

EDUCATION BUILDINGS

The gross expenditure for the year on school buildings, additions, teachers' residences, and the purchase of sites totalled £249,247, this sum including £13,110 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, and Native schools, and Child Welfare institutions.

LANDS-IMPROVEMENT

Most of the works formerly coming under this vote are now referred to under Soil Conservation and River Control. The work during the year was confined to certain drainage works having important bearing on essential production, such as flax cultivation at Moutoa, and to the completion of other drainage and flood protection works already in hand at Ruawai, Naumai, and elsewhere.

Sand-dune Reclamation.—No new work was undertaken, but maintenance and certain essential planting have been done at Helensville and Waikato Heads.

Land-clearing by Machinery.—This important work has been continued on a minor scale at Taumarunui, Ohakune, and near Tuatapere with very satisfactory results. Until more plant and skilled operators are available, the work cannot be greatly extended.

LIGHTHOUSES

The completion of radio-beacon stations, the electrification of lights, the provision of additional navigational aids, and general maintenance of existing plant have been carried out during the year. Owing to the diversion of the lighthouse steamer to other duties, it became necessary to effect improvements in the road access to several outlying stations to ensure accessibility to those stations at all times both for servicing the lights and for the transport of lightkeepers' stores. At some stations the existing amenities have been improved by the provision of hot-water services, septic tanks, drainage, &c.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Agriculture.—The extensive work involved in bringing up to date the layout at the Te Kauwhata Horticultural Station was completed during the year by the installation of the new distillation unit and more modern equipment for the processing of grapes. Improvements have been effected also in the facilities for the staff at the Station.

Justice.—It has not been possible during the past year to undertake any new construction work on courthouses. An endeavour has been made to keep existing buildings maintained in good order.

An area of 417 acres required for farming operations at the Invercargill Borstal Institution has been purchased during this year.

For security reasons it was deemed necessary to vacate the present girls' Borstal site at Mount Crawford. Land was acquired in Takapu Road, Johnsonville, and a new Borstal Institute building is now in course of erection there. The new building has been designed to allow of the proper classification of inmates, and provision has been made for their useful occupation.

Postal and Telegraph.—During the year the following departmental buildings were completed: post-office buildings at Eronadun, Linton Military Camp, Lower Hutt, and Motueka; residences at Hokitika, Plimmerton, Tauranga, Te Kuiti, Waipawa, and Westport; a store building and a garage building at Whangarei; and a radio-telephone building at Seddon.

Additions were made to the post-office buildings at Ohura and Petone and the store-garage building at Kaitaia; and alterations were made to the chief post-office building at Napier, the post-office building at Foxton, and the staff quarters at Awarua Radio and Musick Point Radio.

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

Nineteen sites and additional areas of land for departmental purposes were acquired, as also were six residences for departmental officers.

At the end of the year the following buildings were in course of erection: post-offices at Kaitaia, Te Kuiti, and Wanaka; residences at Featherston, Fitzroy, Foxton, Howick, Kaponga, Murchison, and Te Kuiti; a store garage at Balclutha; a radio receiving building, staff hostel, and seven residences at Makara.

Police-stations.—In addition to four new police-stations erected at Oxford, Port Ahuriri, Cambridge, and Te Aroha, two residences were purchased, one at Greymouth as a residence for the Senior Sergeant, and one at Wellington for the Inspector of Police; a residence for the Sergeant at Feilding was completed. Additional land has been acquired at Petone and Hunterville, and also a site for a police-station at Omakau.

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

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, 1944, 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 annual report of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council, covering the operations of the Council up to 31st March, 1944.