

and Co., and the work is well in hand, but is not progressing as fast as I should like to see it. The contract time expires in November next, but at the present rate of procedure I am doubtful if it will be completed within the time. I am urging the contractors to use the utmost expedition with the work, as if it is not completed within the contract period it will have the effect of delaying the progress of the railway, as the formation between the bridge-site and the third crossing over the river near Alexandra is already well advanced. The contract for the third bridge over the Manuherikia has also recently been let to Messrs. Fraser and Co. The date for its completion is the 30th October, 1906. Formation-work has also been started on the Alexandra—Clyde Section, and as it is of an easy character it will not take very long. The completion of the whole railway to Clyde is therefore now well in sight.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £44,924, and for the current year a vote of £100,000 is asked for.

LAWRENCE—ROXBURGH.

This is one of the new railways authorised in last year's Act. It is proposed to commence formation-work at the Lawrence end shortly, and a vote of £10,000 is provided in the estimates for the purpose.

HERIOT EXTENSION.

This railway has now been completed, having been taken over by the Railway Department for regular traffic on 15th February. The expenditure last year amounted to £6,422. As some of the expenditure in connection with the completion of the undertaking did not come to charge before 31st March it will be necessary to take a vote of £3,000 in the current year's estimates to provide for same.

GORE—WAIKAKA.

This is another of the new lines authorised last session. In this case, as in the case of the Culverden—Waiau line, proposals have been made to the Government to provide the funds for the construction of the railway on similar terms to those authorised in regard to the Paeora—Waihi line, and a Bill to sanction the acceptance of these terms will be submitted to Parliament shortly.

CATLIN'S—WAIMAHAKA.

Work has recently been commenced on a new section at the Catlin's end of this railway. Bushfelling has been completed for about two miles, and earth-work is in hand.

After mature consideration, it has now been definitely decided to construct the extension at the Waimahaka end on the Tokonui route, and formation-work has just been begun.

Last year's expenditure on this railway amounted to £4,193, and for the current year an appropriation of £20,000 is proposed.

RIVERSDALE—SWITZERS.

The only work done on this line last year was the completion of the bridge over the Mataura River. The formation-work between Riversdale and the Mataura Bridge, which was executed several years ago, is now a good deal out of order. It is proposed to have this put into satisfactory condition, and to also undertake an extension of the line beyond the bridge so as to reach a point where a profitable traffic may be expected.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £1,302, and for the current year a vote of £5,000 is proposed.

OREPUKI—WAIU.

Nothing has been done on this line since the completion of the section to Waihoaka, but it is now proposed to take a further length in hand, and a vote of £10,000 is accordingly proposed.