

been decided, and permanent-line survey completed from 35 miles back to 31 miles. No work is proposed on this section at present.

Tauranga Eastwards.

Matapihi Section.—All the cylinders for the Tauranga Bridge have been completed, and, with the exception of six, are sunk to their proper levels. Much extra labour was entailed during sinking operations on account of the soft nature of the material encountered. This necessitated the manufacture of extra lengths of cylinders. A large amount of work in the preparation of material for this bridge has been done in the Mount Workshops, such as cutting and drilling cleat angles, bracing, transome and cover plates, stiffener-angles, &c. Timber has been laid on which to erect a trial span, and a travelling gantry has been placed in position. Good progress has been made with the formation of the bank between the bridge abutment and Matapihi, and the stone protection work is practically complete to the bridge pier.

Mount-Matata.

This length of line between the Mount and Matata embraces what are known as the Mount Branch, Te Puke, Paengaroa, Pongakawa, Otamarakau, and Matata Sections, over which an efficient passenger-and-goods service has been maintained throughout the year. In the early part of the year the service was really better than the amount of traffic warranted, which led to its curtailment. The new service has proved sufficient and economical. The whole length has been properly maintained. An extension of the Mount Workshops yard has been made, and platelaying in the yard is in hand. A new mill and car-shop are almost complete, and several buildings have been erected to house additional machinery. The wharf has been strengthened, and a new water-service to supply the workshops and locomotives has been installed.

The output from the Te Puke Quarry was about 10,000 cubic yards of broken metal, about one-half of which was sold to local bodies for road-metalling purposes.

Subsidences of banks caused some trouble, but all have been brought up to standard level.

Rangitaiki Section.—Permanent rails have been laid over the whole section, although the formation is not finally completed. Five miles of fencing were erected during the year. One permanent reinforced bridge is in hand, and temporary structures over the Tarawera and Rangitaiki Rivers for traffic have been built. The latter has been decked, and now also carries road traffic. This section was opened for goods traffic in September last.

Awakeri Section.—Permanent-way has been laid over the full length, also in the siding at Awakeri Station. This section was opened for goods traffic in September, 1920.

The policy on this line has been to extend it as rapidly as funds permit, from the deep waterfront at Mount Maunganui into the fertile plains of the Bay of Plenty district. While it is recognized as very desirable that the Tauranga Section of railway should be connected with the main North Island systems via Waihi, the need for concentration requires that one or other of these desirable works should halt. The construction programme is laid out with this in view, and to dissipate energy in an effort to simultaneously effect a connection would involve a great loss of money. When the line reaches Taneatua the programme will again be reviewed.

Taneatua Section.—Earthwork has been completed on the first 3 miles, and is in hand for another $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Service road-bridges have been built and others repaired, and the service road itself extended over the summit cutting.

Land-plan survey has been made from 83 miles to 91 miles 20 chains. Permanent pegging of several deviations between 94 miles 40 chains and 97 miles 40 chains completed; total length, 1 mile 60 chains. The line is now permanently pegged to 97 miles 40 chains. Trial lines have been run from 98 miles to 99 miles 77 chains via upper crossing over Whakatane River. A further trial line through Waimana Gorge has been pegged and levelled from 100 miles 16 chains to 104 miles 66 chains. This work is still in hand.

Whakatane Branch Railway.—Trial survey was completed to 7 miles 50 chains, while a length of 4 miles 10 chains was permanently pegged.