

Waiotira Section (14 m. 67 ch. to 19 m. 75 ch. ; length, 5 miles 18 chains).—The work on this section has consisted of maintenance and ballasting. Under the former heading is included the cleaning up, and adoption of preventive measures on several cuttings and fillings which have slipped badly. All the ballasting required on Whangarei Branch, except for maintenance and the completion of the Oakleigh yard, has been completed. The great settlement which takes place on all the North Auckland clay country will render the former a considerable item. On the Huarau—Portland Section, which comprises part of the North Auckland Main Trunk and of the Whangarei Branch, passenger traffic was inaugurated on the 21st December, 1922, and goods traffic on the 28th May, 1923. The traffic has been increasing throughout, and for the last ten months of the period 24,273 passengers and 78,695 gross tons of goods were carried.

WAIPU BRANCH RAILWAY.

Ruakaka Section (0 m. to 9 m. 20 ch. ; length, 9 miles 20 chains).—The formation work on this section has been confined to the operation of one steam-shovel, making up filling between 0 m. and 2 m. This work is now complete, and, with the other formation done on this line, will form part of the up-to-date highway being constructed in lieu of the completion of the railway.

HUNTLY-AWAROA RAILWAY.

(7 m. 20 ch. to 8 m. 75 ch. ; length, 1 mile 55 chains.)

During the period the big slip at 7 m. 31 ch. to 7 m. 37 ch. was cleaned up, and the stone wall below the power-house on approach road to overbridge at 8 m. 50 ch. was also completed. Station-buildings, goods-shed, and latrines at Glen Afton were completed, and also the metalling of yard and approach. General maintenance was carried out over the whole of the section, and the line handed over to the Railway Department on the 16th June, 1924, although goods traffic had been carried out with profit by the Public Works Department for the twelve months prior to that date.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY—WAIHI EASTWARDS.

Athenree Section (0 m. to 8 m. 68 ch. ; length, 8 miles 68 chains).—All earthworks on this section have now been completed with the exception of a few minor alterations to station-yards and a small amount of bank-widening. Fencing has been completed and private crossings have been erected at 0 m. 17 ch., 0 m. 47 ch., 2 m. 55 ch., and 7 m. 37 ch. The following bridges have been completed during the year : Adams Street Bridge, at 0 m. 36 ch. ; Ohinemuri Bridge, at 0 m. 55 ch. ; Waimata Bridges, at 0 m. 67 ch. and 2 m. 62 ch. ; and Waiau Stream Bridge, at 6 m. 60 ch. The Waiau Stream Bridges at 7 m. 23 ch., 7 m. 69 ch., and 7 m. 76 ch. are almost complete, practically all piers being built and girders riveted up ready for placing in position. (See photo.) Several small culverts have been placed. Rails have been laid from the Waihi station-yard to 6 m. 19 ch., and a first lift of ballast completed to 1 m. 34 ch., together with patch ballasting in the bad places to 4 m. 70 ch. Second lift of ballast is complete to 0 m. 40 ch. The ballast for this portion of the line has been obtained from a privately owned quarry at Karangahake, but the quantity available per day has been small and subject to considerable delays, the total quantity supplied being 2,845 cubic yards. A quarry is being opened up by the Department at 7 m. 23 ch., a siding having been put in, crusher erected, and preliminary work completed in readiness for commencing operations on a fairly large scale. Tenders have been invited for the station-building and extra cottages at Athenree, the sites for which have been prepared.

Katikati Section (8 m. 68 ch. to 16 m. 28 ch. ; length, 7 miles 40 chains).—On this section work is in hand up to 14 m., the formation being practically complete with the exception of cutting at 11 m. 60 ch. One of the heaviest pieces of work on this section was the formation of the Tahawai station-yard, which was carried out by means of a steam-shovel. Reinforced-concrete piles for bridge at 10 m. 61 ch., and for the Tuapiro at 12 m., have been cast at Tauranga, and are now being transported to the site. Overbridge at 11 m. 59 ch. is completed, and those at 9 m. 19 ch. and 12 m. 59 ch. are in hand. Two platelayers' cottages have been erected at Katikati Station. The remainder of the work on this line from 14 m. to 34 m. 78 ch., comprising the balance of the Katikati, the Aongatete, Apata, and Te Puna Sections, has been let to Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co., who have just made a start with the preliminary work, setting out of material, yard, &c.

Tauranga Section (34 m. 78 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch. ; length, 6 miles 7 chains).—The formation of the centre-line has been completed from 39 m. 70 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch. The filling between centre-line and the Strand, Tauranga, is complete, and a very considerable portion of the extensive reclamation for Tauranga Station is finished. The formation of the low-level road between the Strand and Tauranga station-yard is in hand. The greater portion of the above bank material was obtained from the borrow-pit opposite 40 m. 23 ch. and 40 m. 30 ch., where a steam-shovel removed 63,516 cubic yards for the year. The stone pitching of bank from 40 m. 30 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch. has been completed, and is in hand at Tauranga Station. The overbridge at 40 m. 22 ch., with necessary approaches, has been completed, and a start has been made with the casting of reinforced-concrete piles for the Waikareao Bridge. The main-line rails have been laid from 39 m. 70 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch., and two sidings and eight sets of points and crossings laid in the Tauranga yard. A bottom lift of ballast has been placed from 40 m. 5 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch., and the final lift completed from 40 m. 36 ch. to end of section. Three platelayers' cottages, goods-shed, platform, and loading-bank have been erected at Tauranga Station-yard, and the remainder of the buildings are well in hand. The portion of section from Tauranga Station to 41 m. 5 ch. and the Tauranga Bridge were officially opened in June, and since then the section has been open for all classes of traffic.