

*Bealey Section (27 m. 40 ch. to 41 m. 53 ch.; or 14 miles 13 chains in length).*—This section, which terminates at the east end of the Arthur's Pass Tunnel contract (59 m. 40 ch. from Grey-mouth), has not yet been touched. It is the connecting length of this east and west coast railway.

## WESTPORT—INANGAHUA.

*Te Kuha Section (0 m. to 5 m. 74 ch.).*—Felling, clearing, culverts, fencing, and about seven-eighths of the earthwork have been done; and the timber is on the ground for the bridges (which include the Orawaiti overflow bridge, 1,140 ft. long), but none erected. A contract was let for the erection of these bridges in the summer, but owing to the contractor's illness no progress has yet been made, and the contract will probably have to be relet if his health does not improve.

Preparation is being made to go on with the platelaying as soon as sleepers are available.

There will be some 20 miles of very difficult line to be made up the Buller Gorge to connect this line with the Reefton—Inangahua line at Inangahua Junction.

## PICTON—WAIPARA.

*North End.*

*Seddon—Blind River Section (33 m. 45 ch. to 37 m. 7 ch.; 3 miles 42 chains in length).*—This length is now almost complete. The formation, bridges, culverts, fencing, and platelaying to 36 m. 61 ch. are finished, but ballasting has been delayed in order to use the new Awatere pit, and also for want of a locomotive. It is hoped to commence immediately. The station buildings at Blind River are being erected by contract, the materials being supplied by the Department. Work is just being started at them.

*Ward Section (47 m. 7 ch. to 48 m. 9 ch.; 11 miles 2 chains in length).*—Good progress has been made with the earthwork for the first 3½ miles. Advantage was taken of the very dry summer to scoop the bank up across the first arm of Lake Grassmere from the then dry bed of the lake, which has been of great value to us, enabling its further construction to be made above winter water-level from each end. I expect the earthwork to be finished to the lake by Christmas, when rails can be laid to Kaparu Station, 39 m. 70 ch.

Beyond the lake to the east some small pieces of earthwork have previously been formed, but not much. However, men are now being started here, and, as the formation is fairly light, good progress will soon be made.

*South End.*

*Opened to Domett Station, 31 m. 65 ch. north of Waipara, or about 72 miles from Christchurch, on the 21st March, 1907.* Construction-work has been discontinued until the route is settled to the Waiiau River. Surveys now in hand show that a good route exists northwards up the Leader, Gelt, and Charwell Valleys, for the extension to Kaikoura.

## NGAHERE—BLACKBALL.

*3 miles 40 chains in length.*—The formation of the new Junction Station on the direct line to Greymouth is now well advanced, and should soon be ready for platelaying. In the meantime a temporary connection has been made with the old siding and main line; rails have been laid up to 1 m. 60 ch., where there is a short length of bank still to form before further advance can be made. Considerable slips have had to be removed from the cuttings at 2 m. 15 ch. and 2 m. 27 ch. The cutting at 2 m. 50 ch. is not yet complete, also a very large quantity of filling is required for the south approach bank to Soldier's Creek Bridge, at 2 m. 60 ch., and a considerable part of the required material has to come over this bridge from the 3 m. cutting. The contract time for the erection of this bridge expired on the 16th July last, but, owing to various causes, the work has not progressed well, and the contractor is now only placing the concrete in position. Notice has been given him to increase the number of men employed, and it is hoped that better progress will now be made. The cutting at 3 m. is being excavated, and the rock stacked ready to convey to the bank, as soon as the bridge is ready for traffic. The piers for the bridge over Ford's Creek, at 3 m. 12 ch., are nearly completed. Work is in hand in the Blackball Station yard, but has been delayed waiting for Mr. Perotti to remove the buildings of his sawmill off the road reserve, where he has squatted without any title apparently. The buildings are now being removed.

The Blackball Company is now starting to form the site for its coal-bins, and the Paparoa Company is busy developing, but it seems quite likely that the railway will be ready by the time the companies are able to send coal over the line.

## COAL CREEK RAILWAY EXTENSION.

In August, 1907, an exploration survey party looked for a route to the coal-seams up Seven-mile Creek, and then made a trial survey from 5 m. on finished line to the bin-site at 8 m. An alternative route, 5 miles 60 chains long, was then surveyed up Coal Creek Valley. The first has been adopted, is being located, and men were started on the construction of the first mile in June, and since then on the second mile.

It is a very heavy piece of line to make, and will take some time, as it is nearly all in rock, the formation requiring deep cuttings along a precipitous mountain-side.

## GREYMOUTH—HOKITIKA—ROSS.

*0 m. to 24 m. 14 ch., to 38 m. 36 ch.*—This line was opened to Ruatapu, or 31 miles 24 chains, on the 9th November, 1906. The remaining length of 7½ miles, including Ross Station yard, is formed, except the approaches to the Totara Bridge, and the rails have been laid to 37 m. 64 ch., or the north bank of the Totara River. No ballasting to speak of has yet been done, but it is just