

At both ends of the tunnel the ground is a very treacherous clay, which before gave much trouble to the Provincial Government by slipping into the cutting. Piling has been resorted to, to prevent this, a portion of which has been done, and has been effective.

The reclamation of land for the station ground has made good progress, Fort Britomart being demolished for the purpose.

Only a small portion of the Onehunga branch has to be done, the greater part of the earthwork having been made by the Provincial Government; this awaits the completion of the work between Auckland and Newmarket.

From Newmarket to Mercer the working plans have been made, and the contract let to Messrs. John Brogden and Sons. The work is under the charge of Mr. James Stewart, A.I.C.E.

Extension of Auckland and Mercer Railway.

A reconnaissance survey has been made by Mr. Stewart, a copy of whose report is attached.*

* See Enclosure
No. 1.

Napier and Ruataniwha Railway.

The section of this line from the Port of Napier to Paki Paki has been surveyed, working plans made, and the contract let to Messrs. John Brogden and Sons.

A few men have been employed on the construction of the work between the port and town, but only about £400 has been spent. This was undertaken for the relief of the men who were unemployed, and whom it was desirable to keep ready for the real beginning of work.

Manawatu to Wanganui.

Trial surveys from Manawatu Gorge to the Wanganui River have been made. The plans are now in hand.

A delay occurred, due to objections on the part of the Natives to surveys being made through their land, but the objections have been removed, and the survey finished.

New surveys, which are now being made, are required over part of this line, as the hill sides have shown a dangerous tendency to slip, and this part of the country will have to be abandoned.

A length of about seven miles, beginning at the Palmerston and Manawatu Road, has been felled and cleared.

Wanganui to Waitotara.

The contract surveys have been completed and the plans are now in hand.

Waitara to New Plymouth.

The preliminary surveys are complete, and part of the working surveys. Mr. Blackett visited the district lately to decide between two lines which had been surveyed—the coast and the inland lines. In the meantime the inland line is being set out for contract.

The surveys between Waingongoro and Whenuakarua, which were made last year, have been lockspitted again, so as to preserve the work formerly done.

Wellington to Masterton.

Fifteen miles of the contract survey are complete, and the contract for eight miles let to Messrs. John Brogden and Sons. The data for the other seven miles have been given to Messrs. Brogden and Sons; their tender is expected in a few days.

The line across the Rimutaka is being surveyed for contract, but as the country is very difficult, it will take some time to complete.

Mr. Rochfort is in charge of the surveys, under the supervision of Mr. H. P. Higginson, M.I.C.E.

Brunner Coal Mine Railway.

The contract surveys are nearly ready.

Canterbury Railways.

On 1st May last the line from Addington to Kaiapoi, about twelve miles, was opened for public traffic. From Kaiapoi to Rangiora, the forming is done and rail-laying going on. From Rangiora to Kowai the contract surveys are ready and plans are in hand.

The contract surveys for the four branch railways enumerated below are complete or nearly so:—
Rangiora to Oxford, Rolleston to Southbridge, Kaiapoi to Eyreton, and Rolleston to Malvern.

Selwyn to Rakaia.

The line is ready for the rails.

Rakaia to Ashburton.

Contract survey nearly ready.

Timaru and Washdyke.

The works here were begun in October, and about five-eighths of the grading and forming have been completed.

Waitaki to Moeraki.

New trial lines have been run, and the contract survey is nearly complete, on an amended line.

Waireka Branch.

Surveys of this branch have been made, and the plans are in hand.

Waitaki Bridge.

Some of the iron girders have arrived, and have been conveyed to the site of the Bridge. The rest are shortly expected.