

A survey is now being made to ascertain the practicability, and if practicable the probable cost, of constructing the railway up to the Blackball Township. On the completion of this survey a decision will be come to as to proceeding with the earthworks on the line.

Very little expenditure came to charge last year—£973 only—as it took the contractor several months to arrange for the supply of the necessary timber and materials. For the current year a vote of £10,000 is proposed.

#### COAL CREEK.

The work of finishing this railway, which was begun by the Greymouth-Point Elizabeth Coal Company, has proceeded throughout the year, and is now approaching completion.

The expenditure during last year amounted to £6,775.

#### GREYMOUTH-HOKITIKA : EXTENSION TO ROSS.

The survey of this railway, which was in progress when my last Statement was made, has since been completed, and construction operations continued throughout the year. The contract for the combined road and railway bridge over the Hokitika River is making progress, but is unlikely to be completed within the contract time, which expires on the 12th April next.

The expenditure last year amounted to £7,245, and for the current year a vote of £10,000 is provided.

#### OTAGO CENTRAL.

The exceptionally severe weather during last winter interfered with the progress of the works on this line. For several weeks almost all work was stopped, and when it could be resumed, progress was further delayed by slips which took place in consequence of the melting of the snow, and by floods in the Manuherikia River due to the same cause. With the return of milder weather work was resumed, and is now actively in progress. The very heavy formation in the Poolburn Gorge, including two tunnels, is now complete, and the rails are laid as far as the Poolburn Viaduct. The masonry piers of this structure are finished, and the erection of the steel superstructure is in hand, and it is expected that locomotives and material trains will be able to cross it by Christmas next, and that within a month afterwards the rails will be laid to the Manuherikia River. The concrete piers and abutments of the Manuherikia Bridge are complete, and the staging for the erection of the steel superstructure is now being built. The formation-works on the section between Manuherikia and Ophir are approaching completion, and similar work is in hand for four or five miles beyond Ophir, on the section towards Chatto Creek.

The expenditure on the railway last year amounted to £40,585, but for the current year a vote of £70,000 is asked for.

#### HERIOT EXTENSION.

The earthworks on this line are now nearly complete. The construction of the concrete piers for the bridges has been begun, and the timber for the superstructure of same is delivered. Also about one mile of platelaying has been done, and the erection of the necessary station buildings is about to be proceeded with.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £3,018, and for the current year a vote of £6,000 to complete the section is proposed.

#### CATLIN'S-SEAWARD BUSH.

The earthworks on the extension at the Catlin's end of this line are practically finished, and platelaying has been begun, and the erection of the necessary station buildings has also been authorised. The line should shortly be available for traffic. The survey of a further section will be taken in hand during the year.