

NORTH AUCKLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY.

Rangiahua Section (24 m. 45 ch. to 38 m. 34 ch. ; length, 13 m. 65 ch.).—My report for last year detailed the extensive and costly work that had to be carried out to get stable railway formation along a considerable length of the unstable hillside. During the earlier portion of this year this section of the work drew to a conclusion—the last three large slips were removed, and the formation consolidated—and all other earthwork was completed. During the period that work was in hand 60,000 cubic yards of earthwork were handled, 40,000 being slip material, and the balance being excavation to make the Rangiahua Station-yard.

All culverts are now complete. During the year 57 lineal chains of stone walls and 94 lineal chains of stone drains were made as part of the work to consolidate cuttings and fillings. Two miles of fencing were erected.

One mile of platelaying was done, and substantial progress was made with the ballasting, the work done being equal to 6 miles of track completely ballasted. All bridge-work has now been completed, the work for the period being the building of a railway-bridge of total length of 130 ft. in plate-girder spans, and a heavy reinforced-concrete road-overbridge.

A feature of the work has been the extensive reconstruction of the main highway, the need for which arose through the way in which the railway location fouled the main highway. With the exception of 2½ miles of metalling, this highway-reconstruction work is about complete. Ballast and road-metal is obtained from a basaltic-rock quarry at Okaihau operated by the Department. While operations were in hand this year the quarry delivered 26,274 cubic yards of crushed metal and 2,474 cubic yards of spalls.

Construction work was suspended at the New Year, and during the six months of the year that works were in hand an average of 235 men had been employed. A few men were retained after the New Year, cleaning up and reconditioning plant and finishing essential road-deviations.

The work that requires to be done to complete this railway is briefly stated as follows: 3 miles of platelaying and ballasting, including Rangiahua Station yard; erection of Rangiahua Station buildings; 10 chains of main-highway formation and 2½ miles of metalling.

TAURAROA QUARRY.

The installation of permanent plant to replace that destroyed by fire in the preceding year was undertaken, the installation being completed early in November last.

A much smaller programme of work was undertaken this year than in previous years, practically the whole of the metal going to the Dargaville Branch Railway or to the Auckland-Maungaturoto Main Highway. With the closing-down of the railway-work at the New Year the quarry likewise had to be closed down.

During the months that the plant was operating 11,800 cubic yards of metal of all kinds were crushed.

DARGAVILLE BRANCH RAILWAY.

This railway continued to make rapid progress during the year under review till construction was stopped at the New Year. By that time the formation had been completed, except for a subsidence at 2 m. 15 ch., the approaches to the Tangowahine Bridge at 10 m. 20 ch., and the continued subsidence at the big bank at 13 m. 63 ch. At 2 m. 15 ch. a single-span bridge is required, and at 13 m. 63 ch. it is anticipated that the filling is approaching a stable condition, probably requiring not a great deal of extra work to complete. Three steam-shovels were in continuous service.

Culverting is complete to 15 m. 66 ch. Three railway-bridges of plate-girder spans, totalling 395 ft., were complete. Overbridge at 12 m. 37 ch. was built of hardwood timber.

Platelaying was continued to 11 m. 70 ch., 1 m. 45 ch. being laid, and 2 miles of ballasting, first lift only, were done. The Te Wharau Station yard was completed, with the exception of metalling, stock-yards, and gates.

The goods service between Tangowahine and Kirikopuni, started the previous year, was continued, and from the 22nd September, 1930, a regular passenger service connecting with the Railway Department's services has been run. These services have been of great benefit to the Dargaville district. The passenger, mail, and goods service is still being continued.

General construction works ceased at the New Year, but a force of fifty men has been retained during the rest of the year now reported upon. These men have been employed on cleaning up, reconditioning of plant, running of train services, and maintenance of works.

During the first six months of the year dealt with in this report the number of men employed averaged 210.

The work required to be done to complete this railway, and thus link Dargaville and the Kaihu Valley with the railway system, is as follows: 1 m. 50 ch. of formation of very light nature, 3 m. 70 ch. of platelaying, 7 miles of ballasting, and erection of Whapu Bridge at 17 m. 20 ch.

NAPIER-GISBORNE RAILWAY.—WAIKOKOPU-GISBORNE.

Owing to the closing-down of construction work on the Waikokopu-Gisborne Railway at the end of 1930 active operations covered by this report represented six months' work only. During that period construction was pushed on vigorously, the average number of men employed being 792.

My report of last year described the heavy nature of the work, particularly in respect to tunnelling, the three longer tunnels having a total length of 241 chains. These tunnels would thus control the time required for the completion of the railway, so the construction of the necessary service roads,