

Little River Branch.—Shortly after the opening of the railway to Little River an extraordinary rainfall caused Lake Forsyth to fill rapidly. The railway-works along the margin were considerably damaged, but the damage has since been made good.

Mount Somers Branch.—The Mount Somers contract, which included the works necessary to finish the railway to Mount Somers Township, was completed in September, and the section from Cavendish to Mount Somers opened on the 4th October, 1886. The length of the section is 1 mile 48 chains, which makes the total length of the branch 23 miles 21 chains.

A working-survey has been made for the extension of the Mount Somers Branch to Springburn, a distance of four miles, and the work of formation was commenced on the 21st March, 1887. The works on the extension are very light, and the curves and gradients easy.

Surveys.—A land-plan survey has been made of the Rakaia and Ashburton Forks Railway, recently purchased by Government, and a similar survey for the Waimate Gorge line is in progress.

WAITAKI-BLUFF RAILWAY AND BRANCHES.

Works on Open Lines.—In minor improvements and additions a considerable amount of work has been done by the Working Railways Department.

Dunedin Station Overbridge.—This work has been carried on in anything but a satisfactory manner. Notwithstanding much pressing, the contractor for the superstructure has not displayed sufficient energy in finishing the work. The contract-time expired nearly two years ago, and there is still at least three months' work to be done. All the ironwork has been manufactured, and the erection is now proceeding. The filling-in of the western approaches to the bridge was completed during the year together with the supply of road-metal for all the approaches. The north-eastern approach is in progress by petty contract, and will be finished before the superstructure. The south-eastern approach, which will for the present be the least used, is being done gradually by prison-labour.

A considerable extent of street-formation has been done round the Dunedin Station during the past two years by "unemployed" labour under the direction of the Corporation, but at the cost of the Government.

River-protection at Balclutha.—These works, which have stood well for many years, were slightly injured by floods in 1886-87. The damage has been made good.

Livingstone Branch.—The first four miles of this line, known as the Rakis section, was finished in July, 1886; but its opening has been held over, pending the completion of a further length.

The Awamoko section, which follows next, brings the line to the Awamoko Stream at 11 miles 75 chains, the terminus for the present of the Livingstone Branch. A contract for the completion of the line and stations was entered into on the 20th July, 1886. The works have not been carried on so energetically as they ought to have been. The contract-time expired on the 20th March, 1886; but the works will not be finished before July or August.

Catlin's River Branch.—A contract was prepared for the formation and bridging on five miles of this line, but on further consideration it was decided to keep the work in hand, so as to furnish work during the winter, when there is always so much surplus labour available. Arrangements are now being made to commence the work.

Waimea-Switzer's Branch.—Tenders are now advertised for laying the permanent-way on the two miles between Riversdale Junction and the Mataura River. A contract for the Mataura Bridge and approaches is in preparation, and nearly ready to advertise.

Edendale-Toitois Branch.—A contract is now advertised for the Glenham section, 1 mile 66 chains in length. It includes a tunnel 10 chains long and some heavy earthwork, together with the formation of a station-yard at the terminus. This section brings the line to the crossing of the main road near Glenham Station, 9 miles 36 chains from Edendale Junction.

Seaward Bush Branch.—The Kilbrony section, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, was completed and opened for traffic on the 9th July, 1886. A further length of 5 miles 48 chains, called the Oteramika section, has been cleared and formed by petty contract.

Surveys.—In addition to those already referred to, a working and land-plan survey has been made of the continuation of the Seaward Bush line to the Toitois district, the total length of the branch being 23 miles 26 chains. It joins the extension of the Edendale-Toitois line at a point 18 miles 57 chains from Edendale. The works on the Invercargill-Toitois line are light throughout, and the alignment and levels good. A land-plan survey has been made for the Walton Park Branch, and the land-plans for the Invercargill-Bluff section have been completed. A preliminary survey has been made of the proposed extension of the Heriot and Lawrence Branches up the Clutha Valley to Roxburgh. It formed the subject of a special report presented to Parliament in 1886 (Parliamentary Paper, D-16).

INVERCARGILL-KINGSTON RAILWAY, WITH BRANCHES.

Works on Open Lines.—The usual amount of additions and improvements of a minor character have been carried out during the year. A small groin built at the Ringway Station to prevent the encroachment of the Aparima River was injured by the same floods that damaged the Clutha works; it has been repaired.

Lumsden-Mararoa Branch.—The Mossburn section, 4 miles 10 chains in length, was finished and opened for traffic on the 22nd January, 1887. This brings the line to the new township of Mossburn, on the Aparima watershed, 10 miles 40 chains from Lumsden Junction.

The land-plan survey of the Mossburn section has been completed.

OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

General.—The works on this line have been carried on with considerable vigour during the past year, and the formation from Chain Hills to Strath Taieri may now be considered as finished.