

A survey is in progress for the extension of the Upper Ashburton Branch across the river to a convenient point for a station opposite the Mount Somers Township.

The station-buildings on the Fairlie Creek Branch in progress at the date of last year's report were duly completed a month thereafter.

The Oxford-Malvern line, although under a separate appropriation, is really part of the Hurunui-Bluff system; it should therefore be noticed here. The alterations to the Waimakariri Bridge, referred to in the last annual report, having been completed, the line was opened on the 7th August, 1884.

*Branch Railways: Works on Open Lines.*—These also have been unimportant. The only ones worth mentioning are: Fencing Albury Branch; additions to sidings at Lyttelton, Lincoln, Ladbrookes, and White Cliffs; platform and shelter-sheds at Rabbit Island, Kaituna, Tengawai, and Coal Creek; engine-driver's house at White Cliffs; and additions to buildings at Birdling's and Pleasant Point.

*Land Plans.*—With the exception of about 30 miles, which are also in hand, complete land plans have now been prepared of all the railways in Canterbury.

#### WAITAKI-BLUFF RAILWAY AND BRANCHES.

*Main-line: Works on Open Line.*—The most important construction work in progress on the main line during the year is the Dunedin Station. With the exception of the passenger-station, the superstructure of which has not been gone on with, the various buildings in course of erection at the date of last annual report are finished, and others have been removed to positions in the new station-yard.

The reclamation, platelaying, and buildings were sufficiently far advanced to admit of the whole traffic being turned into the new station on the 1st November; and since then the greater portion of the works necessary for present requirements have been finished.

The only large works not completed are the passenger-station and the over-bridge. It was decided to remove the old station to the arrival-platform, and make it serve for some time; consequently nothing has been done to the new station beyond completing the foundations, which were under contract. The abutments and piers of the over-bridge were finished in December. Nothing has yet been done towards the erection of the superstructure, but the iron for it is now arriving.

The other more important construction-works carried out or in progress on the open portion of the main line during the year are: Fencing at Abbotsford; stream diversion at Owhiro; connection with wharf and additions to engine-shed at Oamaru; additions to water-service at Palmerston and Woodlands; stationmasters' houses at Gore and Edendale; goods-shed at Milburn; loading-bank at Clinton; cattle-yards at Herbert; and general additions and improvements at Teschmaker's, Waihero, Henley, Arthurton, Pukerau, Otikarama, Waikaka, Mataura, and Invercargill.

*Branch Railways: Works on Open Lines.*—The works under this head for the year have been few and unimportant. The following are the only ones worth enumerating: Fencing at Mount Stuart; relaying Duntroon and Ngapara lines with heavier rails; siding at Queen's Flat; shelter-shed at Waiareka Junction; additional accommodation at Lawrence; water-supply and loading-bank at Waipahi; and removal of engine-shed from Kelso to Heriot.

*Branch-line Extensions.*—The contract for the second tunnel on the Ngapara-Livingston Branch, which was entered into at the end of last year, has just been completed in a satisfactory manner, and within the contract time. A portion of the formation was thrown open for piecework last winter, but comparatively few men availed themselves of the work, the total expenditure being under £700. It is now proposed to call for tenders for the completion of the works in one contract.

A contract for the permanent-way and stations on the Palmerston-Waihero Branch was entered into in November, and the works are now well advanced. They are expected to be finished within contract time, the 29th August.

A contract was entered into in November for the completion of the formation and bridges, together with the platelaying and stations, on the Catlin's River Branch. The works, which are going on satisfactorily, will probably be finished in August. This completes the branch to the Port Molyneux Road.

The formation of the first 3 miles of the Seaward Bush Railway was completed early in the year, and the second formation-section—2½ miles farther—is expected to be finished next month.

The formation on the first 7 miles of the Riversdale-Switzer's Branch, a contract for which had been entered into in January, 1883, was satisfactorily completed in September, 1884.

*Land Plans.*—Out of a total of about 400 miles on the Waitaki-Bluff Railway, 275 miles of land plans are completed, and 100 miles well advanced.

#### OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The formation of the Wingatui section, 7¾ miles, which has been in operation since 1879, was finished in August last, and a contract is now advertised for the platelaying and stations.

The piecework in progress on the Hindon section at the end of last year has been discontinued, and a contract let for the completion of the principal cuttings. A contract has also been let for the five small tunnels that occur on this section. With the exception of finishing some of the smaller cuttings, and the general trimming-up of the earthworks, these works comprise all that is now required to complete the formation on the Hindon section.

One of the most important works on the Otago Central Railway is the bridging of Mullocky Gully, which is crossed at a level of 145ft. above the bed of the creek. After careful consideration it was decided to take the railway across the valley on an iron viaduct of eight spans—three of 106ft. and five of 66ft., called the Wingatui viaduct. The girders which are on the lattice principle, are supported by stone abutments, two concrete piers, and five braced malleable-iron piers. Tenders were called for the manufacture and erection of the ironwork in the colony, the unwrought materials only being imported. After fair competition a contract has been let on