

contract. The course of the further extension to Riverhead is not yet determined, but plans and estimates of the alternative lines are being prepared, and will be considered before the route to be followed is determined.

The Auckland-Waikato line is expected to be open to Newcastle (76 miles) by the end of August; from thence to Ohaupo (20 miles) the formation is finished; and it is proposed during this year to complete the line to Ohaupo, and to push on the work towards Te Awamutu. It is also intended, during the present year, to improve the station and workshops at Auckland, and connect the present station with the Queen Street Wharf. The railway wharf at Onehunga is also in course of construction.

The Napier-Manawatu Railway is now running to Takapau (59 miles), and will be completed to Kopua, between 5 and 6 miles farther, by October. It is proposed to extend this line a few miles during the present year, which will bring the settlements in the Seventy-Mile Bush into more direct communication with Napier, and add considerably to the traffic.

The works on the Wellington-Masterton Railway have been delayed by causes partly unforeseen, and partly arising from the difficult character of the country the line passes through. It is now ascertained that all the tunnels will require lining. The bricks and other materials have to be carried by rail from Wellington or the Hutt, and the progress is necessarily slow, as each tunnel must be completed before the line can be laid, and material carried on for the next. It is, however, believed that the line will be open to Kaitoki, 27 miles from Wellington, by December, and every exertion will be used to get the line open to Featherston within the present year. It is proposed to go on with the formation from Featherston to Masterton, so that the line may be ready for plate-laying by the time the rails can be taken up. It is also proposed to proceed with the works required to connect the railway station with the wharf at Wellington.

On the Waitara-Patea Railway the line will shortly be completed to Inglewood. A section southwards of Inglewood is in progress, and it is proposed to continue the works a few miles farther during the present year.

The southern section of the Patea-Manawatu Railway has progressed satisfactorily during the past year. The line is now open from Turakina to the Wanganui River. A short section to carry the line into the Town of Wanganui is under contract, and it is expected that the whole line from Wanganui to Foxton will be open for traffic within the present year.

To the north of Wanganui the formation to Kai Iwi is finished, and it is proposed to complete that piece of line, and extend the works northwards.

Delay has occurred in connecting the Nelson-Foxhill Railway with the Port, but it is proposed to do so during the present year, and to erect a workshop, so that repairs may be effected locally.

Ten miles of the Westport-Ngakawau Railway are completed, and the remainder will be shortly, as also the necessary works for loading the coal. This line was constructed to open up the valuable coal district between Westport and the Ngakawau River, and it is to be regretted that only one company—the Wellington Coal Company—is in a position to take advantage of the railway.

On the Picton-Blenheim line it is intended to carry out at once the extension of the line into Blenheim, and, as soon as the survey is completed, to extend the line southwards.

The Greymouth-Brunnerton line is working satisfactorily. The Brunner Coal Mining Company, the Coal Pit Heath Company, and the Greymouth Company are now making use of the line, and the traffic is so much increased as to render additional rolling stock necessary. It is proposed to proceed steadily with the river protection works during the present year, and to improve the station accommodation, as well as provide a workshop, as in the case of Nelson.

The line from Amberley to Waitaki was completed some months ago. The works proposed to be carried out during the present year are an extension of the Main Trunk northwards from Amberley about 15 miles; the completion of the Eyreton Railway, now under contract; the improvement of the line at the Waimakiriri River; the completion of the Opawa Railway; the conversion of the broad gauge from Amberley to Lyttelton to narrow gauge; the re-arrangement and