

made. I am sorry that very great pressure of other work has prevented this trial survey being undertaken hitherto, but during the year I had an opportunity of obtaining a general view of the ground myself by driving over the new road which follows the railway-route fairly closely from Te Puke as far as the Oropi Road. For a large part of the distance the bush is still standing, but such of the land as is under crop shows excellent results, and the very uniform slope of the country will probably render it feasible to construct a railway at a very moderate expense. As soon as a suitable officer is available the promised trial survey will be put in hand.

NEW PLYMOUTH—SENTRY HILL DEVIATION.

This line is being constructed to improve the grade near New Plymouth.

The deviation leaves the existing line immediately west of the Waiwakaiho River, crosses the Henui Stream near its mouth, and runs thence between Buller and Molesworth Streets to the reclaimed land on the foreshore east of New Plymouth station, and joins the existing line at the platform.

No expenditure came to charge against last year's vote, but a considerable sum has already been spent this year, and a vote of £30,000 is asked for.

STRATFORD—ONGARUE.

The formation-works on the Huiroa Section have been steadily proceeded with, and have been finished for more than half the length, and the remaining portion, which includes some heavy work, is now well advanced. The necessary bridges have also been erected, and the formation of the station-site at Huiroa commenced. The laying of the permanent-way will be started shortly.

The expenditure last year was £10,896, a material advance on the previous year's rate. For the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

MOUNT EGMONT BRANCH.

The first section of this line is six miles two chains long, and the whole of the formation on this length has been completed, the rails laid, and a portion of the ballasting done. The remainder of the ballasting will stand over until crushed stone is available. The site for the stone-crushing yard has been cleared of bush, also sites for houses for employees, &c., excavation for the lines of sidings completed, the foundations for the stone-crushers commenced, and the stone-crushers themselves delivered on the site. The stone-crushing plant is to be operated by water-power, and a large amount of work in connection with this has also been done, such as the construction of a dam in the Manganui River, sand-trap, inlet and outlet tunnels to latter, and the excavation of a pipe-line from the sand-trap to the crushing-yard. A contract has been let for the supply of 3,000 ft. of steel pipe, 22 in. in diameter, and the whole of this has now been delivered. An engine-shed, water-tanks, coal-store, and five cottages for employees have been built at Waipuku, where the branch joins the main line. It is expected that the railway and stone-crushing plant will be available for regular working early next year, when operations will be commenced by dealing with the large quantity of boulders to be found in the Manganui River and adjacent thereto. This source of supply is not, however, expected to prove a permanent one, so that, when further stone is needed, it will be necessary to undertake the construction of the upper section of the line, which has already been surveyed, so as to open up the permanent quarry on the slopes of Mount Egmont.

The expenditure on this railway last year amounted to £10,248, and for the current year a vote of £15,000 is asked for.

OPUNAKE BRANCH.

Strong representations having been made to the Government in favour of the construction of a branch line to connect Opunake with the main line of railway between Wellington and New Plymouth, a trial survey for the same was put in hand in the early part of last year. As considerable difference of opinion