

with the erection. Beyond Ngatapa earthworks are in hand over a length of two miles under small contracts and by co-operative labour. A supply of stone suitable for ballast has been located near Ngatapa, and will be utilized for practically the whole of the line already formed. A survey party has been in the field throughout the year locating the route ahead of construction, besides laying out deviations found necessary since the original location was made. Permanent plans have been prepared to carry the line thirty-six miles from the Makaraka junction.

A satisfactory arrangement has been arrived at between the Government, the Napier Harbour Board, and the Hawke's Bay County Council regarding the terms on which an embankment and bridge to carry the railway over the Inner Harbour will be constructed, and formal agreements relating to the matter have lately been entered into. The Department is also considering whether it would not be desirable to survey the route of this railway north and south from Wairoa, with a view to putting the construction of a central section in hand before the line could reach Wairoa from either Gisborne or Napier. This course would doubtless considerably expedite the construction of the through line.

The expenditure during last financial year on the different sections of the East Coast Railway was as follows :—

	£
Waihi to Tauranga	205
Tauranga to Taneatua	40,346
Gisborne to Motu	44,464
Gisborne to Napier, north end	29,647
Gisborne to Napier, south end	2,982

For the current year votes are proposed as under :—

	£
Waihi to Tauranga	25,000
Tauranga to Te Maunga	20,000
Maunganui to Taneatua	50,000
Gisborne to Motu	30,000
Gisborne to Napier, north end	45,000
Gisborne to Napier, south end	20,000

£190,000

STRATFORD—MAIN TRUNK.

Another important section of this railway—from Pohokura to Whangamomona—6 miles 13 chains in length, including a tunnel through the Whangamomona Ridge, was completed and opened for traffic on 1st July last. Beyond the new terminus earthworks are completed and rails laid for a distance of four miles to a station-site at Kohuratahi, and formation, principally heavy cuttings and banks, is in hand over a further length of three miles. There are two tunnels just beyond Kohuratahi, one of which (23 chains long) is approaching completion, and the second is just opened out. Ballast is not obtainable in this locality and has to be hauled all the way from Mount Egmont. It is expected that the section to Kohuratahi will be completed during the coming summer. From Tahora a new route for the line has been adopted, following the Raekohua Stream, crossing the Tangarakau below its gorge, then across some rough country to the Haeo Valley. By this route some difficult and costly works on the original location through the Tangarakau Gorge will be avoided.

At the eastern end of this line there has been increased activity during the year, and formation-work is in progress over a length of six miles from the junction with the Main Trunk line at Okahukura. Included in this length is the Okahu Tunnel now being excavated under contract, and due for completion in July, 1916. The tunnel contract covers two miles and a half of the railway—namely, one mile and a half of formation in addition to the tunnel itself. Six small contracts are in hand besides, and several co-operative parties are also employed on railway and service-road formation.

As suitable material for concrete is not obtainable in this locality, the Department is installing a plant for the manufacture on a large scale of bricks to be used in tunnels and culverts on the railways.