

The Main Highways Board has been subjected in a few instances to local pressure directed to enforcing the carrying-out of grade easements and other improvements, which are perhaps just a little premature in the present state of development of New Zealand. It is important that the funds available, which are by no means in excess of bare requirements, should be conserved and devoted rather to the elimination of dangers and the improvement of surface than to the obtaining of ideal grades.

The economics of all projects put forward are carefully looked into, and while perhaps to the passerby some of the deviations or improvements in hand may appear extravagant, an investigation of the pros and cons will show that they have all a solid justification when upkeep and running expenses are considered as well as capital.

EXPENDITURE.

The total net expenditure under all votes and accounts appearing on the public-works estimates for the financial year ended 31st March, 1927, was £6,777,474. Of this sum £3,588,059 was expended out of General Purposes Account, and the balance, £3,189,415, out of special accounts.

A brief summary of this expenditure, as well as the total expenditure since the inception of the public-works policy to the 31st March last, follows in tabular form :—

Class of Work.	Expenditure for Year ended 31st March, 1927.	Total Expenditure to 31st March, 1927.
Railways—	£	£
New construction	1,096,368	34,259,198
Additions to open lines	384,439	15,557,081
Payment to Midland Railway bondholders	..	150,000
Roads	578,128	16,261,228*
Public buildings	326,039	9,920,287
Immigration	184,918	3,117,408
Purchase of Native lands	..	2,061,204
Lighthouses, harbour-works, and harbour defences	19,021	1,225,509
Tourist and health resorts	31,981	424,609
Telegraph extension	558,042	8,666,408
Development of mining	..	882,975
Defence works (general)	34,014	1,241,395
Departmental	115,866	2,372,941
Irrigation and water-supply	56,937	734,345
Lands-improvement	56,267	356,283
Minor works and services	..	312,607
Plant, material, and stores	Cr. 24,148	358,492
Quarries (acquisition and operating)	6,302	20,468
Timber-supply and sawmills for Public Works Department	8,512	12,686
Motor-transport services	..	33,635
Cost and discount, raising loans, &c.	155,373	2,496,325
Total General Purposes Account	3,588,059†	100,465,084
Aid to Water-power Works and Electric Supply Account	1,130,013‡	5,845,927
Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers Improvement Account	65,856‡	548,345
Total Public Works Fund	4,783,928	106,859,356
Wellington-Hutt Railway, &c.—		
Railway	..	228,374
Road	..	101,658
Railways Improvement Account	..	641,275
Railways Improvement Authorization Act 1914 Account	880,229§	2,970,054
Loans to Local Bodies Account—Roads to open up Crown lands	..	697,408
Opening up Crown Lands for Settlement Account—Roads to open up Crown lands	..	206,626
Lands for Settlement Account—Roads to open up Crown lands	12,714	583,688
National Endowment Account	..	53,401
Education Loans Account	550,954§	3,002,947
Main Highways Account Construction Fund	549,649§	1,197,448
	6,777,474	116,542,235

* Includes £4,500 expended under section 16, subsection (1), Native Land Amendment and Native Claims Adjustment Act, 1923. † Does not include expenditure under the Ellesmere Land Drainage Act, 1905.

‡ Excludes interest during construction.

§ Includes proportionate cost of loan raised under these accounts.