

On the Stratford–Main Trunk Railway, east end, the permanent line is laid to 14 m. 50 c. Beyond this point a temporary line suitable for ordinary railway rolling-stock drawn by a light locomotive is run, partly on the main road to the 16-mile peg, where a construction depot, dealing also with a goods and passenger service, connects by a metalled road with Ohura Township, 3 miles away. During the ensuing year it is hoped to complete the permanent line and bridges to Ohura Station (19 m.) and all station-yard structures along the length.

On the Stratford–Main Trunk Railway, west end, the construction of road and railway bridges on the Raekohua Section for which the material has already been obtained will be undertaken, and also the construction of a service tramway to the Tangarakau River, surveys for which are well in hand.

On the Opunake Branch Railway the whole of the formation and platelaying works will be completed, and tenders will shortly be invited for the erection of station-buildings at the first six stations. Others will be provided for during the year. The whole of the works on this line should be completed within eighteen months from the present time.

#### SOUTH ISLAND LINES.

In my last Statement I advised that the Westport–Inangahua Railway should be one of those on which the expenditure of money available should next be concentrated. At the time that statement was made I anticipated that far greater progress would have been made with railway construction; but, as indicated previously in this report, a great deal of additional work still remains to be done on this and other lines not yet completed, and therefore vigorous prosecution of the Westport–Inangahua connection has been slightly delayed. The work done was more or less of a preparatory nature, pending further development of the coal-mines in the basin of Cascade Creek. Arrangements have been made to put in a temporary siding on the Westport side of this creek, to which point the miners are constructing a flume to transport coal. The formation has been cleaned up, and immediately the rails and sleepers (which are on order) arrive, the railhead will be pushed on from Te Kuha, the present terminus, to the Cascade Creek. When the work to this point is completed it is anticipated that surveys and plans will be sufficiently far advanced to enable systematic construction to be undertaken, with the object of completing the connection with Inangahua.

On the Glenhope–Murchison Section all formation work, culverts, and bridges should be completed as far as Kawatiri Station by the end of January, and it should be possible, say, at the end of November, to start laying rails. The Kawatiri Section should then be ready for opening by the 30th June, 1925. Authorization is being asked for from the Owen to Murchison. In the meantime survey parties are engaged upon locating the line to Murchison.

On the Beaumont–Roxburgh Railway (Miller's Flat Section) it is expected that platelaying will be completed by the end of November, and that ballasting operations will be well advanced by that date. It is proposed to provide for a goods service between Beaumont and Miller's Flat early in next year. The work then remaining to be completed will comprise the widening of cuttings and banks, final ballasting, erection of station buildings and platelayers' cottages at Craig Flat and Miller's Flat, and general finishing off. It is expected that this section will be completed during next year.

Orepuki–Waiau Railway (Orawia Section): The work to be carried out during the coming year is the completion of the platelaying and ballasting, and the erection of station-buildings. It is anticipated that the line will be completed by the 31st March next.