

The only other section of the Midland line on which construction-work was in progress during the year was the Arthur's Pass Tunnel, the excavation of which was continued steadily at both the Otira and Bealey ends under the direction of the Department's Engineers. At the Otira end the work is carried on by day labour—three shifts per day, with an average of thirty-seven workmen per shift.

During the twelve months ended June last the bottom heading at the Otira end advanced 23·19 chains, and the excavation and lining 24·17 chains. The face is now 2 miles 50 chains from the Otira portal. At the Bealey end the work is being carried on by co-operative contract, with an average of seventeen men per shift; the heading during the twelve months advanced 16·19 chains, and the excavation and lining 19·82 chains. The respective faces are now distant from the tunnel portals at either end—Otira, 2 miles 50 chains; Bealey, 54 chains. The distance between the two headings is 1 mile 64·45 chains, and between the limits of fully excavated and lined tunnel 2 miles 17·06 chains. The rock encountered at the headings has mostly been very wet, requiring heavy timbering practically all the way.

No works have been in progress on the Reefton-Inangahua Section since June, 1914, but a considerable amount of the expenditure on this section came to charge during the late financial year.

WESTPORT—INANGAHUA.

Three contracts for short tunnels and rock cuttings along the Buller River bank have yet to be completed, after which it is not proposed to put further work in hand for the present.

GREYMOUTH—POINT ELIZABETH.

There was a vote on last year's appropriations to cover expenditure in connection with the extension of this line to the Liverpool State Coal-mine, out of which there was an expenditure during the financial year of £864. Some small items of expenditure are still expected to come to charge, and these are provided for on the estimates.

CULVERDEN—WAI AU.

Six small contracts for formation-work on this line have been let. The work is completed for the first six miles, and is in varying stages of progress over the remainder of the route. Platelaying is in hand, and some buildings have been provided. The current year will probably see the completion of the line to Wai au.

WAIMATE BRANCH EXTENSION.

Formation-work is in progress over the first four miles from Waihao Downs Station. Some protection-work has been done where the line comes close to the Waihao River.

LAWRENCE—ROXBURGH.

The section from Big Hill to Beaumont Station, five miles and a half in length, was handed over to the Railway Department in December last for regular traffic. The authorization of the further fifteen-mile section to Miller's Flat will be provided for in the current year's Railways Authorization Bill.

The expenditure on the railway during the past financial year was £14,886, and contingent liabilities to the extent of £4,000 are provided for on the estimates.

OTAGO CENTRAL.

The extension from Clyde to Cromwell, 12½ miles in length, was located and construction-work commenced in July of last year. Good progress has been made, and the work is now in hand right up to the Cromwell Station site. The formation on this section is of lighter and less expensive character than the standard of recent years. Rails are laid for four miles, and ballasting completed over the first three miles.