

During the year the ground and first and second floors of the left wing of the Wellington new station were extended, the work being undertaken by the Fletcher Construction Co., Ltd., under contract. A rearrangement of the accommodation allocated to the Traffic (Coaching) and Refreshment Branches has been made following the completion of the new wing.

Further progress has been made with the preliminary works associated with the scheme for the provision of a new station and yard at Christchurch, and in that connection the following new works were brought to completion during the year:—

- New Signal Branch depot buildings and sidings.
- New car and wagon shed.
- New car yard connected to Waltham yard.
- Falsgrave Street subway (opened for traffic on 22nd December, 1939).
- Boiler-house, linen-store, yard staff quarters.
- Bicycle-stands, car-washing stands.

The contract for the erection of a building for the new omnibus station and social hall at Dunedin was satisfactorily completed during the year, and these buildings are now in occupation.

Unemployed Relief.—During the year an average of 1,017 casual workers have been employed on earthworks for grade easements, deviations, improvements to track, cutting noxious weeds, repairing fences, &c.

Mileage of Track.—The total mileage of track open for traffic on 31st March, 1940, was 3,389 miles 74 chains.

SIGNAL AND ELECTRICAL BRANCH.

The main activities of the Signal and Electrical Branch during the year were as follows:—

Papakura—Horotiu Duplication.—Automatic signalling on the duplicated sections of line between Papakura and Paerata (8 miles 45 chains) and between Ohinewai and Huntly (5 miles 10 chains) were brought into use during the year, superseding the existing single-line automatic signalling. Coincident with the above, power-interlocking apparatus was brought into use at Ohinewai.

Te Kuiti—Puketutu.—Centralized traffic control has been installed and brought into use between Te Kuiti and Puketutu (8 miles 2 chains). The new apparatus permits of the signals and points at the crossing-loop at Waiteti and the departure signals at Puketutu being controlled from Te Kuiti signal box.

Stratford—Okahukura.—The remaining section of the Stratford—Okahukura single-line automatic signalling between Whangamomona and Okahukura (51 miles 52 chains) has been brought into use.

Wellington—Porirua—Paekakariki Centralized Traffic Control.—Automatic signalling (7 miles 11 chains double line and 1 mile 63 chains single line) between Plimmerton and Paekakariki and operated by Centralized Traffic Control from Wellington was brought into use. The new installation includes electric interlocking at Plimmerton.

Napier—Gisborne Automatic Signalling.—The overseas material to be used in connection with the above has arrived, and the pole-line work has been completed between Napier and Wairoa, and mechanical work has been commenced at Putorino.

Rolleston—Dunsandel Automatic Signalling.—An order has been placed for the necessary materials required for this installation.

Lower Hutt.—The installation of power-interlocking apparatus to allow of a rearrangement of the station yard at Lower Hutt to accommodate the new western highway is in hand.

Frame-levers.—Frame-levers and facing-points locks have been installed at fourteen stations.

General.—Works of lesser importance carried out during the year include alterations and additions to existing signalling and interlocking apparatus at many stations, the provision of motor points at fourteen stations, and the installation of track circuiting at Paekakariki, Greymouth, Blackball, and Invercargill.

The transfer of the Signal and Electric Lines Inspector's depot from Christchurch to Addington was completed during the year. A Signal and Electric Lines Inspector's depot was provided at Napier.

Switch-locked points interlocked with the automatic signalling were provided at Panmure, Drury, Niho Niho, Toi Toi, and Pukerua Bay. Switch-locked points were dispensed with at Opaheke and power interlocking at Panmure was removed.

The following additional automatic crossing-loops were installed during the year: Tuhua, Matiere, Ohura, Mangaparo, Tokirima, Heao, Tangarakau, Tahora, and Kohuratahi.

Tablet locks (interlocking points with the tablet system) have been installed at Mangatera and also at several service sidings in both Islands. Tablet-locked points were removed from Piripiri, and Mangatera was closed as a fixed signal station.

With the installation of automatic signalling between Whangamomona and Okahukura the fixed signals at Ohura, Tangarakau, and Whangamomona have been superseded.

Fixed signals have been provided at Gowers Cutting, Piripiri, Te Apiti, Omakau, and Wairio.

The total number of signalling installations is as follows:—

| | m. ch. | Number. |
|---|---------|---------|
| Miles of single-line automatic signalling | 273 30 | .. |
| Miles of double-line automatic signalling | 120 12 | .. |
| Automatic crossing-loops | | 44 |
| Automatic switch-locked sidings | | 46 |
| Power interlockings | | 44 |
| Mechanical interlockings | | 108 |
| Interlocked tramway crossings | | 7 |
| Fixed signals and Woods' locked stations | | 288 |
| Tablet-locked sidings | | 282 |

Tablet-working.—Gowers Cutting, Piripiri, and Te Apiti were opened as switch-out tablet stations. Pukerua Bay was closed as a tablet station, and Mangatera and The Gorge were closed as switch-out tablet stations.