

*Tauranga-Opotiki.*

*Te Maunga Section (41 m. to 45 m.).*—The length from Te Maunga Junction back to the site of the large bridge across an arm of Tauranga Harbour is completed with the exception of some ballasting and part of Te Maunga Station yard. The stone-faced approach banks are in hand, and part of the steel material for the bridge has been obtained, but it is impossible to procure the remainder at present. Stone facing is being placed along the Tauranga waterfront to enable land for railway purposes to be reclaimed by dredgings from the channel leading to the town wharves. This dredging will be carried out by the Department by arrangement with the Marine Department and the Tauranga Harbour Board.

*Maunganui-Te Puke Section (Maunganui to Te Maunga Branch Line, 0 m. to 4 m. 27 ch.; Te Maunga to Te Puke, 45 m. to 54 m.).*—Goods and passenger traffic has been handled on this section throughout the period, the works in hand being mainly of the nature of maintenance. The stone-crushing plant at Moturiki quarry has ceased operations, but stone is still obtained for facing the harbour embankments, &c. At Te Puke quarry three crushers have been installed, also compressed-air drills, and a steady output of crushed stone has been maintained, but difficulty has been experienced in obtaining skilled labour, so that the maximum output has not been approached nor could the bins be completed. Local bodies' requirements as regards road-metal are being supplied from this quarry. The growing traffic on the line has necessitated an extension of the wharf at Maunganui.

*Paengaroa Section (54 m. to 59 m. 65 ch.).*—This section is also practically complete, with the exception of the permanent bridge over the Kaituna River, which cannot be erected until steel is obtainable. A temporary bridge is in use in the meantime, and the section is under traffic. Station buildings were erected at Rangiora and Paengaroa.

*Pongakawa Section (59 m. 65 ch. to 64 m. 10 ch.).*—This section is completed with the exception of a culvert at 61 m. 13 ch. and a bridge at 63 m. 7 ch., which cannot be constructed until the drainage of the Waihi Swamp is completed. Strong temporary structures have been erected to enable our trains to use the line. The Maniatutu and Pongakawa station buildings have been erected under contract.

*Otamarakau Section (64 m. 10 ch. to 71 m. 5 ch.).*—Earthwork on this section is practically complete, with the exception of the length 67 m. to 68 m., where a narrow bank only has been formed with the materials available, to be widened later by means of the train. This will enable the platelaying to proceed. For the purpose of forming the long embankments across the numerous swamp areas on this line a steam-navvy is in use, borrowing material which is run out and distributed by means of a train fitted with unloader and spreader. The Pongakawa Stream Bridge has been completed, and concrete piles for the Otamarakau Bridge have been made. The girders for the latter bridge and for the small bridge at 67 m. 5 ch. are in stock.

*Matata Section (71 m. 5 ch. to 79 m. 18 ch.).*—Satisfactory progress has been made with the earthwork considering the small number of men available, formation being practically continuous to Matata Station yard (79 m.). Formation of Pikowai and Matata station-yards is in hand.

*General.*—The construction-work on the long length of line between Tauranga and Matata, and the handling of a considerable volume of traffic on the completed portions, involves the employment of a good deal of plant and rolling-stock. There being no local facilities for carrying out repairs, &c., a workshop has been established at the Mount, and equipped with machine tools, to enable the Department to undertake the necessary repairs, as well as the construction of certain items of rolling-stock, bridge ironwork, and sundries.

*Gisborne-Motu.*

*Motu Section (44 m. 10 ch. to 49 m. 8 ch.).*—This section comprises the length between Matawai, the terminus of the opened line, and Kowhai Road. All the formation-works are complete, except a portion of the filling in Kowhai Road Station yard. Most of the cuttings have been in solid rock, part of this material being used in the construction of culverts and for road-metal. All culverts are completed. Fencing is erected up to 47 m. 30 ch. Two road-deviations have been constructed and metalled. A contract was let for the erection of a bridge over the Motu River at 48 m. 36 ch., and all the 22 ft. spans have been completed, but the 62 ft. centre span cannot be finished until certain materials can be obtained—probably after the war. In the meantime a temporary bridge is in use to enable the filling in Kowhai Road yard to proceed, this work being carried out by a locomotive and trucks filled by a steam-shovel. In addition, large quantities of timber are hauled for the public between the rail-head and Matawai. Rails are laid throughout the section, and completely ballasted with the exception of about 1 mile, on which part of the ballast has been placed. A platelayer's cottage has been erected at Otoko, on the opened line, and the sites have been prepared for the Kowhai Road Station buildings.

*Gisborne-Napier (North End).*

*Ngatapa Section (0 m. to 10 m. 40 ch.).*—The formation is practically complete, and all culverts constructed. Fences, gates, cattle-stops, and notice-boards have been erected. The large steel bridge across the Waipaoa River has been completed, and a smaller bridge at 9 m. 66 ch. is in hand. Reinforced-concrete piles have been made for use in several small bridges on the section. Platelaying is practically complete, and ballasting partly so, most of the ballast having been obtained from the Waipaoa River bed by means of a drag-scoop working on an aerial cableway. A platelayer's cottage has been erected at Makaraka Junction, also four cottages at Repongaere and four at Ngatapa, besides the usual station buildings and structures at Patutahi, Repongaere, and Ngatapa. A passenger and goods service, under the control of the Public Works Department, has been in operation since December last, but the traffic is very light.