

roads is justified by the present traffic, the local authorities concerned have not come forward with suitable proposals to the extent anticipated or intended by the original legislation, and consequently the highways in these districts are appreciably below the average standard throughout the rest of the Dominion.

During the last session amending legislation was passed empowering the Board to increase its subsidy towards the cost of maintenance from £1 for £1 to £1 10s. for £1. Thus within three years the Board's contribution has increased from 33 per cent. to 50 per cent. and then again to 60 per cent. of the total cost of highway maintenance.

To provide sufficient funds for this year's construction programme it has been found necessary to make a transfer from the Revenue Fund to the Construction Fund in accordance with section 15 of the Main Highways Act, 1922. This transfer will be a temporary one only, it being the Government's intention to introduce during this session legislation providing for reimbursement to the Revenue Fund of any amount so transferred.

I have pleasure in recording that the Main Highways Board has willingly and effectively co-operated with the Government in providing suitable work for the relief of the unemployed.

RAILWAYS.

ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The expenditure out of the Public Works Fund amounted to £384,439 1s. 8d., for the provision of additional rolling-stock, motor-vehicles for road services, electric lighting for cars, improvements and additions to station buildings, extension of sidings, bridge-work, cranes, weighbridges, turntables, additional dwellings, and purchase of land.

RAILWAYS IMPROVEMENT AUTHORIZATION ACT, 1914.

The expenditure under the Railways Improvement Authorization Act, 1914, amounted to £665,145 9s. 6d., including the sum of £32,233 8s. 11d., the Railway Department's proportion of the cost of raising the loan. The works included in this expenditure were new stations, station-yards, goods-sheds, and terminal facilities at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Addington, Lyttelton, Timaru; duplication, Penrose-Papakura; grade easements, Frankton Junction—Te Kuiti; new lines, Auckland—Westfield and Auckland—Morningside; workshops and locomotive workshops equipments; elimination of level crossings; deviations, Ravensbourne—Burke's, Pelichet Bay, and Palmerston North; signalling, interlocking, and safety appliances and electric lighting.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

At Wellington new Public Works stores buildings were acquired; the workshops have been moved from Sydney Street to Pipitea Point, and on the space vacated by the workshops new offices have been erected, to assist in relieving the shortage of accommodation for Government Departments. Additions were made to the caretaker's quarters at Shelly Bay and to the Hector Observatory.

In the Taumarunui district new departmental offices and further staff accommodation were erected in the town of Taumarunui, and the fish-hatchery at Tokaanu has been completed.

Additions to departmental buildings were made at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Napier, and Invercargill.

Further stores space was provided at Penrose and Greymouth, and a departmental garage erected at Dunedin.

COURTHOUSES.

No new Courthouses were commenced during the year, but new buildings at Te Puke and Balclutha, which were under erection in the previous year, were completed, and alterations and renovations were carried out at Whakatane, Palmerston North, and Invercargill.