

open the line for regular traffic, but excursion-trains are occasionally run to the Deep Stream, at the 20th mile, and settlers' produce and mining-plant are carried by the ballast-trains.

The contract for the superstructure of the Barewood bridges expires in July, 1890, and the platelaying to the Sutton must necessarily be finished at the same time. There will be no difficulty in having the formation and bridges on the Middlemarch Section also finished by the same date. The only work therefore that will remain unfinished after the Barewood bridges is the Middlemarch platelaying, and this can easily be done in three months. We may consequently look forward with confidence to having this long-delayed railway completed to Middlemarch before Christmas, 1890.

For the works already in hand, or still to be undertaken, for the completion of the railway to Middlemarch, the sum of £61,473, being the balance of the existing loan allocation, will now require to be authorised; and, of this amount, £40,000 will be required to be voted for actual expenditure within the current year.

It will thus be seen that it is anticipated that the present loan allocation will complete the railway to Middlemarch, but with nothing to spare; and, as the Government has come to the conclusion that a further extension of this railway is absolutely necessary, if any return whatever is to be obtained for the money already expended, a Bill has been prepared and laid before Parliament setting forth a proposal by which the construction of a further distance of 38 miles can be attained. This will bring the railway to Eweburn, which is, in fact, the first point on the line of this railway from which any considerable amount of traffic can be anticipated. If this extension is not provided for, the working of the portion already in hand from Chain Hills to Middlemarch would involve a continuous loss of revenue, in addition to the loss already incurred by interest on upwards of £500,000, which it will have cost when completed.

CATLIN'S RIVER.

On the Catlin's River branch, the first 7 miles from Balclutha to Romahapa has been opened for traffic for some considerable time, and the formation-works are now practically finished for 5 miles further, up to the Ahuriri Flat.

The proposal of the Government now is, to complete this 5 miles of formation with permanent-way, and to also construct and complete with permanent-way a further distance of 1 mile up to McDonald's Saddle, thus attaining in all a length of 13 miles of railway, over which it is anticipated that considerable traffic will ensue.

To admit of these works being undertaken, an authority for the balance of the loan allocation, £26,549, will now be asked for; but of this amount the vote required for actual expenditure within the current year will be only £8,000.

RIVERSDALE—SWITZER'S.

On the Riversdale—Switzer's Railway no work has been done since the date of my last Public Works Statement. It therefore remains in the same position as there described; that is to say, completed for a distance of 2 miles, and formed without bridges for a further length of 6 miles; out of a total length of 14 miles from Riversdale to Switzer's.

The balance of the existing loan allocation for this work is £18,615; but the amount required to complete it will be £15,000 more than that; and, as the Government cannot see its way to provide this extra amount, it is considered that no further work should be done at present.

EDENDALE—FORTROSE.

On the Edendale—Fortrose Railway a length of 4 miles from Edendale to Wyndham has been opened for traffic for several years, and a further distance of $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Wyndham to Glenham is now formed, and a contract has just been entered into for platelaying and stations. When that is done there will be a total length of $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles, terminating at the Glenham Road-crossing, which is a convenient point for traffic.