

The Board records its appreciation of the work which has been done during the year by District Highway Councils. It can be realized that it is not always possible to accept recommendations made by District Highway Councils, as the members of these bodies have not the same opportunity of keeping in touch with the financial situation as Board members, nor are they always in a position to view matters from a national standpoint. Nevertheless, all recommendations made by District Highway Councils receive the most careful consideration. The Board, moreover, fully realizes that the work of District Councils cannot be measured merely by recommendations passed on to it. Their work involves a great deal of local negotiation and discussion which do not come directly under the Board's notice.

The Board also wishes to place on record its appreciation of the enthusiastic co-operation which has been accorded its policy by its representatives in the various districts, together with the whole of their staffs.

With the object of gaining first-hand knowledge of local problems and at the same time keeping in touch with those responsible for local-authority administration throughout the Dominion, the Board during the year made two comprehensive tours of the North Island, traversing the greater portion of the primary highway system. Opportunity was taken on the occasion of the visit to the North Auckland District to inspect three different routes which had been investigated for the purpose of deciding on the future main artery north of the City of Auckland. It is proposed that the Board undertake a tour of the South Island during the year 1927-28.

PERSONAL.

Mr. J. D. Bruce, one of the members representing the New Zealand Counties Association, and a foundation member of the Board, by reason of ill health retired on the 27th July, 1926, and on the same date Mr. C. J. Talbot, Fairlie, was appointed to fill the consequential vacancy. On Mr. Bruce's retirement the Board placed on record, by resolution, its very great appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him during his term of office. It is with deep regret that the Board has to record the subsequent death of Mr. Bruce, which took place on the 28th August, 1927.

Early in April, 1926, Mr. F. W. Furkert, Chairman of the Board, proceeded abroad on a twelve-months world tour. Whilst in Italy in September, 1926, he attended, as the official representative of New Zealand, the Fifth International Road Congress at Milan. During Mr. Furkert's absence from New Zealand Mr. C. J. McKenzie, Assistant Engineer-in-Chief of the Public Works Department, held the position of Chairman.

As this report is going to press the sad news has been received of the untimely death, on the 8th September, 1927, of Mr. P. S. Waldie, Chief Clerk of the Public Works Department, who has been an active member of the Board since April, 1924, and it is desired here to record our appreciation of the loyal and efficient service rendered by Mr. Waldie during the three years he was associated with us.

MAIN HIGHWAYS AMENDMENT ACT, 1926.

Several amendments to the Main Highways Act, 1922, were brought into operation by the passing of the Main Highways Amendment Act, 1926. The most important amendment authorized the Board to increase its subsidy towards the cost of maintenance from £1 for £1 to £1 10s. for £1. The effect of this amendment is that the Board is now paying 60 per cent. of the cost of maintenance of ordinary main highways, whereas the original Act provided for a contribution of 33 per cent. only. The Board was also authorized, in special cases, to increase its maintenance subsidy to local authorities without the necessity for declaring the sections of main highways involved to be Government roads. Another clause in the Amendment Act aims at giving further assistance towards the cost of maintenance in boroughs where large bridges are situated on continuations of main highways. The Board was also given power in the amending Act to advance on loan to local authorities sums not exceeding in the aggregate £50,000, the maximum period of any such loan being limited to ten years. Although several inquiries were made concerning this, only one application, of £3,400, was finalized in terms of this provision.

DECLARATION OF NEW MAIN HIGHWAYS.

In pursuance of section 11 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, the usual annual review of main highways was made and District Highway Councils submitted recommendations for new highways totalling 693 miles in length. The following roads, of a total length of 187 miles 75 chains were declared, bringing the total length of main highways in the Dominion, less the mileage revoked, up to 6,390 miles 77 chains:—

No. 2 Highway District—						M. ch.
Papakura—Clevedon	..	..	..	..	..	7 73
No. 5 Highway District—						
Napier—Wellington, via Wairarapa (extension) ..	..	..	..	..	..	0 31
Omahu—Tukituki River Bridge via Hastings and Havelock ..	..	..	..	..	..	12 0
Farndon—Hastings	..	..	..	..	..	5 0
No. 11 Highway District—						
Takaka—Terakohe	..	..	..	..	..	7 10
Nelson—Westport (Jenkins Hill)	..	..	..	..	..	1 32
No. 12 Highway District—						
Loopline Road	..	..	..	..	..	9 0
No. 13 Highway District—						
Hanmer—Jollie's Pass	..	..	..	..	..	2 0