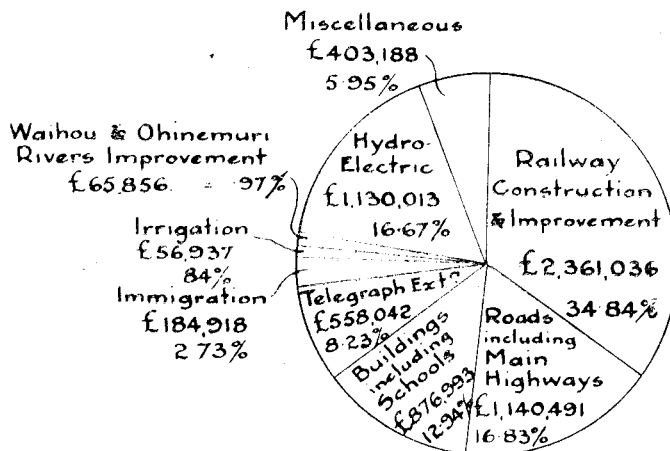


RATIO OF EXPENDITURE, 1926-1927.

The ratios which the various classes of expenditure on works bear to the whole are indicated graphically in the diagram below.



RAILWAY-CONSTRUCTION.

During the last financial year the Opunake Branch Railway, of a length of 23 miles, was completed and handed over to the Railway Department for incorporation with the general railway system of the country.

In addition to this line, rails have been laid on 47 miles 65 chains. A passenger and goods service has been run by the Public Works Department over various lines totalling 152 miles in length, the principal sections being between Tauranga and Taneatua, Wairoa and Waikokopu, Waiotira and Pukehuia, and Okahukura and Ohura. Goods traffic only has been run over a further length of 20 miles. These services, run while sections of line are being completed, have undoubtedly been of great benefit to the districts and settlers served, although perhaps in some cases adding to the cost of construction.

The schedule attached gives a complete statement of the work on railways now in progress, and the extent to which it is anticipated the railways can be completed during the next two years, assuming that sufficient financial provision will be available.

NORTH ISLAND LINES.

North Auckland Main Trunk Railway.—Work on this railway is being prosecuted on two sections, widely separated—one, the Rangiahua Section, between Okaihau and Rangiahua, on the Hokianga River, and the other, the Kirikopuni Section, running from Waiotira Railway Junction to Kirikopuni, across the Wairoa River. The completion of the Rangiahua Section will extend railway communication to the waters of Hokianga Harbour and towards the large area of country north of that harbour. The Kirikopuni Section will carry rail connection across the Wairoa River, and when the Dargaville Section is complete will link the Kaihu Valley with the general railway system.

Work on the Rangiahua Section had been started some years ago, but financial considerations caused its suspension. This section of railway in grading down from Okaihau to the Rangiahua Valley is running for many miles high up on the sides of the valley. This country has proved to be of a very treacherous and unstable nature. The cuttings slip, and the banks subside. Much of the ground on which the line has to be built is old-slip country of wide extent. However, the Engineers are using stone-drain and dry-stone-wall construction on an extensive scale, and it is anticipated that in spite of the natural difficulties the line will be successfully built without undue delays.

On the Kirikopuni Section (length, 13½ miles) one of the outstanding construction features is the greatly increased extent of earthworks due to slipping cuttings and the need for widening banks on weak or slipping foundations. As a result of an unusually wet winter, almost every cutting on a length of 11 miles slipped, and to cope with the situation much additional stone-drain and similar work was necessary, and five steam-shovels were continuously employed excavating the slipped saturated