

APPENDIX B

ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLIC WORKS BY THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF

The ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the Hon. the MINISTER OF WORKS

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the various public works completed and in progress throughout the Dominion during the year ended 31st March, 1944 :—

RAILWAYS

Westport-Inangahua.—The construction of this line was virtually completed by the end of November, 1943, and was formally handed over to the Railways Department on 5th December last.

Turakina-Okoia Railway Deviation.—Construction was recommenced on 1st September, 1943. Accommodation was restored at Turakina and Fordell, and a quantity of plant, consisting of locomotives, air-compressors, water-pumps, &c., was brought into operation.

Test boring of the linings of the Turakina and Fordell tunnels was commenced towards the close of the year.

The girders of the Turakina River railway-bridge were placed in position and a temporary track laid, and preparations were made to erect the girders of the Wangaeahu River Bridge.

Work on other bridges is proceeding.

South Island Main Trunk.—Considerable progress has been made during the year and two sections have been opened to passenger traffic. The section from Hundalee to Oaro, 10 miles, was opened on 17th May, 1943, and although some slips and sea erosion have occurred, a fairly regular train service has been maintained. The section from Clarence to Kaikoura, 22 miles 20 chains, was opened on 11th March, 1944, and a regular service has since been maintained.

Work is nearing completion on the Kaikoura and Hundalee-Puketa sections. The former, 28 miles 41 chains in length, was practically completed during the previous year. On the latter section certain tunnel extensions and the construction of culverts are the principal items remaining to be done, apart from the laying of the permanent-way, which is proceeding as fast as materials and man-power will permit.

Hutt Valley Railway Extension.—Extensive surveys have been carried out in connection with the permanent location of the extension of this line beyond the present terminus at Waterloo.

IRRIGATION

Central Otago.—The season was marked by extreme variations in the weather conditions. A severe winter was followed by a wet spring, with consequent delay in the commencement of the irrigation season. From the end of November till the middle of January the weather was exceptionally dry, and in some places a water shortage appeared likely, but February was the wettest month for twenty-five years and all sources were replenished.

No new construction was carried out, but maintenance work has been heavier than usual on account of the high demand during the dry weather.

Irrigation water was supplied to 510 irrigators in all.

In schemes where irrigation agreements are in force, the total area subject to agreements was 45,185 acres, and the area actually irrigated was 43,711 acres. The total area irrigated, including schemes where agreements are not required, was 52,711 out of a total area commanded of approximately 60,000 acres.

The financial results of the year's workings are : revenue, £26,650 ; expenditure, £23,000 ; profit on working, £3,650.

On the Omakau Scheme the water sold to date was 7,400 acre-feet.

Canterbury.—Redcliff Scheme : Owing to an extremely wet spring and summer, irrigation was practically confined to the months of December and January. The area under irrigation showed a further decline over last year. The revenue was £98, the working-expenses amounted to £870, the area irrigated was 300 acres, and the number of irrigators was 7.

Levels Scheme : For the same reason as on the Redcliff Scheme, there was a marked decline in the use of irrigation water on this scheme during the season. The relevant statistics are as follows : revenue, £369 ; working-expenses, £1,846 ; area irrigated, 2,100 acres ; number of irrigators, 51.

As stated last year, the Canterbury and Omakau Schemes, which are new and operating on the demand system without agreements, are showing in a marked degree the effects of labour and material shortages. However, there is evidence of a general movement among farmers in these areas to prepare for better times.

Downs Water-supply Scheme : No further construction work has been done during the year. An area of 10,543 acres in Waimate County awaits completion and is held in abeyance until the necessary galvanized pipes and fittings are received. Normal maintenance was continued during the year and satisfactory service was given to an area of over 140,000 acres.

SCHEMES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Ashburton-Lyndhurst Scheme.—This scheme, commanding 68,000 acres, is almost ready for use, certain extensions to the waste race system only remaining to be done. It is expected that water will be available to farmers during the coming season.

Mayfield-Hinds Scheme.—Except for some maintenance, work on this scheme has been held in abeyance on account of prior calls on man-power and materials. As it stands, the work is 32 per cent. completed, and when finished will provide water for 78,000 acres.