

This line is let to Messrs. Brogden, the time for completion being 1st April, 1875. The earthwork is well advanced, but the bridge work is behindhand.

PATEA TO WANGANUI.

The surveys for this line were delayed on account of the difficulty of getting a competent railway surveyor, but are now in hand.

The ironwork for the bridge across the Wanganui was ordered from England, and a contract has been entered into for the wood work and erection.

The bridge will consist of 5 spans of 120 feet each. The piers are of cast-iron cylinders, 7 feet in diameter, filled with concrete, and the superstructure is a combination of wood and iron.

WANGANUI TO MANAWATU.

The first section, 10 miles, has been let to Mr. W. Strachan; the second, of about the same length, to Mr. W. Pell; and the wood work and erection of the bridges over the Wangaehu and Turakina to Mr. R. S. Low.

On Mr. Strachan's contract, about one-third of the work has been done; the other works have been only lately let.

It is proposed to let about 9 miles of line, from the end of the Palmerston Tramway towards Wanganui, by private contract to Mr. Halcombe, as agent for Colonel Feilding.

NAPIER TO WAIPUKURAU.

The first section of 18 miles is under contract with Messrs. Brogden. It should have been completed in December last, but owing to the failure of the sub-contractors to whom Messrs. Brogden had intrusted the supply of timber and sleepers to fulfil their engagements, Messrs. Brogden have completely failed in carrying out their contract with the Government; and there is little prospect of the line being ready before the end of October, or nearly a year beyond the contract time.

The next section, of 8½ miles, has been submitted to public tender. Great delay was caused on this section by an error of judgment on the part of the engineer who surveyed the line, in selecting an unfavourable position.

The next length, of 9 miles, is let to Messrs. Brogden, who are going on satisfactorily with the work.