

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF

Auckland to Newcastle.

This section of the Waikato line has been entirely reconstructed during the year. Two wires have been run as far as Mercer on the new poles, in order to give increased accommodation when telegraph communication is open with the Thames. Totara posts have been used throughout in the reconstruction of this section; in fact, from Auckland to Cambridge, the poles are all totara. The cost of the reconstruction to Newcastle, including the additional wire from Auckland to Mercer, and the twelve miles of new line to Cambridge, has been £3688 13s. 11d., or equal to £44 19s. 8d. per mile. Further details will be found in Table A.

LINES IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Mercer to the Thames.

This line has been completed from Mercer to Pukorokoro, and from the station at Grahamstown to Piako. Should no unforeseen difficulties occur, communication between Auckland and Grahamstown will in all probability be completed by the middle of July.*

Taupo Line.

This line extends from Napier to Tapuaeharuru, a distance of ninety miles, and is all but completed. The great difficulties in procuring poles, and in conveying the wire and insulators to the line of route, have considerably retarded the progress of the work. There is, however, every reason to believe that Wellington will be in telegraphic communication with Tapuaeharuru by the first week in July, as at the time of closing this report the construction of the line was completed to within two miles of Tapuaeharuru. The construction of this line is under the supervision of Mr Bold.

Tapuaeharuru to Tauranga, via Maketu.

The contract for supplying and delivering poles on this line has been let, and is being rapidly proceeded with. All the material for the wiring has been landed at Tauranga and Maketu. Eight miles, commencing at Tauranga, have been erected, and it is expected that the line will be finished by the end of July. It is intended to open a station at Tauranga, and a lineman's station half-way between Tauranga and Tapuaeharuru. The posts are all to be of totara. The works have been placed under the charge of Mr Walter Blake. The estimated length of the line is between 100 and 110 miles.

Alexandra (Otago) to Naseby.

At the request of the Provincial Government of Otago, preliminary operations have been commenced on this line. The survey was completed some time since, and the contract for the supply and delivery of poles (all heart of totara) has been let to Mr G. Proudfoot. The line, after leaving Alexandra, will pass by the township of Blacks, cross the Manuherikia at Beck's, run through the township of Hill's Creek, and thence along the main road to Naseby. Owing to the great distance whence poles had to be obtained, and as carting them would have to be done during the most inclement season, it was thought advisable to make the contract time as long as possible, and thus to lessen the cost. Should the material ordered from England arrive in time, however, it may be hoped that Dunedin will be in telegraphic communication with Naseby by the end of October at latest.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS.

Bluff to Balclutha.

Bluff Harbor to Invercargill (twenty miles). The insertion of new poles, all of totara, will shortly be commenced, a contract for the supply and delivery of such poles along the line having been let to Messrs. Driver, M'Lean and Co., lessees of the Southland Railway. It was thought advisable not to call for tenders for this work, as whoever might have obtained the contract would have been compelled to use the railway for delivering the poles.

From Invercargill to Balclutha, the poles have been lowered, new ones put in where necessary, and the route altered in some places. This section will probably not require new poles for two or three years, but none of the poles recently lowered can be expected to last for more than three years from the present time.

A station will shortly be opened at the Mataura, about half-way between Invercargill and Balclutha, which, apart from the accommodation it will afford to the public, will be most valuable in cases of interruption on the line.

Balclutha to Waitaki.

The Balclutha to Waikouaiti portion of this section has been entirely renewed with totara poles, and a third wire has been run from Dunedin to Tokomairiro, in order to give Dunedin direct circuit with the gold fields line. Important alterations have been made in the route, by which the stability of the line has been greatly improved, and its length considerably reduced, thus materially lessening the cost of future maintenance. From Waikouaiti to the River Waitaki, the line is now being thoroughly examined and repaired, and this work will probably be completed in a few months.

Waitaki to Christchurch.

Between the Waitaki and Rakaia Rivers, the line has been thoroughly overhauled, and is now in very fair condition. From the Rakaia to Christchurch, new poles of totara have been inserted, and this portion of the line may be considered nearly equal to new. A post and telegraph station will shortly be opened at Waimate, between the Waitaki and Timaru; tenders for the erection of buildings having been advertised for.

*Communication was completed on the 27th of July.