

WESTPORT-NGAKAWAU RAILWAY.

Extension to Mokihinui (7 miles 8 chains).—This has been divided into nine small sections, on seven of which the formation and culverts are now in hand. Three of these are let on the co-operative principle to trustees on behalf of 107 workmen, who are making satisfactory progress with the works on all the sections. It is intended shortly to let the remaining two sections, and the plans for the Ngakawau Bridge have also been prepared, ready for advertising.

Surveys.—The survey for land-plans of the extension is in progress; some three miles has been completed.

GREYMOUTH-BRUNNERTON RAILWAY.

Surveys.—From 3 miles 62 chains to 6 miles 12 chains the land-plan survey is finished. No other work has been done on this line by the department.

GREYMOUTH-HOKITIKA RAILWAY.

Kapitea Section (4 miles 43 chains).—A contract was entered into in December for the formation of this section between Kapitea and Teremakau. The cuttings are well in hand, and half of the felling and clearing has been done.

Arahura Bridge Extension and Roadway.—A quantity of timber for the addition of four 11ft. spans to the north end of the bridge, and the planking of the whole length of the bridge so that it may be available for road traffic, is on the ground. As the tender was only accepted on the 2nd ultimo, there has not been time to make more than a start at the work.

Surveys.—The field-work for the land-plans from 10 miles to north of the Teremakau Bridge is nearly finished.

CATLIN'S RIVER RAILWAY.

Glenomaru Section (6 miles 18 chains).—Although there has been some delay in carrying on the works on this section, which will complete the railway to McDonald's Saddle, the contractor is now pushing on the works vigorously. It is expected that the contract will be finished not more than a month or six weeks after the due date—25th May, 1891.

Catlin's Section (40 chains).—A tunnel, 12½ chains in length, through McDonald's Saddle is included in this contract, which was let in December last. Pending a decision on a proposed deviation, affecting the last 10 chains of the section, the contractor has only been able to open out the work from one end, consequently the progress made is slight.

Surveys.—With the view of altering the route of the railway so as to make it more conveniently available for a larger number of the settlers in the district, and also provide a better means of access to the Crown lands now being rapidly taken up for settlement, a survey has been made of a deviation from 13 miles 40 chains to 21 miles 40 chains, near the head of Catlin's Lake. The results of the survey are now under consideration.

EDENDALE-TOITOIS RAILWAY.

Wyndham-Glenham Section.—The Mainai station-buildings contract was finished, and the section from Wyndham to Glenham handed over to the Railway Commissioners ready for opening in May.

OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

Hindon to Middelmarsh.—The Barewood bridges iron piers and superstructure contract was completed by Messrs. J. and A. Anderson, of Christchurch, in a most satisfactory manner, in November. The masonry and superstructure of the Middelmarsh bridges were finished in August. The platelaying has been done to Middelmarsh Station, at 40 miles, and for 2 miles beyond, to the ballast reserve. At Middelmarsh the following station-buildings are erected, viz.: combined railway, post, and telegraph station; first-class Stationmaster's house; three cottages for men; goods-shed, 60ft. by 30ft.; engine-shed; coal-store. Sheep- and cattle-yards and a gravitation water-supply have also been provided. Everything will be ready for opening to Middelmarsh next month.

Middelmarsh-Ida Valley.—Working-drawings and estimates are prepared for the extension of the railway from Middelmarsh to the Ida Valley, opposite Blackstone Hill, 98¼ miles from Wingatui Junction, and 106¾ miles from Dunedin. This portion has been divided into the following sections, viz.: Strath Taieri, 16 miles 14 chains in length, estimated to cost £80,000; Kyeburn, 16 miles 66 chains, £115,000; and Maniototo, 25 miles 18½ chains, £105,000: the total length of the sections being 58 miles 18½ chains, estimated to cost, exclusive of rolling-stock, £300,000, or an average of £5,152 per mile.

SURVEYS, OTAGO DISTRICT.

Land-plan Surveys.—The contract for the land-plan survey of the Dunedin-Port Chalmers Railway was finished in December, and the plans are now being examined in the Survey and Land Transfer Offices. Some progress has been made with the survey for land-plans of the Otago Central Railway, and in a few months the plans will be ready for the portion of the railway constructed—viz., to 42 miles. Several small surveys for land-plans on various lines were executed during the year.

Orepuki to Waiau River.—A reconnaissance survey for the extension of the railway from the present terminus of the Riverton branch at Orepuki for 12½ miles to the Waiau River was made, and a site suitable for either a railway- or road-bridge across the river selected about 5 miles from its mouth.

SLEEPERS.

Out of 10,000 totara sleepers contracted to be delivered at Putaruru for the Auckland-Rotorua Railway 5,000 have been delivered. Tenders were invited for 7,000 sleepers for the Makarau section of the Helensville Northwards Railway, but none were received, and arrangements have been entered into for supplies under agreements for small numbers.