

Bridges.—The bridge-construction programme on this deviation is a large one, the most important structures being three bridges over openings left in the embankment across Hobson Bay, and seven concrete and steel road-overbridges of heavy construction, and two bridges to carry the railway over roads. The concrete piers, nineteen in number—concrete on piled foundations—for the Hobson Bay bridges are all complete, ready for the superstructure. Of the heavy road-overbridges, four, being those at 2 m. 70 ch., 7 m. 14 ch., 8 m. 3 ch., and 8 m. 77 ch., are complete, and that at 6 m. 60 ch. is almost complete. In addition, work is in hand at several of the other bridges.

EAST COAST MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.—WAIHI EASTWARDS.

During the year this line has been completed, except for a few minor details, between Tahawai and Taneatua—a total distance of 84 m. 26 ch. Messrs. Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co. completed their contract, nineteen miles in length, between the 14 m. and Te Puna, on the 19th March last, and handed over that part of the line to the Public Works Department on the 30th May.

The line between Tahawai and Tauranga was declared officially open by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister on the 28th March, and a tri-weekly through passenger service was inaugurated between Taneatua and Auckland as from that date. The portion of the line between Tahawai and Tauranga was handed over to the Working Railways on the 18th June, and a daily passenger and goods service was at once established. Pending the handing over to the Railway Department of the Tauranga-Taneatua length, the service thereon is being run by the Public Works Department. It is anticipated that this latter section will be complete and ready for handing over towards the end of the month of August. A description of the work done on the various sections of the line is as follows:—

Katikati Section (14 m. to 16 m. 28 ch.; length, 2 m. 28 ch.).—The Tahawai bank, which gave considerable trouble through subsidence, was completed. Platelaying and ballasting on the whole section, including Katikati station-yard, was completed, and station buildings, goods-shed, and cattleyards at Katikati erected. The Tahawai Bridge at 15 m. 2 ch., consisting of five 40 ft. spans, was completed, and all bridges painted. A start has been made with the erection of a Stationmaster's house at Katikati. Flood-gates have been erected where necessary.

Aongatete Section (16 m. 28 ch. to 21 m. 5 ch.; length, 4 m. 57 ch.).—One girder was placed on the Waitekohe Bridge, completing the bridge. The Uretara, Rereatuakahia, Te Mania, Waitekohe, and Aongatete Bridges were painted. Platelaying was completed from 20 m. 51 ch. to 21 m. 5 ch., and the whole of the section ballasted. The banks at the Rereatuakahia and Aongatete Streams were stone-pitched with spalls from Te Puke quarry. Private crossings at 17 m. 30 ch. and 20 m. 40 ch. were metalled. Goods-shed, latrines, and stockyards at Aongatete station-yard were completed. Flood-gates have been erected where necessary.

Apata Section (21 m. 5 ch. to 27 m. 50 ch.; length, 4 m. 12 ch.).—(Short length is due to deviations from original line.) All fencing on the section was completed. The old piers of the first Wainui Bridge (23 m. 2 ch.) were removed, and a new bridge of seven 35 ft. spans erected. The stability of the original bridge had been destroyed by ground-subsidences that took place as the heavy filling was being placed. This was referred to in my report for last year under heading "Apata Section." The Watakao and Wainui Bridges were painted. 1 m. 12 ch. of platelaying was done, and the ballasting of the whole section completed. A wash-out occurred at 23 m. 28 ch., taking away 1,000 cub. yd. out of the bank. This damage was repaired. Apata station-yard was widened, and a platform and cattleyards constructed. The approach-road fence to the overbridge at 26 m. 49.50 ch. and the gates at Apata station-yard were painted. Flood-gates were erected along section.

Te Puna Section (27 m. 70 ch. to 34 m. 78 ch.; length, 7 m. 2 ch.).—The fencing, culverting, formation, and ballasting of this section were completed. Cattleyards were erected at Omokoroa and Te Puna Stations. Stone-pitching with spalls from Te Puke quarry was done at overbridges at 30 m. 15.75 ch. and 31 m. 43 ch., at Te Puna Bridge, and along the Mangawhai bank, 30 m. 60 ch. to 31 m. 7 ch. The overbridge at 31 m. 43 ch. was completed, and a new abutment and one new pier put in the Waipapa Bridge. All bridges and station buildings were painted. Flood-gates were erected where necessary. A considerable yardage of slips was removed from the Mangawhai cut.

Tauranga Section (34 m. 78 ch. to 41 m. 5 ch.; length, 6 m. 7 ch.).—This section was open for traffic throughout the year, and usual maintenance-work carried out. Considerable ballasting was done between Tauranga and Te Puna. Spalls were placed around the piers of the Wairoa Bridge, along the banks in the Wairoa section, and along the Tauranga Wharf approach. A platform, cart-dock, and station building were erected at the Strand. The Wairoa and Waikareao Bridges were painted.

Te Maunga, Te Puke, Paengaroa, Pongakawa, Otaramakau, and Matata Sections (41 m. 5 ch. to 79 m. 16 ch.; total length, 38 m. 11 ch.).—This length has carried regular goods and passenger traffic, and adequate maintenance has been carried out. Most of the line between Tauranga and Paengaroa has been regraded and ballasted. Shelter-sheds have been erected at Te Maunga and Matapehi. The Tauranga, Otaimatua, Kopuroa, Kaituna, Otamarakau, and several smaller bridges have been painted. A number of small bridges have been close-sleepered and straightened. A siding has been put in at Te Maunga, and a 4 ft. arched culvert at 67 m. 60 ch. The Te Puke quarry output included 28,670 cub. yd. crushed metal and 14,645 cub. yd. spalls, as well as a quantity of screenings. The Matata pit output included 26,750 cub. yd. metal for ballast and 16,850 cub. yd. stripping, the latter being mostly used for widening banks.

Rangitaiki and Awakeri Sections (79 m. 16 ch. to 91 m. 40 ch.; length, 12 m. 24 ch.).—This length has carried regular goods and passenger service, and has been well maintained. Considerable ballasting-work has been done on this section. The Tarawera, Rangitaiki, and a number of smaller bridges have been painted. Two extra spans have been erected on bridge at 88 m. 35 ch. Level crossings have been formed and metalled at 89 m. 45 ch. and 90 m. 26 ch.