

work is only just sufficient to cover the liabilities already incurred on account of it, it is therefore proposed to allocate an additional sum of £15,571 thereto out of the released sinking funds. This will bring the total available funds for the line up to £35,000, and any further amount that may be required in order to complete it to the point indicated can be allocated when available.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

The only work that has been in hand at the northern end of this line for some time past is the Poro-o-tarao Tunnel, and this has been completed during the year. At the southern end of the line a contract for the Mangaonoho section (nearly 4 miles in length, and including platelaying), has been let, and a good start made with the work; and a further length of about 2 miles between the end of that section and the Makohine has been got ready for construction, to meet the demands of the labour market, and is now in course of formation by the "Unemployed."

The balance at the credit of the North Island Main Trunk Railway Account on the 31st March last was £356,107. Of the £1,000,000 loan specially raised for this work, £394,942 has been spent on the construction of the railway; £48,137 on the construction of roads to give access thereto; £136,454 on the purchase of Native lands within the railway-area; £12,572 on departmental services; while the charges and expenses of raising the loan amounted to £51,788: thus leaving an available balance on the 31st March last of £356,107, as already stated. Of this amount, £83,831 has been specially allocated for the purchase of Native lands, that being the balance unexpended on the 31st March last of the total allocation made for that purpose under "The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Act, 1886," and the Amendment Act of 1889. The net amount available for the construction of the railway, and for roads to give access thereto, is £267,076, the balance of £5,200 being allocated to departmental expenses. We ask this year for an appropriation of £130,000 for railway construction-works, £50,000 for roads to give access to the railway, and £3,000 for further surveys. Only £113,000 of the total amount, however, is proposed for actual expenditure within the year; and, on account of this, liabilities already exist to the amount of £44,903.

At the north end of the line there is a section between the portion already completed and the Poro-o-tarao Tunnel, on which nothing has at present been done. This section, which is 11 miles 9 chains in length, it is proposed to put in hand as soon as my honourable colleague the Native Minister is in a position to state that the acquisition of land in the locality has progressed sufficiently to admit of the work being gone on with without detriment to the land-purchase transactions of his department. A vote for £65,000 has been placed on the Estimates for this section accordingly. With the view of saving time it is also proposed to let a contract for the Makohine Viaduct at the southern end of the line, as that work will take a considerable time to construct, and if not put in hand soon would retard the prosecution of the works when the Native land difficulty is removed. The vote proposed provides for this, and for the completion of the Makohine section now in hand by the "unemployed." The Native lands are being acquired as fast as possible, and, as soon as circumstances permit, the Government will call for tenders for the works for which the votes have been taken.

WOODVILLE-PALMERSTON.

This important line, the last link in the chain of communication to connect Napier with Taranaki, Wanganui, and Wellington, was opened for public traffic, with some little local demonstration, on the 9th March last.

Some heavy slips took place in the Manawatu Gorge during the winter and spring of 1890, which considerably retarded the progress of the works, and delayed the opening beyond the date expected; but it is satisfactory to note that no slips of any considerable magnitude have occurred since the line has been open for traffic.