

One building and several sites which were no longer required were disposed of during the year.

Sites and additional land for departmental purposes were acquired at fourteen places. Two residences for departmental officers were also acquired.

At the end of the year the following buildings were in course of erection: Lower Hutt Post-office, Motueka Post-office, Te Kuiti Post-office and residence, and a residence at Westport.

Also in progress were additions to the post-office buildings at Glenorehy and Paihia and the original staff quarters at Musick Point Radio, and alterations to the old chief-post-office building at Wanganui and the post-office building at Foxton.

EDUCATION BUILDINGS

The gross expenditure for the year on school buildings, additions, teachers' residences, and the purchase of sites totalled £226,477, this sum including £19,074 provided by the Consolidated Fund to meet the cost of minor works. Practically the whole of this expenditure was incurred in respect of primary, secondary, technical, and Native schools.

LANDS-IMPROVEMENT

A limited amount of stop-banking was carried out at Naumai and Ruawai, and a commencement was made with the construction of certain culverting and flood-gates.

Sand-dune reclamation was continued on a much-reduced scale.

River control and protection were undertaken in respect of the Otaki, Karamea, and Ashley Rivers, and towards the end of the year work was resumed on the Whirokino Cut, Manawatu River.

With regard to the rehabilitation of the flax industry, development work at Moutoa was continued by my Department, but early in the year under review arrangements were made whereby the Department of Industries and Commerce assumed control of this area and continued the work in association with the National Service Department.

LINEN-FLAX DEVELOPMENT

The successful development of the linen-flax industry in New Zealand has been continued, and additional facilities have been provided as required at the factories established throughout the South Island.

Living-quarters have been provided where necessary, including the erection of a number of hostels to accommodate female workers, a considerable number of whom are employed in this industry.

A recent feature of the successful development of the linen-flax industry in New Zealand has been that the Government has been able to arrange for the disposal of its surplus linen-flax seed from which linseed-oil is now being manufactured.

LIGHTHOUSES

During the year progress has been made with the completion of radio-beacon stations, electrification of lights, and the provision of additional navigational aids, &c. In addition, in some cases road access to isolated stations has been improved, and, where possible, amenities at light stations have been added to improve the general conveniences there.

At stations where power plants are in operation the Department has maintained and overhauled the engines from time to time during the year.

Further information relating to public works carried out during the past year is included in the attached reports by the Engineer-in-Chief, the Government Architect, and the Chief Electrical Engineer.

In accordance with section 24 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, the annual report of the Main Highways Board for the year ended 31st March, 1943, is also submitted herewith, *vide* Appendix E.

As required by subsection (2) of section 33 of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, I also submit with this Statement, the first report of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council, covering the operations of the Council up to 31st March, 1943.