

Te Wera Quarry.—During the first nine months of the period crushing was carried on continuously, and a total of 17,266 cubic yards was produced. Of this metal 5,920 cubic yards were utilized in ballasting on the Tahora Section and the quarry line and road; 11,346 cubic yards were sold to various local bodies throughout the district. During the last three months of the period the men were taken off quarrying and employed on flood-damage repairs, both on the open portion of the railway and on the Ohura Road. Additional stripping was carried out, further building accommodation provided for the workmen, and general maintenance on machinery, &c., attended to. This quarry is filling a long-felt want in the district, where the provision of crushed stone at a reasonable price has always been a difficult problem.

OPUNAKE BRANCH RAILWAY.

Kapuni Section (0 m. to 7 m.; length, 7 miles).—This section was opened for goods traffic on the 1st August last, and all freight offering has been handled by the Public Works Department. In addition to maintenance work, a great deal of work has been carried out on the completion of cuttings and banks by means of muck-trains. At the Skeet Road crossing, at 0 m. 42 ch., a concrete overbridge and approach filling, which contained 1,200 cubic yards of earth, have been constructed. The whole has been metalled with crushed metal, blinded with ballast, and opened for traffic. At the Kapuni station-yard, at 6 m. 54 ch., three sidings have been laid, thus completing all platelaying on this section. The ballasting of the main line throughout, and also sidings in Matapu, Duthie Road, and Palmer Road Stations, has been completed. The metalling of approach roads to the various stations is well in hand, and the only ballasting yet to do on the section is the final lift for sidings at Kapuni station-yard, which have received first and second lifts throughout. Loading-banks have been constructed with concrete fronts at Matapu, Duthie Road, Palmer Road, and Kapuni station-yards. The permanent telephone-line has been erected.

Auroa Section (7 m. to 12 m.; length, 5 miles).—The concrete piers for the Mangawhero River Bridge at 9 m. 41 ch., and the Otakeho River Bridge at 11 m. 37 ch., have been erected. Temporary timber superstructures were provided in order to enable platelaying to proceed. The plate girder spans for these bridges have now arrived, and the assembling and riveting up is in an advanced state. Permanent-way has been laid from the commencement of the section to 11 m. 37 ch., including the siding at Mangawhero station-yard at 9 m. 78 ch. The first and second lift of ballast has been completed on the main line to 11 m. 30 ch., and the third lift to 11 m. 25 ch. Ballasting of sidings on the Mangawhero Road station-yard is completed.

Pihama Section (12 m. to 16 m. 40 ch.; length, 4 miles 40 chains).—The work on this section has been mainly confined to formation work, the erection of bridge piers, and a road overbridge. Banks at 14 m. 78 ch. to 15 m. 4 ch., and 15 m. 8 ch. to 15 m. 13 ch. have been completed to a width of 12 ft. on top. The cutting at 15 m. 44 ch. has been gulletted through, and the formation of the Pihama station-yard at 16 m. 40 ch. is in hand. The concrete piers for the Oeo River Bridge at 15 m. 6 ch. and the Ouri River Bridge at 16 m. 10 ch. have been erected. The plate girders for the superstructure of these bridges is now in hand, and a start is being made with the assembling. An overbridge has been erected at the Oeo Road at 13 m. 52 ch.

Opunake Section (15 m. 40 ch. to 23 m.; length, 7 miles 40 chains).—A very considerable amount of formation work has been carried out on this section. The cuttings have been in most cases gulletted, and the banks built to 12 ft. wide, with the intention of taking down the batters of the cuttings and widening the banks by means of a muck-train after the permanent-way has been laid. Formation on these lines is well in hand. Good progress was made in the long cutting at 21 m. 36 ch. This cutting is nearly a mile in length, and excavation is being carried out by a steam-shovel, the material being run to bank and dumped from trestles. Eight culverts, ranging from an 18 in. pipe to double 10 ft. arched concrete culverts, have been placed. The concrete foundation of pier B for the Punehu River Bridge at 17 m. 53 ch. has been completed. Considerable difficulty was experienced with this excavation. At the Mangahume River, at 20 m. 75 ch., a service bridge has been erected, and a start made with the concreting of abutments. At the Waiaua River Bridge, at 22 m. 8 ch., both abutments have been finished, and foundations of the other four piers completely concreted. A stone gabion stop-bank across the east channel and gabion facing around the eastern approach toe has been completed. During the period forty-one 8 ft. by 10 ft. huts have been erected for the accommodation of workmen.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Kawatiri Section (59 m. 17 ch. to 63 m. 10 ch.).—Earthwork is in hand and almost completed up to 63 m. 10 ch. The principal formation work dealt with during the period has been the cuttings at 61 m. 64 ch., 63 m. 8 ch., and the completion of the tunnel at 62 m. 43 ch. A start has been made with the piers of the Sandy Creek Railway-bridge at 62 m. 36 ch. and the Sandy Creek Road-bridge at the same chainage. At the Hope River Bridge, 62 m. 41 ch., consisting of three 51 ft. spans, the concrete abutments and two piers have been completed.

Murchison Section.—Formation on this section is in hand between 63 m. 10 ch. and 64 m. 15 ch., and the clearing up to 65 m. 30 ch. The principal work on this section consists of the excavation of cuttings at 63 m. 23 ch. (which is being transported to form a large bank at 63 m. 45 ch.), 63 m. 52 ch., 63 m. 73 ch., and 64 m. 15 ch.

Further hut accommodation was provided to the extent of thirty single and fifteen married men's huts. A new cookhouse was erected at Letterbox, and canteen store built and opened at Pikomanu. A recreation-hall was also erected. The increased housing was necessary to accommodate a number of men transferred from Otira.