

The expenditure last year amounted to £36,609, the whole of which was charged to the special account established in connection with this railway. As the balance to the credit of the special account will not be sufficient to complete the work, a vote of £12,000 to supplement it is provided on the estimates. The original estimate of cost was made prior to the survey of the line being undertaken.

#### CATLIN'S—WAIMAHAKA.

The section of this line between Catlin's River and Houipapa is practically finished, and goods traffic is being carried over it. On the next section, between Houipapa and Table Hill, the first mile and a half is well in hand, and work has been started all along the line for another four miles. A large staff of workmen is now engaged, and a further increase in the numbers will be made as soon as better weather conditions prevail. In view of the large quantity of timber available for milling and the suitability of the land for farming, it is desirable that this line should be completed to the Tahakopa Valley at an early date, and it is anticipated that considerable progress will be made with it during the coming summer.

At the Waimahaka end of the line the work continues to progress, but as it is of a heavy character apparent progress is not very great, but work is now completed or in hand over rather more than four miles out of the total length of eight miles.

The expenditure on the railway last year amounted to £19,311, but as more men are employed now than formerly, and further works are to be taken in hand shortly, a much larger vote will be needed this year, and an appropriation of £80,000 is therefore proposed.

#### RIVERSDALE—SWITZERS.

On the first two miles of this line the rails are laid, and on the next eight miles—namely, up to Wendonside Station—the formation is practically finished, and rail-laying will be started shortly. The formation of the section between Wendonside and Waikaia is about to be put in hand.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £5,604, and for the current year a vote of £18,000 is proposed.

#### OREPUKI—WAIU.

The formation of the section of this line between Waihoaka and Te Wae Wae is finished and the rails laid, but no ballasting has yet been done. The ballast-pit lies on the section between Te Wae Wae and Waiu, the formation of which, as far as the pit, has been actively in hand throughout the year, and is now approaching completion. The rails have been laid into the ballast-pit, and a locomotive has been transferred from the North Island Main Trunk Railway to enable the ballasting to be commenced. The work will be pushed on as rapidly as possible, and I hope to have the line complete and ready for traffic to Te Tua by about the end of the financial year, and to Tuatapere by the Christmas following.

The expenditure last year amounted to £10,726, and a vote of £30,000 is asked for this year.

#### SURVEYS.

The importance of ascertaining the best possible route for a railway with respect to economy of construction and the production of the best results from a revenue point of view cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is therefore highly desirable that each proposed railway should be subject to careful exploration and survey so as to insure the selection of the route which will give the best financial results to the Dominion. The most important railway-survey works in hand at the present time are—

Helensville Northwards Railway (Maungaturoto to Kaikohe)—Permanent survey.

Pokeno to Paeroa—Permanent survey.

Waihi to Tauranga—Trial survey.

North Island Main Trunk Railway—Branch line to Raetihi.