

Waikokopu Branch Railway.

Nuhaka Section (0 m. to 17 m. 12 ch.; actual length, 18 miles 65 chains).—This section includes a short piece, 1 mile 53 chains long, between the Wairoa station-yard and the 0 m. on the original starting-point of the Nuhaka Section. The formation of this portion is practically complete. The remainder of the formation on this section, with the exception of the large cutting at 0 m. 40 ch., is complete. The contractors in this large cutting have not made satisfactory progress, but a steam-shovel was started in the other end, and better progress is now being maintained. In the lighter formation an average of seventy scoop teams was employed, and progress was good.

Protection work has been carried out at Whakahi Lake, and fencing is in hand.

Waikokopu Section (17 m. 12 ch. onwards).—Formation is in hand up to 22 m. 40 ch. In the earlier portion of the year labour was scarce, but by the end of March cuttings were fully manned, and steady progress has been made.

Gisborne-Napier (South End).

Eskdale Section (0 m. to 10 m. 51 ch.; length, 10 miles 51 chains).—The whole of the formation on this section, with the exception of the river-gaps at 0 m. 24 ch. and 0 m. 55 ch., has been completed, and is ready for trimming and platelaying. The portion between 0 m. 49 ch. and 1 m. 69 ch. was carried out by the Napier Harbour Board under contract. One platelayer's cottage in concrete blocks at Eskdale station-yard is completed, and two others, together with a Stationmaster's house are in hand.

Tutira Section (10 m. 51 ch. onwards).—Formation and culverting is complete from 10 m. 51 ch. to 12 m. 13 ch., and is well in hand to 14 m. 29 ch. A Thew steam-shovel is in use on this section, being at present engaged at 14 m. 5 ch. Road-diversions are complete at 11 m. and 11 m. 30 ch. A 14 ft. service road has been constructed from 13 m. 45 ch. to 17 m., and metalled from 13 m. 45 ch. to 17 m. A start is being made with the bridge at 11 m. 45 ch., reinforcing-steel for the piles being now to hand. Three married quarters and thirty-one single huts for workmen have been built. Two cookhouses, one canteen, and one substore have been erected, and construction headquarters shifted to Eskdale.

STRATFORD MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

(West End.)

Tahora Section (42 m. 26 ch. to 47 m. 40 ch.; length, 5 miles 14 chains).—Formation and platelaying are now practically complete, but no ballast has been procurable during the period. Previously all ballast was secured from the Railway Department's ballast-pit at Mount Egmont, but, as they have not been able to supply for some time, and as future supplies are indefinite, it has been decided to open up a shell-rock pit at Te Wera and crush for ballast. The station buildings are well in hand, all material being on the ground and several of the buildings completed.

Raekohura Section (47 m. 40 ch. onwards).—Work on this section has been mainly confined to the completion of works actually in hand and to service-road formation. Permanent rails were laid to 47 m. 59 ch., and a stacking-ground for plant and construction-yard established at the rail-head, to which a great proportion of material and plant has been shifted. Engine-sheds, washout-tanks, &c., were also established here. Work was stopped on the railway formation in February, and the other works are being gradually cleaned up and closed down.

(East End.)

Matiere Section (0 m. to 10 m. 21 ch.; length, 10 miles 21 chains).—Good progress has been made on this section, and the earthworks are complete with the exception of approach banks to bridges. The Okahu Tunnel, 2 m. 22 ch. to 3 m. 17.5 ch., and tunnels at 6 m. 12 ch. (length, 4 chains) and at 7 m. 55 ch. (length, 7 miles 69 chains) have been completed. The fabrication of the steel for bridge at 0 m. 7 ch. has been almost completed, and a start has been made with the erection, which it is anticipated should be completed before the end of the year. The reinforced piles for the Ohura River bridges have been made and carted to the site, and a start has been made with the erection. Two overbridges have been built and two subways are in hand. Additional sidings have been laid in the Okahukura station-yard and locomotive and plant for handling material installed. Formation is being trimmed in readiness for platelaying, and 22,000 sleepers are to hand and are being adzed. Fifty-four workmen's huts have been erected for the accommodation of workmen.

Ohura Section (10 m. 21 ch. to 19 m. 70 ch.; length, 9 miles 49 chains).—Formation is partially completed to 12 m. 25 ch., but no new formation has been commenced.

OPUNAKE BRANCH RAILWAY.

Kapuni Section (0 m. 6 ch. to 7 m.; length, 6 miles 74 chains).—Work on this section has been confined to the completion of the Waingongoro Bridge and the prosecution of the Kapuni River Bridge. The early delivery of rails and sleepers is expected, and a start will then be made with the platelaying.

Auroa Section (7 m. to 12 m.).—At the start of the period the construction of culverts was being vigorously prosecuted, but owing to the shortage of cement this work was brought to a standstill and largely restricted the prosecution of earthwork, which temporarily stopped in March. In June the section was again manned as relief work, and both culverts and earthwork were vigorously pushed on. Formation is now well in hand up to 11 m. 68 ch.

Pihama Section (12 m. to 16 m. 42 ch.; length, 4 miles 42 chains).—A start was made with unemployed labour on this section in the latter part of July, and camps were provided for twenty men.