

and three-quarters in length is required to carry the material to the main line, and this branch is also included in the schedule to the Railways Authorization Bill. The construction of the branch has already been put in hand.

The sum of £2,000 appears on the estimates under the heading of Te Maunga Northwards. This is for the purpose of commencing the approaches to the bridge across the Tauranga Harbour.

From the Gisborne end construction-work has been pushed on vigorously during the year, and the advance parties are now at work within three miles of Motu Township, or forty-eight miles from Gisborne. The terminus of the opened line is still at Otoko, but the rails are laid and the line partly ballasted up to Matawai Station, thirteen miles ahead, to which point a temporary goods and passenger service is being run daily. The works on this section have been of an arduous and varied character, comprising heavy cuttings, banks (up to 81 ft. high), one tunnel, and five steel and concrete viaducts of an aggregate length of 947 ft., and ranging in height from 42 ft. to 73 ft. above the streams which they cross. Material for ballast has to be hauled from Puhā, on the opened line, a distance of twenty-two miles, most of which is on steep grades.

Between Gisborne and Napier earthworks are practically completed for 10½ miles between the junction of Makaraka and Ngatapa. Several bridges have, however, still to be built on this length. Seven small contracts have been let for earthworks on the next section, at reasonable prices, and the contractors have commenced work. A strong party is engaged surveying the permanent location of the line ahead, and has already covered a length of twenty-four miles from Ngatapa. At the Napier end construction was suspended in October, 1912. Negotiations have been proceeding for some time between the Public Works Department on the one hand and the Napier Harbour Board and the Hawke's Bay County Council on the other in regard to the construction of a combined railway and road embankment and bridge across the Inner Harbour. There is no reason now why a satisfactory settlement of all difficulties should not be arrived at, and the sum of £10,000 has accordingly been placed on the estimates towards giving effect thereto. This embankment will connect the existing railway-line at Port Ahuriri with the earthworks already constructed on the northern side of the harbour.

The expenditure during last financial year on the different sections of the East Coast Railway was as follows:—

	£
Waihi to Tauranga	5,363
Tauranga to Taneatua	28,462
Gisborne to Motu	57,548
Gisborne to Napier, north end	15,677
Gisborne to Napier, south end	11,438

For the current year votes are proposed as under:—

Waihi to Tauranga	10,000
Te Maunga Northwards	2,000
Tauranga to Taneatua	50,000
Gisborne to Motu	60,000
Gisborne to Napier, north end	35,000
Gisborne to Napier, south end	10,000

STRATFORD—MAIN TRUNK.

The section to Pohokura, 31½ miles from Stratford, was opened for traffic in August, 1912. Since then the 31-chain tunnel beyond Pohokura has been finished, heavy construction-works, with seven small bridges between the tunnel and Whangamomona, completed, rails laid into the station-yard, and ballasting almost finished. The section to Whangamomona will shortly be opened for traffic, and the train service will save settlers the difficult road journey over the Whangamomona Saddle. Beyond Whangamomona earthworks are nearing completion for over five miles, but the tendency of the country to slip in the cuttings has necessitated two small deviations. A 23-chain tunnel beyond Tahora has been pierced, and enlargement is now in progress. Four small bridges on this section are also in