

Kaukapakapa Contract (Formation and Permanent-way, 7 miles 58 chains).—This length includes 3 miles 46 new chains of new formation beyond the Kaipara contract, and the platelaying over both of the sections: the contractors have begun bush-felling and other works. This contract takes the line of railway up to a point 43 miles 30 chains from Auckland.

Surveys.—A trial survey was finished to the Makarau River in September last, and was again taken up in November: it has now reached the Kaitoto Stream, a branch of the Hoteo River, at a point $61\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Auckland, or 18 miles 30 chains beyond the end of the Kaukapakapa contract. The survey is now being plotted. The greater part of the distance surveyed is through rough bush-country, and there will be three tunnels on the route, 30 chains, 22 chains, and 18 chains respectively.

WAIKATO-THAMES RAILWAY.

Grahamstown-Te Aroha Section.—The Hikutaia contract, 8 miles 25 chains, was completed in May last; it included formation only.

Ohinemuri Contract (6 miles 15 chains, Formation only).—The contractor for this stopped work on the 14th July; and, under the usual procedure in such cases, a new contract was entered into on the 11th November. The new contractor is making satisfactory progress.

Bridges Contract.—A contract including the bridges and culverts on the Hikutaia and Ohinemuri sections is now being prepared for public tender.

Surveys.—The land plans of the Ohinemuri section were completed in January last, as also a survey of the subdivision of the Whakau Block in connection with the Hikutaia land-plan survey. The survey plans of the line as constructed between Hamilton and Te Aroha have also been finished.

Hamilton-Cambridge Branch.—The plans of the survey of this line as constructed (reported last year as being in hand) have since been completed.

TAUPIRI BRANCH RAILWAY.

Formation and Permanent-way (1 mile 76 chains).—This is a branch from the main line (Kaipara-Waikato) near Huntly to Lake Kimihia, and was constructed for the Taupiri Reserve Colliery Company, under "The Railways Authorisation Act, 1885." The work was finished on the 1st August, 1887.

Surveys.—The land plans for this branch were completed in October last.

MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY, NORTH ISLAND (NORTHERN END).

Puniu Station-buildings Contract.—This work was completed on the 19th May last.

Te Kuiti Contract (Formation and Permanent-way, 10 miles $59\frac{1}{2}$ chains).—This was completed on the 20th August, and the section was opened for goods traffic on the 2nd September, and for passenger traffic on the 2nd December. This brings the open line to 25 miles 60 chains from Te Awamutu, or 125 miles 60 chains from Auckland.

Te Kuiti Station-buildings Contract.—This comprises the necessary buildings, &c., at four stations, and the work was completed in January.

Waiteti Contract (Formation and Permanent-way, 8 miles 53 chains).—This contract was let on the 9th March, 1887, and should be completed by the 10th December, 1888. The contractor is making good progress.

Pororo-tarao Tunnel Contract.—As explained in last year's report, this work was not being carried out in a satisfactory manner, and this ultimately led to the transfer of the contract to another contractor, which took place in June last, since which time the work has been carried on in a more energetic and satisfactory manner.

Mokau Section (11 miles 9 chains).—This section fills up the distance between the Waiteti contract and Pororo-tarao Tunnel contract. The survey is now complete, and the plans and draft specifications have been received at the head office.

Taumaranui Section.—This lies south of the tunnel contract, and surveys have been made as far as about 2 miles south of Te Koura, about 65 miles 60 chains from Te Awamutu, the work being pegged out, levelled, and cross-sectioned. Two alternative lines were run for the last 5 miles, the second one, on the left branch of the Ongaruhe, being found the best and shortest. This piece has been pegged out only to 62 miles 16 chains, or 16 miles beyond the south end of the tunnel contract. At this point the survey has for the present been stopped.

Land Plans (Waiteti section and Part of Mokau Section: total, $11\frac{1}{2}$ miles).—This survey has been satisfactorily completed, and the plans have been sent in. The land plans for the Pororo-tarao section will, it is expected, be finished shortly.

SURVEYS.

Auckland-Taranaki.—Under instructions, a section of a trial survey of a probable route for a railway between Auckland and Taranaki was begun in February last. After some reconnaissance, the point for leaving the main line was fixed upon at 59 miles 60 chains on the permanent survey, or 12 miles 53 chains south of the tunnel contract, the route under survey being selected by way of the Tumataki Valley towards Nihoniho, which is estimated to be about 16 miles distant from the starting-point. This place has been selected as the point which the survey parties working from the south will make for. The ground over this section is broken, and covered with scrub and patches of bush. Five miles of the survey have been plotted in pencil, and another 5 miles will be plotted in a few days, the fieldwork being finished for 10 miles 25 chains.

Auckland-Helensville.—A survey of this line as constructed has been made, and plans were completed in July.

Auckland-Penrose.—A proposition has been made for duplicating the railway-line between those two places, and the survey is now in hand.