

APPENDIX E

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAIN HIGHWAYS BOARD

The Hon. MINISTER OF WORKS, Wellington.

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of section 24 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, the Main Highways Board has the honour to submit its twenty-second annual report for presentation to Parliament.

The report covers the period 1st April, 1945, to 31st March, 1946.

General.—While the general position regarding road-building materials is still fairly acute, it is satisfactory to record a slight improvement in the supply of bituminous material, and in consequence of this, and increased man-power, the maintenance situation is now somewhat better.

During the year the dustless paving was extended by only 21 miles, but existing sealed surfaces were renewed over a length of 286 miles, being an increase of 134 miles over that of the previous year.

This is still well below the figure required to maintain the highways at a satisfactory standard, which was estimated in 1944 as 400 miles per annum.

The bridge-renewal programme has again been delayed through continued shortage of steel and cement, and the length of new bridging erected was 2,211 linear feet, compared with 2,239 linear feet in the previous period. A number of new structures are in progress, but their early completion cannot be expected under present supply conditions. The pre-war aim of the Board was to renew 9,000 linear feet of bridging per annum, and on account of the limited length erected during the war years a greater length per annum is now necessary if we are to avoid placing loading restrictions on a great number of our bridges and thus increase transport charges.

Personnel.—In consequence of the death of Mr. F. R. Flatman, who had been a member of the Board for three years, Mr. D. H. Cockburn, Chairman of the Lake County Council, was appointed to be a member of the Board on the 18th October, 1945, on the recommendation of the New Zealand Counties' Association. By reason of his retirement from the position of Permanent Head of the Public Works Department, Mr. W. L. Newnham relinquished his seat on the Board and the office of Chairman on the 11th July, 1946, and Mr. T. G. Beck, Deputy Chairman of the Board, on account of his appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Works, relinquished his seat on the Board on the same date. To replace these gentlemen Mr. F. Langbein was appointed Chairman, and Mr. R. Trevor Smith, Deputy Chairman. With the recent return of Mr. F. M. Hanson from overseas, he has now taken up his position as Highways Engineer, the position having previously been held by Mr. F. D. Grant in an acting capacity. Mr. Grant will now occupy the position of Assistant Highways Engineer.

Finance.—Although the revenue of the Board showed an advance on that of the previous year, expenditure increased also, and whilst receipts were sufficient to provide for standing charges, maintenance, and renewals, interest on loans raised was again deferred for the year.