

NEW WORKS.

The expenditure during the year on works authorized under the Railways Improvement Authorization Acts and charged to capital was £546,416, making a total expenditure to 31st March, 1926, on the various schemes authorized by these Acts £1,721,133. The principal works in hand were—

Auckland Shunting-yard.—Good progress has been made with the new yard at Auckland, and tenders are being called for the erection of new goods-shed and offices. The plans for the new station building are in hand.

Helensville.—A commencement has been made with the provision of new station-yard.

The Auckland-Westfield new line is being proceeded with, and all plans for the completion of this work have been prepared.

The Penrose-Papakura duplication has been completed as far as Westfield, and the work is now being pushed on towards Otahuhu.

Palmerston North New Yard.—The preliminary work has been started in connection with this job, and it is expected that it will be completed within schedule time.

Wellington Station and Yard.—The contract for the erection of the sea-wall in connection with the reclamation for the new station-yard at Wellington was completed well under the stipulated time, and arrangements were made for the erection of a further length of 450 ft. of wall, the construction of which is now well forward.

A considerable amount of reclamation behind the wall has been carried out by the Harbour Board's dredge, and a second dredge has now been chartered to assist with the work.

At Christchurch a start has been made with the new "hump" shunting-yard between Addington and Middleton. The completion of this work will allow the rearrangement of Christchurch station and yard to be proceeded with.

Workshops.—Plans have been prepared and tenders are being called for the erection of new workshops at Otahuhu, Petone, Addington, and Hillside.

Dunedin-Burkes Duplication.—The new double track between Dunedin and Ravensbourne was opened for traffic in May, and the duplication of the line between Ravensbourne and Burkes is now in hand.

Signals, &c.—Automatic signalling with colour-light signals, for double-line working between Auckland and Westfield, and between Dunedin and Ravensbourne, has been completed and brought into operation. The tablet system was brought into use between Whangarei and Kaukapakapa, a section of 87 miles.

Traffic is now controlled by—

	Miles.
Tablet system (single line)	1,746
Lock and block (double line)	16½
Three-position upper-quadrant and colour-light signals—	
Single line	126
Double line	31

Forty-two miles of poles and 456 miles of wire were erected during the year.

The Department's telegraph and telephone system now comprises—293 Morse sets, 1,866 telephones, 365 electric bells, 9,447 miles of wires, and 2,875 miles of poles.

£17,756 was expended during the year on the installation of electric lighting in stations, workshops, departmental houses, &c. Fifty-seven electric motors, aggregating 1,190 horse-power, were installed in locomotive workshops during the year.

ELECTRIFICATION : LYTTTELTON-CHRISTCHURCH.

Messrs. Merz and McLennan's report on the electrification of suburban lines was received during the year. That section of the report dealing with the electrification of the line between Lyttelton and Christchurch has been reviewed by the engineers of the Public Works and Railway Departments, and Cabinet authority has been received to proceed with the work. Although the traffic on this section is not sufficiently intensive to show a profit as the result of the change over to electric traction, the discomforts due to smoke and fumes in the existing tunnel will be completely eliminated thereby, and the construction of the proposed second tunnel at a cost of £265,000 will be obviated. Detailed plans and specifications for the electrification of this section are at present in course of preparation, and the work, which will take approximately two years to complete, will shortly be put in hand. Messrs. Merz and McLennan's report is published as an appendix to this statement. (Appendix B).

HOUSING.

During the year 300 five-roomed houses were cut at Frankton Junction Factory, of which 251 were erected at fifty-seven stations, making the total number of houses erected since the inception of the housing scheme 728. In addition, there are 104 houses now in course of erection and uncompleted—at Otahuhu 20, Taumarunui 3, Wanganui 15, Palmerston North 33, Upper Hutt 4, Maungaturoto 5, and Lower Hutt 24.

The quantity of timber passed through the big planer during the year was 6,184,007 lineal feet, averaging 19,757 lineal feet per working-day.