

is well advanced. The girders of the first two 80 ft. spans are in place; those for the first span were built in position on a low scaffold. The girders for the second span were built on the top of the first-span girders, and then run out into position. The girders for the third span are now nearly ready to be run out into position. The piers are being erected without scaffolding; and the high girders are being built on the top of those already erected, and run out into position by means of two travellers running on two wire ropes and provided with suitable tackle.

The steelwork for the Toitoi Bridge at 37 m. 54 ch. was manufactured by contract. Most of the material is now at the site.

Paengaroa Section (40 m. 40 ch. to 50 m. 70 ch.; length, 10 miles 30 chains).—The earthworks on this section are now well advanced. The large bank over the Taihape Creek is not yet completed. The only tunnel on this section is at Taihape; the heading was finished in September last, and the enlarging and lining is in progress. The excavation for the Taihape Station yard is nearly complete.

Turangarere Section (50 m. 70 ch. to 61 m. 40 ch.; length, 10 miles 50 chains).—The service roads have been formed, and a number of pipes and culverts put in, as many as could be during the short carting season. Frost also interferes with doing concrete-work on this section. Most of the cuttings have been put in hand, and considerable progress has been made. A contract for the manufacture of the steelwork for the first bridge over the Hautapu has been completed, and the material delivered.

STRATFORD—WHANGAMOMONA.

Toko Section (0 m. to 6 m. 26 ch.; length, 6 miles 26 chains).—This section was completed during the year, and opened for traffic on the 9th August last.

Ururu Section (6 m. 26 ch. to 11 m. 16 ch.; length, 4 miles 70 chains).—All the bush has been felled and cleared. The formation is nearly completed up to 10 m., and the formation of the Gordon Road Station is well advanced. Some very troublesome work had to be done in cutting numerous creek-diversions in ground full of timber. The fencing was carried out well in advance of the formation.

A contract for platelayers' cottages has been let, and the work is now in progress.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Tadmor Section (30 m. 58 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch.; length, 10 miles 27 chains).—The culverts have been finished, and the formation is for the most part complete. A contract was let for the erection of a road and railway bridge over the Motueka River in July last, and good progress has been made, the piles are all driven for the piers, and the construction of the piers is well advanced.

Reefton-Inangahua Section.—The formation-works were put in hand in January last, and are now in progress over about two miles and a half. A contract has been let for the construction of a bridge over the Inangahua River at Reefton, and the preparations to begin the erection are being made. A contract was also let for the construction of a bridge over the Inangahua River at the Landing; no work has yet been done.

Oira Gorge.—No construction-works were done on this section of the Midland Railway during the year.

Mount Torlesse Section (6 m. to 18 m.; length, 12 miles).—All the earthworks up to Staircase Gully, at 9 miles 62 chains, have been finished; and the six tunnels between Patterson's Creek and Staircase have been finished. There were six tunnels between these points, of a total length of 88½ chains. Considerable progress has been made with the first tunnel beyond Staircase, and a start has been made with two more. Messrs. Scott Bros.' contract for the erection of the steel superstructure of Patterson's Creek Viaduct was finished during the year. The timber piers built by the Midland Company were strengthened, and a protective wall of concrete blocks was built along the left bank of the creek to prevent the erosion of the base of the slope on which the last piers of the viaduct are built. A small bridge of steel-plate girders on concrete piers was built at 7 m. Platelaying has been finished up to 7 m. 40 ch., and ballasting is being done. A wire-rope way has been erected at 10 m. to lift shingle from the bed of the Waimakariri, and another over Broken River to transport material. Tenders were called for the erection of the Staircase Viaduct, but declined as being too high.

PICTON—WAIKARI.

North End.

Awatere Section (28 m. to 33 m. 60 ch.; length, 5 miles 30 chains).—No earthworks were done on this section, the permanent-way was maintained as required, the Seddon Station yard and buildings were finished, an overbridge built at the south end of Seddon Station yard, and some improvement was made in the cattle-yard at Dumgree Station. A wind-screen was built on the up-stream side of the Awatere Bridge. The line was opened for traffic to Seddon on the 10th October last.

South End.

Omihi Section (0 m. to 15 m.; length, 15 miles).—The formation has been completed during the year, also the fencing and permanent-way. The Omihi and Scargill Station yards were finished, and the section was opened for traffic on the 16th December last. A contract for the erection of additional buildings is in progress.

Waikari Section (15 m. to 23 m. 54.42 ch.; length, 8 miles 54.42 chains).—The earthworks are well advanced up to the Hurunui River, the culverts are nearly finished, and four miles of fencing have been done. The piers for the Hurunui River Bridge are in course of construction, and the manufacture of the steelwork for the superstructure is in progress under contract by Messrs. Scott Bros.