Opunake Branch.

Kapuni Section.—The formation, with the exception of a little widening and easing batters, is fully ready for platelaying. This latter work has been commenced, and 34 chains of rails laid. Platelaying will now proceed uninterruptedly except for the time required for launching girders on Mangatoki and Kapuni bridges. A steam-shovel has been employed stripping ballast-pit at Kaupokonui River, and 18,000 yards of stripping removed. A goods-shed has been erected at Kapuni Station.

Auroa Section.—Work has been confined primarily to fencing (which is complete except for flood-gates), culverting, and earthwork, including excavation of Auroa station-yard, which is nearing completion.

Pihama Section.—About a mile of formation has been finished, the remaining culverting is in hand, and clearing, including logging and stumping, has been finished to 14 miles 60 chains.

A concrete-block platelayer's cottage has been erected in Pihama station-yard at 16 miles 40 chains.

Opunake Section.—This section has only just been commenced, the work done being of the usual preliminary character—viz., erecting camps, clearing, carting shingle, draining, besides a little formation.

Manaia Section.—The only work done on this branch was completion of cutting at 3 miles, the erection of gates at private crossings, and general maintenance.

Midland.

Glenhope–Murchison.

Kawatiri Section.—Tunnel at 62 miles 43 chains. A commencement was made in November with one shift, and 246 ft. of bottom heading has been driven. The material encountered is hard granite, broken with seams of quartz, which has made both drilling and shooting difficult.

The piers for Hope River Bridge have been completed, and the four girders have been erected for field riveting.

The temporary bridge was seriously damaged by flood in March last, but it has been restored to the level of concrete piers and is ready for the launching of girders.

Otira–Bealey.

This section extends from Arthur's Pass Station, the present railway terminus on the Canterbury side of the pass, to Otira Station, the present railway terminus on the Westland side. The section is only 8 miles 54 chains long, but includes the Arthur's Pass or Otira Tunnel, of 5 miles 25 chains in length, and nearly the whole length of the section is on a grade of 1 in 33, the summit of the line being 1,177 ft. above the Otira Station and 2,436 ft. above sea-level.

The lining of the tunnel was completed in October, and the floor has now been cleaned up and the permanent 100 lb. track laid from 51 miles 54 chains to 58 miles 40 chains, with the exception of about 10 chains across the Rolleston Bridge. The dismantling of buildings and plant required in the tunnelling operations has commenced, and portions of the plant transferred for use on other works.

A crushing plant, with two crushers and a steam-navvy, was installed at Arthur's Pass, and with this and the aid of a small crusher at Otira the line has been ballasted and lifted with the first lift from 51 miles 54 chains to 58 miles 12 chains.

Arthur's Pass Station-yard.—The formation was completed, and a start made with the concrete kerbing for the platform and excavation for the subway. A permanent water-supply for railway and village requirements has been located.

Bealey Bridge.—This bridge is immediately at the Canterbury portal of the tunnel. It is a skewed structure, and includes vertical and horizontal curves in the track. The permanent superstructure, comprising about 230 tons of structural steel, has been delivered at site, and six of the girders riveted up ready to be placed on the piers.

Electrical Equipment.—The steam-power station located at Otira has been erected in reinforced concrete, and the associated workshops, electric-locomotive sheds, and coal-bunkers are nearing completion. Overhead electric cranes are being installed in the main engine-room, workshop, and over the coal-bunkers.