

It is evident, therefore, that considerable lag exists in respect of this class of work; the reduction in the volume of military traffic is, at present, a mitigatory factor to some extent, but the shorter life of the tar now extensively used instead of bitumen has also to be taken into consideration. It should be mentioned that for the purposes of this report the term "sealing" covers all classes of dustless surfacing, other than the light tar-primer coat.

As staff becomes available the Board is arranging surveys of projected improvement works in order that it may be in a position to accept its share in the rehabilitation of our men returning from overseas. The present restricted revenue and the uncertainty regarding funds that may be made available to the Board in the future, however, makes it most difficult to arrange an orderly programme of improvement works.

Personnel.—The first appointments to the Main Highways Board were made on the 12th June, 1923, and the Board had thus completed twenty-one years of service. Of the original appointees, Mr. M. H. Wynyard, representing the owners of motor-vehicles, is the only one to have seen continuous service.

Legislation.—New legislation passed since last report and directly affecting the Board's administration was section 5 of the Finance Act (No. 2), 1943. This section provides that the sum of £1,226,000, being the total amount appropriated out of the Public Works Fund and paid into the Main Highways Construction Fund, shall, until it is repaid, constitute a capital liability of the Main Highways Account to the Consolidated Fund.

Works.—The principal works carried out in the various districts during the year are briefly as follows:—

In the Whangarei district three bridges totalling 253 ft. were completed on the Pakaraka-Awanui Highway, and two others in the same locality are in progress.

The 630 ft. Titoki Bridge, in the Whangarei County, is now making good progress, the whole of the piers being nearly completed and three spans of the superstructure have been concreted.

One mile of new sealing was carried out north of Hikurangi, and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of old sealing was resurfaced.

Maintenance expenditure in this district was 66 per cent. in advance of that of the previous year a special effort being made to restore damaged highways to something approaching normal standards.

In the Auckland district 20 miles of maintenance sealing was applied and a small amount of bridging carried out, the 200 ft. Waiwawa Bridge on the Waihi-Coroglen Highway being the most important.

Several bridges were strengthened to provide for military traffic, in particular the Whatiwhatiho Bridge over the Waipa River, the timber trusses of which were replaced by steel joists and the piers strengthened.

The Kauri Gully deviations on the Northcote Highway and a further 2 miles of reconstruction on the Beach Highway, Waitemata County, are in progress, the first 2 miles of the latter highway having been completed and sealed during the year.

The approaches to the Otorohanga Overbridge have recently been completed, except for the surface course, and the bridge is in use by traffic.

The Tauranga and Gisborne districts suffered fairly heavy flood-damage during the year and considerable repair work was necessary.

In the former district, 3 miles at the summit of the Kaimai Hill was sealed in two coats, completing a length of 10 miles from this point to the Wairoa Bridge.

The Gisborne district carried out $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of maintenance sealing, together with a large amount of bridge-repair work and the installation of culverts.

The principal works in the Napier district were the completion of the 272 ft. Waikoau and 172 ft. Matahaura Bridges on the Gisborne-Napier Highway and the raising by 5 ft. of a 20-chain length of the State highway near Awatoto to avoid flooding.

The approaches to the Waikoau Bridge, 42 chains in length, have been completed, and those to the Matahaura Bridge are nearing completion.

Five miles of maintenance sealing were carried out and very extensive flood-damage on the highway north of Napier was attended to, restoration work being still in progress.

In the Taumarunui district work has been largely confined to maintenance operations.

Two $2\frac{1}{4}$ -mile lengths on the State highway north and south of Te Kuiti are being prepared for sealing.

A 104 ft. bridge was erected at Mangamaire, and a 120 ft. water-drive put in at Te Maire bluff, on the Stratford-Taumarunui Highway.

A $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile length of the highway between Tokaanu and Waihi Village was raised and protected to avoid flooding.

In the Taranaki district 10 miles of maintenance sealing, half of which was on State highways, was carried out, and the second 85 ft. Mangaotuku Bridge on the Stratford-Taumarunui Highway was completed.

Considerable bridge-repair work was effected, and test borings made on new sites for two major bridges on the State highway south of Mokau. The Wanganui district extended dustless surfacing by $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles and resealed $15\frac{1}{4}$ miles of highway. The greater part of this work was on the State highway between Waiouru and Taihape.

A new bridge is being erected on the Torupapa Stream between Pipiriki and Raetihi.