

that the Commissioners agree with the policy of the Motor-omnibus Traffic Act, 1926, and find the majority of its provisions, and the provisions of the regulations issued under it, reasonable and satisfactory. The Government is giving consideration to the suggestions made by the Commission for amendments to this law, and also to the question of bringing forward other amendments which experience has shown might be desirable.

PLANT AND MECHANICAL.

If the order of reference under the heading "Plant and Mechanical" were to be in keeping with the relative importance of the wide variety of work undertaken by the mechanical staff, first place would be given to plant-maintenance in its many phases. However capable an operator may be in the control of an efficient machine, that machine frequently controls the entire local situation—it has, in fact, complete "job control"—hence requests from the field for renewable parts or for the repair of some worn or over-strained part belonging to a hard-worked plant article are immediately dealt with, and are given preference over current general business.

During the year certain districts have benefited by the appointment of Plant Overseers, men who by training and experience are competent to correctly diagnose plant-ailments, who immediately counteract threatened defects, and who are capable of undertaking the practical and other work incidental to the inspection of motor-omnibuses, also contracts for manufactured ironwork.

As was expected, the regulation of motor-omnibus design and construction for the safety of the public, and for the control of motor-vehicles in general throughout the Dominion, has sent much additional work to the Mechanical Engineers' office, and it is opportune to here add that my Department endeavours to keep abreast of the times in the fast-travelling and progressive motor world.

The comparatively large undertaking in the Wellington—Tawa Flat Railway Deviation has occasioned more than the ordinary amount of time in the preparation of specifications for the supply by tender of labour-aiding plant and machinery, but the new plant required for this work is not included in the following schedule of plant which has been purchased and delivered for general purposes during the year: Four air-compressors, one air-hoist, one air-lock, two air-receivers, two bitumen-boilers, six concrete-mixers, five electric motors, one electric winch, two fans, five light locomotives, ten machine tools, nineteen motor-cars, seven motor-trucks, one motor-velocipede, one oil-engine, one pump, two road-graders, one steam-crane, three tractors, two trailers, and one welding plant.

STAFF.

It is with sincere regret that I have to record the fact that a number of officers of the Department died, as one might say, in harness. Mr. J. F. Simpson, Assistant Engineer, was accidentally shot while at work. Mr. C. H. Lawn, Office Engineer, after a long and valuable service, died, having worked until 5 o'clock on the very day of his death. Assistant Engineer A. A. Quartermain died from appendicitis, contracted while on his Christmas holidays. S. Fittall, Storekeeper, and A. Ross, Overseer, died after comparatively short illnesses.

Mr. H. Dickson, Office Engineer at Auckland, retired on superannuation, and Messrs. F. N. Thompson, District Engineer, E. R. McKillop, Assistant Engineer, and G. I. B. Thomas, Assistant Engineer, resigned in order to take up positions with the Wellington City Corporation.

During the year a number of retired Public Works officers passed away, notable amongst these being Mr. W. S. Short, I.S.O., for many years Under-Secretary of the Department, and who since his retirement on superannuation has rendered valuable assistance to the Department, extending almost up to the time of his death, by acting as a Commissioner in investigating such questions as the allocation of costs of road and bridge construction and maintenance between different mutually interested bodies.