

Mr. Polson had twenty-four years of good service to his credit, and at the time of his death was an Overseer at Invercargill.

Mr. Wright was a Buildings Overseer at Nelson, and had served the Department faithfully for eighteen years.

In addition, the following five officers—John Hannah, S. J. Harding, A. W. Horne, S. R. James, and A. J. Sutcliffe—retired on well-earned superannuation.

Mr. Hannah, at the time of his retirement, was Acting Inspecting Engineer in the Head Office, but he had previously held with distinction the positions of District Engineer at Wellington and Resident Engineer at Nelson and Tauranga. Although his continuous service dated only from 1901, he was first connected with the Department in 1877.

Mr. Harding, who was Office Engineer at Auckland, joined the Department in 1894, and since then he had occupied many engineering positions and was connected for several years with the heavy works on the central portion of the North Island Main Trunk Railway.

Mr. Horne, whose services commenced in 1903, was an Assistant Road Engineer at Gisborne at the time of his retirement through ill-health, and, I am sad to say, died less than a year after being superannuated.

Mr. James, who was Inspector of Works at Ngaruawahia, joined the service in 1900, and has left behind him a great record of bridge-building.

Mr. Sutcliffe, who at the time of his retirement held the position of Chief Clerk in the District Electrical Engineer's Office at Christchurch, had continuous service from 1896, but had been employed in temporary positions prior to that date.

CONCLUSION.

It will be abundantly clear from the particulars given in the preceding pages that during the past year the construction of all classes of developmental works that are chargeable to capital has continued on a very extensive scale. The total expenditure against the Public Works Fund and other capital accounts amounted to £6,777,474, and that sum has only once been exceeded in any one financial year. The expenditure, however, on works which are directly carried out by the Public Works Department represents a total greater than that in any previous period.

The provision of transport facilities continues to be the most important of the activities that are chargeable against these funds, and this must necessarily be so in a young country where the success of primary industries is so dependent upon a successful and adequate transport system.

Of the total expenditure from funds under my control the sum of approximately £2,360,000 was expended upon Railway development, the construction of new lines absorbing £1,096,000, while the important railway-improvements works and additions to open lines now in hand absorbed a rather larger sum.

Portions of new lines under construction represent important links in the existing system, and as these are approaching completion it is reasonable to anticipate that during the next few years there will be a decrease in the expenditure on the construction of new lines.

Next in order of importance is the expenditure upon highway and road construction and improvement. Under these heads a total sum of approximately £1,140,000 came to charge. I have in the introductory portion of this statement dealt at some length with the most important and pressing question of finance for highway and road improvement purposes.

The expenditure of the very large sum of £1,130,000 from the Water-power Works and Electric-supply Account is an ample indication of the great importance in which the utilization of electric energy is held by the Government. It is a most important and vital fact that electric energy is available for the use of town and country dweller alike, and the reticulation of country districts must go a long way towards providing the country dweller with the amenities of city life and retarding the urban drift.

It is hardly necessary to make further mention here of the many other activities, important though these be, that my Department has carried on.

I wish, however, to very briefly stress that I feel sure that economy and efficiency of management and operation are the guiding motives throughout the