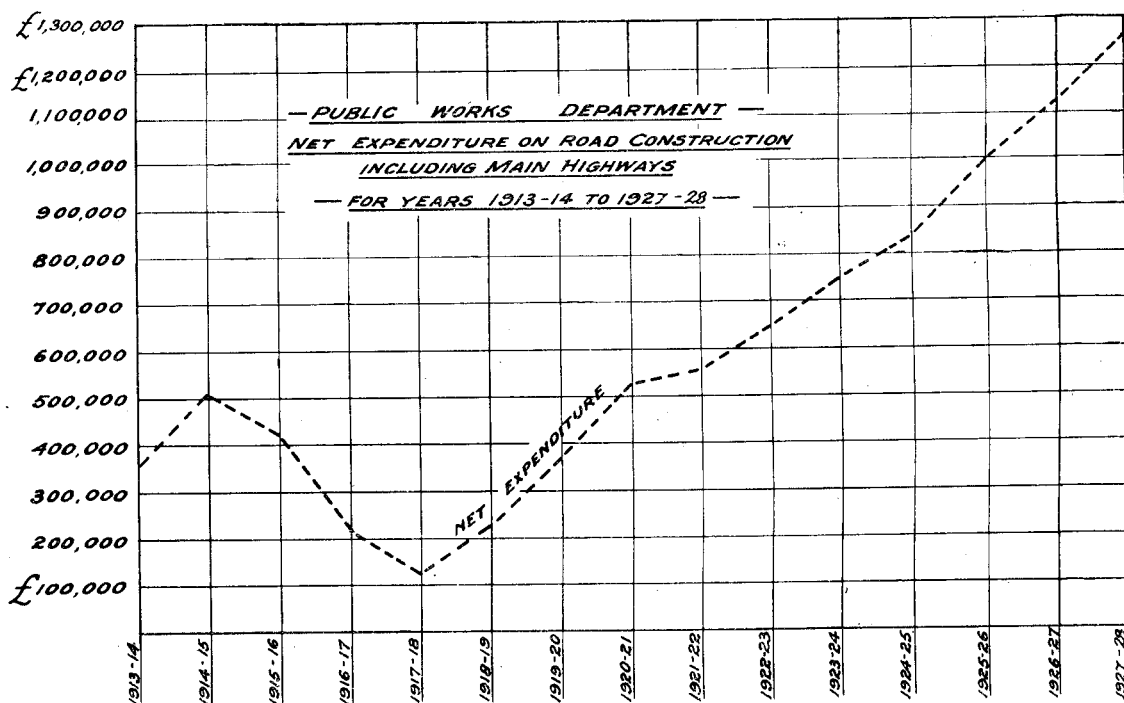




Wherever possible, consideration in the way of improved access was given to the backblock settlers, and the setting-aside of a substantial sum under the new vote, "Roads to provide access to outlying districts," resulted in more attention being paid to those roads than would have been possible from the general allocation under the ordinary Roads vote. The extension of the Main South Road of Westland with a view to its ultimate connection with the general roading system of Otago is one of the works which I have particularly in mind in this connection. In my Statement last year I mentioned the fact that the new vote was being created, and the results obtained have, I think, amply justified the decision to earmark a specified amount for the purpose of opening up and improving the roads in the sparsely populated districts.

In addition to the road-construction which was undertaken by the various local bodies and the Department out of the usual funds provided from the Roads and Outlying Districts votes, a large number of new works in various parts of the country were put in hand for the purpose of giving relief to the unemployed. Many of these were completed, while others are approaching that stage, and a considerable number of roads the construction of which under ordinary circumstances would have had to remain over for possibly several years have in this way received attention.

It is the policy of the Government, where circumstances warrant such treatment, to assist the local bodies with the renewal of bridges, the state of the finance of the county, the nature of the materials used in the old structure, and the fact as to whether the Government or the local ratepayers bore the cost of the original bridge all being taken into consideration when arriving at the rate of assistance to be granted. In the course of the year under review several bridges, some of which were built of soft timber and had been in use for upwards of twenty years, were replaced by modern and more substantial structures. This replacement of old bridges has in some cases been the final work in the general improvement of a road.