

On the Orikaka Section formation has proceeded satisfactorily, and the whole section, $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, is now fully manned, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles being completed. Some of the cuttings on this section are exceptionally heavy, as the country is precipitous. A suspension bridge across the Buller River, 540 ft. long, is being erected at the 19-mile peg to facilitate access to the men camped there.

South Island Main Trunk Railway.—At the north end of this railway formation work has progressed satisfactorily on the Clarence Section, 20 miles in length. Foundations have been completed for bridges over Keckerangu, Deadman's, Woodbank, and Washdyke Streams, and the permanent bridges will be completed as soon as the girders and steel come to hand.

At the south end formation is in hand on the Conway and Oaro Sections. The Conway Section is being worked by heavy machinery, six steam-shovels, two drag-lines, and eight locomotives being utilized. A very heavy cutting, 46 chains long, is in hand. This is to take the place of a tunnel which was originally proposed.

At Parnassus an up-to-date workshop and plant-depot has been established; sixty-one married men's quarters and 134 single men's huts and two staff cottages have been built. At Wharanui an office, store, smithy, carpenters' shop, garage, fitting-shop, recreation-hall have been erected, and at Camp No. 8 twenty-nine single men's huts and twelve married men's cottages.

RAILWAYS.

ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The net expenditure out of the Public Works Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1931, amounted to £526,514 11s. 3d., and was charged to capital. This sum represents the provision of new rolling-stock, grade-easements between Crichton and Lovell's Flat, additional dwellings, improvements and extensions to operating buildings and plant, workshop equipment, rearrangement of station-yards, and other facilities.

RAILWAYS IMPROVEMENT AUTHORIZATION ACT, 1914.

The expenditure under the Railways Improvement Authorization Act 1914 Account amounted to £1,018,615, including £45,928 proportion of cost of raising loan. The works carried out during the year included the completion of new station and yard at Auckland, new goods-shed at Wellington and reclamation for station-yard, Papatoetoe-Papakura duplication, reconstruction and strengthening of bridges, completion of Ravensbourne-Burke's Deviation, telegraph and telephone lines, safety appliances, and train-control; and in addition to these works, which were executed under the control of the staff of the Railway Department, the Public Works Department has proceeded with the Wellington-Tawa Flat Deviation described above.

RIVER-IMPROVEMENTS AND LAND-PROTECTION WORKS.

Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers.—The work carried out during the year comprised the raising of the stop-bank on both banks of the Upper Waihou River for a distance of 4 miles. Some of the drains leading into the Ohinemuri River have been deepened. The Tirohia-Rotokohu drain has been cleaned out for a total length of $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and Te Tawa drain for 1 mile.

Taieri River.—The contour channel has been improved over a distance of 4 miles, and the whole work to be carried out by my Department on the Taieri Plain is complete and has been handed over to the Taieri River Trust for future maintenance.

HARBOURS.

In order to improve the entrance at Westport, an extension of the training-wall was put in hand during the year, and dredging was steadily proceeded with. The funds for this work are provided out of the general revenue for the harbour, which in itself is largely dependent on the output of coal. Unfortunately, towards the end of the period this coal-output dropped very considerably, and in the interests