

THE CASTLEMAINE AND MARYBOROUGH RAILWAY.

The railway from Castlemaine to Maryborough, and the first section of the Ballarat and Maryborough line from Ballarat to Creswick, was opened for general traffic on Tuesday. There was no celebration in connexion with the opening of these lines. The Castlemaine and Maryborough line was commenced in September, 1872, and was one of the light lines authorised under the Railway Construction Act of 1871. The length of the line is 34 miles. The first section, from Castlemaine to Newstead (a distance of 14½ miles), was constructed by Mr. Thomas Doran, the amount of the contract being £49,509 3s. 5d. From Castlemaine to Guildford the line passes through rough and heavy country. For the purposes of economy in the construction of these light lines, cuttings have been avoided as much as possible, and in consequence the curves on the line are very sharp. At Guildford a station has been erected. One of the heaviest pieces of work on the line is the bridge over the River Loddon, a structure about 320ft. in length. From Guildford the line passes along the valley of the Loddon to Strangways, crossing the Jim Crow Creek by means of a long pile bridge, and thence to Newstead. The second section of the line is from Newstead to Maryborough, a distance of 19½ miles. The contractor was Mr. John Thomas, the amount being £51,312 4s. 4d. From Newstead the line passes for several miles through level country, and follows very closely the coach road. There is a long pile bridge over Joyce's Creek; but on this portion of the line there are very few engineering difficulties to be overcome. From Moolort, where a platform has been erected, a long stretch of plain is crossed until the vicinity of Carisbrook is reached, when the line winds round the Bald-hilla, and passes down to the Deep Creek, which is crossed by a pile and cylinder bridge over 440ft. in length. The cost of this work was much increased owing to the necessity of using iron cylinders instead of piles in the bed of the creek. Between Carisbrook and Maryborough, a distance of four miles and a half, the country is rather hilly, and the Maryborough ranges are crossed by a gradient of 1 in 50. Maryborough is the centre to which several railway lines converge—from Dunolly, from Avoca, from Ballarat, and from Castlemaine. A large station has therefore to be erected to provide the requisite accommodation, at a cost of about £4,000. The line from Maryborough to Dunolly is in a forward state, and only the plates remain to be laid. The line will be finished in about two months. The distance is 13½ miles. The contractor is Mr. J. Bloomfield, and the amount of the contract is £38,148 19s. 1d. The construction of the Ballarat and Maryborough line is also being proceeded with as rapidly as possible. The first section from Ballarat to Creswick, which was opened for traffic on

possible. The first section from Ballarat to Creswick, which was opened for traffic on Tuesday, comprises a distance of 11½ miles. The country through which it passes possesses few features of interest, and there are no very heavy works upon that portion of the line. The contractors are Messrs. Young and M'Guigan, the amount of the contract being £37,481 1s. 2d. The second section of this line, from Creswick to Clunes, a distance of 10½ miles, will probably be completed in about four months. Mr. John Thomas is the contractor, the amount being £42,732 14s. 7d. The last section is from Clunes to Maryborough, a distance of 19 miles. The contractors are Messrs. Fishbourne, Morton, and Adams, the contract price being £59,751 18s. 11d. It is anticipated that the line will be finished through to Maryborough about February or March next.

[BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.]

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

MARYBOROUGH, TUESDAY.

The railway line to Castlemaine was formally opened to-day. In consequence of the unfinished state of the station and approaches there were no festivities or celebration of any kind. Fifty-two passengers left by the morning train for Melbourne. Very few people were present, but a few borough councillors assembled. The noon train brought 70 passengers to Maryborough. On the arrival of this train a considerable concourse assembled at the railway station, which presented a gay appearance. On the completion of the station and goods sheds it is intended to have a grand celebration, but this cannot take place for some weeks yet.