

*Tauranga-Opotiki.* (Length, 86 miles.)

*Te Maunga Section* (40 m. to 44 m. 58 ch.; length, 4 miles 58 chains).—This section is completed from Te Maunga Junction back to the site of the Tauranga Harbour Bridge. The track has been put in good order to facilitate the conveyance of stone to face the reclamation-work on the waterfront at Tauranga. Some further work has been done at the bridge-site, a few concrete cylinders having been made and sunk to various depths to form some of the piers in readiness for the superstructure of the bridge when steel is available.

*Maunganui Branch Line* (Maunganui to Te Maunga Junction, 0 m. 21 ch. to 4 m. 28 ch.; length, 4 miles 7 chains).—This length was completed some time ago, and carries a considerable and increasing traffic to and from the wharf at Maunganui, on Tauranga Harbour, where trains connect with the steamer service to Auckland.

*Te Puke Section* (44 m. 58 ch. to 54 m.; length, 9 miles 22 chains).—This section of the main line has been completed sufficiently to allow of train traffic, passenger and goods. The railway-line suffered considerable damage in consequence of an extraordinary rainfall on the night of 15th February last. The washouts were immediately repaired, traffic being interrupted for only two days. Another flood occurred in March, but no damage was done.

*Paengaroa Section* (54 m. to 59 m. 65 ch.; length, 5 miles 65 chains).—This section is also completed, with the exception of the Kaituna River Bridge. This has been delayed by difficulty in obtaining materials, but these are now coming to hand, and erection is in progress. An over-bridge, with approaches, was constructed at Canaan Landing. A washout occurred at Waiere Stream (54 m. 62 ch.) during the heavy flood mentioned above. A regular train service has been run throughout the period.

*Pongakawa Section* (59 m. 65 ch. to 64 m. 15 ch.; length, 4 miles 30 chains).—This section is also completed, with the exception of a few details.

*Otamarakau Section* (64 m. 15 ch. to 71 m. 5 ch.; length, 6 miles 70 chains).—Material has been obtained from the cliffs at about 70 m. to form banks ahead and raise some of those which have already been partly formed. The material is distributed by means of a train fitted with an automatic unloading-device. The fencing of the section has been completed, the posts used being made on the works of reinforced concrete. Rails are laid on the whole section, and ballasted sufficiently for present requirements.

*Matata Section* (71 m. 5 ch. to 79 m. 16 ch.; length, 8 miles 11 chains).—The formation-work has been continued, and is now practically completed. Permanent-way is laid throughout, including sidings at Pikowai and Matata station-yards, and ballasting is in progress. Station buildings are being erected. Goods traffic has been carried to Matata since the end of 1917, and it is expected that passengers can be carried after October next. Considerable areas of sand-dunes along the line are being planted with marram-grass to prevent drifting.

*General.*

Sundry additions have been made to the plant in the workshop at Maunganui, where rolling-stock is built and repaired, and ironwork manufactured for the works generally. A well-equipped quarry and stone-crushing plant are in operation near Te Puke, supplying all the broken stone and spalls required for ballast, road-metal, concrete, stone pitching, &c. A steam-navvy is in use in connection with the train and unloader, material being taken from a borrow-pit to make up subsidences in the various banks. Such subsidences are considerable on this line, as it traverses a great deal of swampy country, some of which is being drained by settlers, local authorities, and the Lands Department.

The length of this line from Waihi to Opotiki is about as follows: Main line, 126 miles; Maunganui Branch, 4 miles: total, 130 miles. The present position as regards construction is—Formation completed, 48 miles; platelaying completed, 41 miles; under traffic, 38 miles.

*Gisborne-Motu.*

*Motu Section*—44 m. 10 ch. (Matawai) to 49 m. 8 ch. (Motuhora); length, 4 miles 78 chains.—The formation-work executed during the year comprised chiefly the making-up of banks to standard heights and widths, removal of slips, and general-maintenance work. The permanent-way was also maintained in good order, and traffic was handled by the Public Works Department until the 26th November, 1917, when the section was handed over to the Railway Department for regular working. A 6,000-gallon water-vat, with pumping-station and pipe-line, has been constructed at Motuhora, also a platform and loading-bank. Station buildings were erected under contract, the joinery and fittings being manufactured at the Department's workshop.

*Gisborne-Napier (North End).*

*Ngatapa Section* (length, 11 miles 18 chains).—The work on this section comprises principally the maintenance of formation and permanent-way and the running of traffic. Serious floods have been experienced, entailing much work in clearing and removing silt-deposits and replacing ballast. Piers and abutments have been constructed for bridges at 5 m. 38 ch. and 5 m. 62 ch., and temporary superstructures have been placed on these, also at 9 m. 66 ch. A bi-weekly train service has been maintained between Makaraka Junction and Ngatapa, carrying passengers, mails, and goods.

*Waikura Section*.—A considerable amount of formation-work was done on this section prior to October, 1915, but since that date practically nothing has been done, there being no labour available in the district. About half a mile of fencing was erected during the period, and a little maintenance-work was carried out.