

Big Hill Section (25 m. 39 ch. to 29 m. 35 ch.).—The earthwork is nearly completed, except finishing to tunnel-mouth and widening banks and cuttings in several places. Four private crossings and one public-road crossing have been formed. Formation of Bowler's Creek Station yard is complete, but approaches are not yet done. The following culverts have been put in: 653 ft. of 12 in., 427 ft. of 18 in., 270 ft. of 2 ft., 193 ft. of 3 ft. Two bridges on concrete piers, total length 180 ft., have been erected. Trimming of formation has been done to 27 m. 34 ch., and platelaying continued to same point. A siding at Bowler's Creek has also been put in. The first lift of ballasting has been done to 27 m. 18 ch. Station-buildings and platform at Bowler's Creek have been commenced; frames of two platelayers' cottages have also been erected. Fencing has been completed on the left side of line from 26 m. 5 ch. to 29 m. 20 ch., except at road-crossings.

Big Hill Tunnel and Beyond.—A bottom heading has been driven for a distance of $2\frac{3}{4}$ chains from the west or Beaumont end, and a start made on the next cutting; but no further work has lately been put in hand. It is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles from here to Beaumont Station.

GORE-WAIKAKA.

Length, 12 m. 65 ch. During the year platelaying was advanced from 10 m. 73 ch., to the terminus at 12 m. 65 ch. First lift ballasting was carried from 10 m. 35 ch., and final lift from 3 m. to terminus. The small amount of formation-work remaining unfinished at the end of last period was completed. Fencing was continued from 10 m. 35 ch. to the end of line, gaps filled in, and gates erected. Bridges were erected at 3 m. 57 ch., 7 m. 47 ch., 8 m. 51 ch., 10 m. 76 ch. (Waikaka River), and 12 m. 4 ch.—an aggregate length of 540 ft. The few remaining culverts were built, and also concrete ends to all pipe culverts. The banks at ends of Waikaka Bridge were protected with stone pitching and a stone groin constructed. Formation and platelaying of station-yards at Howes, Willowbank, Fleming, Maitland, Pullar, and Waikaka were completed, yards and approaches metalled, and cattle-stops put in.

The line was handed over to the Railway Department on the 26th November, 1908, being then complete, with exception of the buildings. These were finished in February, 1909. Goods traffic for the public was carried over the line by the ballast-train for about two months prior to November, 1908.

RIVERSDALE-SWITZERS.

Length, 13 m. 70 ch. Formation (of which 2 miles had been constructed previously), with the exception of some trimming, has been completed to 13 m. 23 ch. Onwards from that point some small excavations are required to finish the earthwork in cuttings. When rails are laid to end of section the ballast train will be used to complete widening of Waikaka Station yard. The stop-bank at terminus is finished.

Platelaying was commenced in September, 1908, and has advanced to 12 m. 14 ch., including the various sidings *en route*.

A ballast-pit was opened at 5 m., and a siding laid into it. Ballasting is completed to 10 m. 40 ch., and the first lift to 12 m. 14 ch.

Fencing has been erected on both sides of the line to 12 m. 4 ch.

A bridge, 280 ft. long, at Muddy Creek, 9 m. 8 ch., was commenced in November, 1908, and finished in February, 1909. The bridge party then proceeded to Dome Creek, 12 m. 17 ch., where a bridge 300 ft. long is being erected. This work is approaching completion. The ends of banks at the Mataura bridges have been protected with hand-laid stone pitching.

All culverts have been completed.

In December, 1908, a contract was entered into for erection of station-buildings at Waipouamu, Plains, Keith, and Freshford, and for two platelayers' cottages at Riversdale. These buildings are not yet finished, the contract time having been considerably exceeded.

Goods traffic has been carried over the line as far as Freshford during the past two months.

OREPUKI-WAIAU.

Tuatapere Section (40 m. 16 ch. to 48 m. 23 ch.).—Bushfelling was completed to 48 m. 23 ch., which is as far as it is proposed to carry the work at present. Clearing and grubbing are nearing completion.

Formation is completed to the end of section, except a small amount around Tuatapere Station. Culverts are practically all completed.

A deviation of Ford's Road, crossing the line at 46 m. 25 ch., was completed—length about 17 chains. An overbridge was erected at this crossing.

Fencing is completed, except about half a mile at Tuatapere.

Platelaying is completed, except some of the sidings at Tuatapere.

Ballasting is finished to 46 m., and bottom lift to 47 m. 60 ch.

Station-buildings at Te Waewae and Te Tua have been completed, and a platelayer's cottage erected at Waihoaka.

A contract has been entered into for the erection of station-buildings at Tuatapere, and the contractors have made a commencement with the work. This contract includes, in addition to ordinary station-buildings, a Stationmaster's house and seven cottages. A water-supply by means