

In the vicinity of Wairoa (Hawke's Bay) about 14½ miles of trial lines and 14 miles of permanent lines have been surveyed with a view to locating the line north and south of Wairoa, also a branch line to the wharf and a ballast-siding to the beach.

TE ROTI—OPUNAKE—MOTUROA RAILWAY.

Land-plan surveys of the Kapuni and Auroa Sections and of the Manaia Branch have been completed, but the plans have not yet been passed by the Survey Department.

A deviation between 16 m. and 20 m. 25 ch. was surveyed and permanently pegged, and the plans are nearly finished.

The permanent line has been extended from 38 m. 60 ch. to 46 m., and about 17 miles of trial surveys have been made. Permanent plans beyond 23 m. are in hand.

WELLINGTON—WAIRARAPA RAILWAY.

In connection with the proposed deviation through the Rimutaka Range a trial line was surveyed from a point on the existing line near Pigeon Bush, along the western shore of Lake Wairarapa to the Wairongomai River, thence up the river for a short distance, and striking through to the Wainui-o-mata Valley, and down this valley to connect with a former trial line from Petone. This work was plotted, and the approximate centre-line located on paper, with the exception of former trial line. Quantities were taken out but no estimate was made, as it appears that, owing to the costly and almost impracticable nature of the Petone to Wainui-o-mata location, further exploration between the Wainui Valley and the existing line will be required. On the Wairarapa side of the range the location can probably be improved by further survey-work. On the Tauherenikau route no further field-work has been done, but that already done has been plotted. Further survey-work is required before an estimate can be prepared. It would appear that practically a new trial line will have to be surveyed from Upper Hutt almost to the Summit Tunnel. More information is also required to enable the line down the Tauherenikau Gorge to be located and the cost estimated. Unfortunately, we were compelled to suspend operations in August last, the staff being utilized for urgent works in connection with the military camps.

SOUTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY (NORTH END).

The location survey has been completed from 60 m. to 61 m. 22 ch., and plans prepared.

MIDLAND RAILWAY (NELSON—WESTLAND).

Some trial-line work was done, completing the length 65 m. to 66 m. The permanent pegging is complete from 63 m. to 64 m., and in progress from 64 m. to 65 m.

WAIMATE BRANCH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

A land-plan survey (4½ miles) has been made, and plans prepared and approved by the Survey Department.

TUAPEKA MOUTH BRANCH RAILWAY.

A start has just been made with trial surveys for a line connecting the district of Tuapeka Mouth with the South Island Main Trunk Railway in the vicinity of Lovell's Flat or Crichton as an alternative to the proposed line from Balclutha.

OREPUKI—WAIU RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The permanent survey has been extended to 55 m., and trial line to 61 m.

ROADS, BRIDGES, ETC.

The construction of roads and bridges has been curtailed to some extent in the interests of economy. Of the very large number of works carried out the following are selected for special mention:—

Motu—Opotiki Road.—This road has been widened to 16 ft. for a distance of 3 miles between Motu and Toatoa, and between Toatoa and Papamoa. A large amount of work has been done on Papamoa Hill, a considerable portion being widened to 16 ft. Sundry improvements have been made elsewhere, and 16 miles of the road maintained by the Department.

Mangapoike Road.—A considerable amount of widening has been done. The dray-road formation now extends for 33 miles from Gisborne and 25 miles from Wairoa, leaving about 7 miles of bridle-track to be widened to complete the road throughout. Maintenance expenditure has been heavy owing to storms.

Te Kuiti to Mokau.—About 1 mile of new metalling has been done near Te Kuiti. Various gaps between Mangaotaki and Mahoenui have been metalled, and some metalling has been done in Mokau Township. Two small bridges are being renewed.

Ohura Road.—Flood damages have been repaired, and the Tangarakau Top Crossing Bridge has been completed. Papa has been burnt for use as road-metal, and sundry short sections of road have been metalled, besides ordinary maintenance-work.

Rotoaira to Waimarino.—Satisfactory progress is being made with the formation of this road by prison labour. The erection of the bridges over the Whakapapa streams is in hand.