

Bridges at 23 m. 58 ch. and 24 m. 7 ch. have been completed. The concrete piers for bridge at 26 m. 14 ch. have been erected, and pier-foundations for the bridge at 27 m. 41 ch. have been completed.

The Waihuka tunnel at 26 m. 17 ch. was commenced in September, 1908, and finished in April, 1909.

Fencing has been completed up to 26 m.

At Otoko Station three platelayers' cottages and a Stationmaster's house have been erected.

Rails are laid up to 27 m., and the ballasting is practically completed to 26 m.

Plans are being prepared for the Otoko Viaduct at 31 m.

STRATFORD—ONGARUE.

Huiroa Section (11 m. 18 ch. to 15 m. 68 ch.).—The buildings which were incomplete at the time of last report were duly completed, and the section handed over to the Railway Department on the 1st April, 1908.

Te Wera Section (15 m. 68 ch. to 22 m. 65 ch.).—All the earthwork on this section up to 20 m., including Kiore Station, is practically completed. Work in the tunnel just beyond this, through the Mohakau Saddle, is now making fair progress, about 3 chains being complete; three shifts are working at either end; for 1½ chains at the west end the ground was found to be very heavy, necessitating 18 in. lining. This tunnel-work should be finished by about the end of October. Two cottages have been built at Kiore, and station-buildings, platform, cattle-yards, &c., in this yard are nearly finished. Rails and one lift of ballast have been laid to 19 m. 65 ch. The cuttings and big banks between 20 m. 30 ch. and 20 m. 67 ch. are nearing completion; the bank at 20 m. 56 ch. has caused a good deal of difficulty through sinking in swampy foundation. Formation-work from this point to Te Wera Station yard has been finished. Some culverts have been left until the rail-head is more advanced so as to save cartage of cement, timber, and other material. A small bridge at 22 m. 27 ch. has been put in hand. Fair progress has been made in the formation of Te Wera Station yard. One platelayer's cottage is now in course of erection, and a contract for the others will be prepared shortly.

Pohokura Section (22 m. 65 ch. to 31 m. 40 ch.).—The line has been cleared up to 29 m., and clearing-parties are now advanced towards the proposed station at Pohokura. All creek-diversions and side drains have been completed up to 27 m. 40 ch., and the formation-work is in hand to the tunnel-mouth at 28 m. 14 ch. The survey-work on this line is completed to 32 m. 10 ch.

MOUNT EGMONT BRANCH.

Manganui Section (6 miles in length).—This section, which includes the stone-crushing plant, &c., was handed over to the Railway Department on the 1st April, 1908. During the year further stone-prospecting operations for a quarry at Waingongoro Spur have been carried out, and a report and estimate relative to the opening-up of a quarry at that point made. The report was, however, unfavourable, so a survey of the proposed incline to the Manganui quarry on the Surrey Road track has been commenced.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK.

Marton—Te Awamutu.—The two railheads from north and south were connected on 3rd August, and the first through train from Wellington to Auckland was run over this line on the 8th August, 1908, on the occasion of the visit of the American fleet to New Zealand. From shortly after that date until the 13th February, 1909, traffic was run over the unopened sections by the Public Works Department. On the latter date the whole of the line intervening between the opened line on the north and south ends was handed over to the Railway Department, and through traffic has been regularly carried on since.

On this length the Makatote Viaduct contract and the Manganui-o-te-ao and Mangaturuturu Viaducts contracts were completed during the year.

The Government sawmill at Kakahi has been steadily employed cutting timber at the rate of about 10,000 superficial feet per day during the year. This mill was handed over on the 1st April, 1909, to the New Zealand Railways Department.

BLenheim—WAI PARA (NORTH END).

Seddon—Blind River Section (33 m. 45 ch. to 37 m. 7 ch.).—Formation-work on this section was practically complete at the date of last annual report, the only earthwork requiring completion being the batters in cuttings at 34 m. 5 ch. and levelling of part of Blind River Station yard, which have been finished. Platelaying has been completed from 36 m. 61 ch. (last year's point) to the end of section, including the laying of sidings and points and crossings in Blind River yard. The whole section has been ballasted. A ballast-pit was opened near the Awatere River, and a line constructed from the main line at the south end of the Awatere Bridge to connect with the pit. Station-buildings at Blind River, consisting of shelter-shed and platform, cottage, goods-shed and loading-bank, cattle-yards, tank-stand and windmill have been completed. The line has been fenced, gates hung, and cattle-stops put in where necessary. An overbridge has been erected at 35 m. 23 ch., and additional work carried out at Hog Swamp Bridge. A party of men has been employed on maintenance of this section for about six months. This section, though completed, has not been handed over to the Railway Department, as doing so would