

Tauranga-Opotiki.

Te Maunga Section (41 m. to 45 m.).—From Te Maunga Junction back to the site of the large bridge over Tauranga Harbour the formation is practically completed. Some concrete cylinders have been made and sunk to form two of the piers for the bridge, but little can be done here until the return of normal conditions enables the steel for the superstructure to be obtained. A little formation-work is being done at the site of the Tauranga Station yard, with material obtained from the cutting at 40 m. 19 ch.

Maunganui-Te Puke Section (Maunganui to Te Maunga, Branch Line, 0 m. to 4 m. 27 ch.; Te Maunga to Te Puke, 45 m. to 54 m.).—This is practically an open section, the Department handling goods and passenger traffic from the wharf at Maunganui, on Tauranga Harbour, to Paengaroa, a total distance of 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Since January last mails have been carried as far as Paengaroa, connecting with the Rotorua and Matata coach services.

In October, 1916, extraordinarily heavy rains caused severe floods in the swampy area traversed by the railway between 50 m. 50 ch. and 52 m. 28 ch. The Atuaroa Stream overflowed its banks, and a great volume of water was diverted into the Kopuaroa Stream, which crosses the railway at 51 m. 22 ch., causing a serious washout. This has been repaired, but in order to prevent a repetition of this trouble it is proposed to stop-bank the Atuaroa Stream for some distance, and the necessary survey is in hand.

Paengaroa Section (54 m. to 59 m. 65 ch.).—This section is also complete, with the exception of the Kaituna River Bridge. This cannot be completed until the steelwork, which has been on order for many months, can be obtained. A temporary bridge is in use in the meantime, and a regular train service has been handled throughout the year. The traffic is considerable and increasing, and it was found necessary to make some additions to the station buildings at Paengaroa.

Pongakawa Section (59 m. 65 ch. to 64 m. 10 ch.).—During the year bridges were erected at 61 m. 13 ch. and 63 m. 7 ch., also an overbridge at 62 m. 5 ch. The section is practically completed.

Otamarakau Section (64 m. 10 ch. to 71 m. 5 ch.).—The earthwork on this section is practically finished, with the exception of a portion along a cliff at 69 m. 76 ch. to 70 m. 8 ch.; this is in hand, the material being used to make up subsidences in the banks across the swamps from 67 m. to 68 m. 70 ch., which have been troublesome, but now show signs of consolidating. A bridge with concrete pile piers has been erected at Waitahanui Stream (70 m. 33 ch.), and platelaying has been carried forward to the end of the section. A first lift of ballast has been applied on all firm ground. Points and crossings and part of the sidings have been laid in Otamarakau Station yard. Fencing with concrete posts manufactured on the works is in progress on the right of the railway from Waitahanui Stream.

Matata Section (71 m. 5 ch. to 79 m. 18 ch.).—Earthworks were practically completed to Matata Station yard, but as a result of the heavy floods in the latter part of last year it was deemed advisable to raise the formation-level along a considerable portion of the section. This work is now in hand, the material being brought by train from the vicinity of 70 m. Platelaying has been continued, with temporary structures over the streams, the rail-head being 75 m. 53 ch.

General.

A second steam-navy has been obtained for use on this line. This is of a later pattern than the one already in use, and has shown excellent results. Unfortunately, just as the men were getting used to the machine and the work it was found necessary to cease operations owing to a prospect of a coal shortage. The old steam-navy, which was in need of repairs, has been overhauled and will be put in commission again shortly.

A small addition to our railway workshop at Maunganui has been made, and some additional machine tools have been obtained. This shop deals with the whole of the ordinary repair work in connection with the plant and rolling-stock on the line, besides manufacturing ironwork for bridges, &c.

Gisborne-Motu.

Motu Section—44 m. 10 ch. (Matawai) to 49 m. 8 ch. (Motuhora).—A considerable amount of bushwork has been done at the terminal station-yard (Motuhora), and the yard has been completely formed. A quantity of slipped material has been removed from various cuttings, and the formation has been maintained. Seven concrete-pipe culverts were laid complete. All fencing was completed, six 12 ft. gates erected, and existing fences repaired where necessary. Concrete inlets and outlets were built on to thirty pipe culverts, and sundry drains made and maintained. Twenty-five chains of roads have been made and metalled. The Motu River Bridge (48 m. 36 ch.), consisting of one 80 ft. truss span and four 20 ft. stringer spans, was completed, the contractor having been greatly hindered in his work through difficulty in obtaining steel. Rails have been laid throughout, including the Motuhora Station sidings, and the main line is completely ballasted. A contract has been let for the erection of station buildings and four platelayers' cottages, and the work is in hand. With the exception of these buildings, the section is practically complete. Goods-trains have been running over the line during the year.

An overbridge, to take the place of a level crossing, was erected at 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. on the opened line.

Gisborne-Napier (North End).

Ngatapa Section (0 m. to 10 m. 40 ch.).—The bank between 2 m. 5 ch. and 2 m. 20 ch. was raised and widened, and stop-banks were built across temporary cuts to the river at 1 m. 79 ch. and 2 m. 5 ch. A good deal of fencing has been erected, with cattle-stops, gates, and notice-boards, completing the fencing on the section; also a 3 ft. culvert at 8 m. 60 ch. Eight concrete