

During the year the Board made two comprehensive tours of the South Island. It is pleasing to record that during the two years which elapsed since its previous tour of this Island a very considerable improvement in the condition of the surface of the main highways has been brought about in practically every locality. This visit enabled the Board to obtain first-hand information in regard to the large number of roads which had been recommended by District Highways Councils for declaration as main highways in consequence of the introduction of the petrol-tax. In several cases the Board took the opportunity of inspecting roads, the claims of which for inclusion in the highways scheme seemed doubtful.

PERSONAL.

In consequence of the death of Mr. P. S. Waldie, Chief Clerk of the Public Works Department, who had been a member of the Board for three years, Mr. J. J. Gibson, Accountant of the Public Works Department, was appointed to be a member of the Board on the 9th February, 1928.

MAIN HIGHWAYS AMENDMENT ACT, 1927.

Several amendments to the Main Highways Act, 1922, were made by the passing of the Main Highways Amendment Act, 1927. Only two clauses of importance were embodied in this Act, the remainder of the sections being merely machinery clauses. One clause authorized local authorities to borrow their proportion of the cost of reconstruction of any bridge over 30 ft. span without a poll of the ratepayers, provided a resolution by the District Highways Council to the effect that the reconstruction of the bridge is necessary is confirmed by the Board. While the Board has always strongly supported the system whereby the interests of ratepayers are safeguarded by the taking of polls, it was felt that in many cases of bridge reconstruction the expenditure involved in following the statutory procedure was out of proportion to the cost and importance of the works concerned. The operation of this amendment will also expedite the rebuilding of small structures which have, through obsolescence, become a danger to the travelling public.

The second clause, to which reference has been made, was that authorizing the Board to charge the cost of experimental works to the Revenue Fund irrespective of whether the type of work would ordinarily be classified as construction or maintenance.

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. Recommendations for new highways totalling 975 m. in length were received from District Highways Councils. The following roads, of a total length of 64 m. 29 ch., were declared, while 17 m. 12 ch. were revoked.

<i>New Main Highways.</i>					Length.	
					M.	ch.
No. 1 Highway District—						
	Hoteo Railway-station Road	..	..	..	0	20
	Paparoa-Maungaturoto Railway-station	..	..	..	6	0
No. 2 Highway District—						
	Panmure-Howick	..	..	..	4	66
	Drury-Waiuku via Pukekohe	..	..	..	20	30
No. 4 Highway District—						
	Hick's Bay Wharf Road	..	..	..	1	44
No. 8 Highway District—						
	Waitotara Station Road	..	..	..	1	40
No. 10 Highway District—						
	Dreyer's Rock Road	..	..	..	6	0
No. 13 Highway District—						
	Christchurch-Blenheim Main Highway (alteration in route)	..			0	48
No. 14 Highway District—						
	Christchurch-Governor's Bay via Dyer's Pass..	..			4	0
No. 16 Highway District—						
	Cromwell-Hawea Flat (alteration in route)	..	..	..	0	20
No. 17 Highway District—						
	Dunedin-Portobello (low road)	..	..	..	10	16
	Dunedin-Portobello (high road)	..	..	..	8	65
					64	29

Main Highways revoked.

No. 2 Highway District—						
	Auckland-Helensville	..	..	..	1	55
No. 4 Highway District—						
	Rotokautuku Bridge-Tikitiki via right bank Waiapu River	..			9	66
No. 5 Highway District—						
	Napier-Wellington Main Highway (section in Waipawa Borough)				0	31
No. 12 Highway District—						
	Westport-Nelson (Westport-Te Kuha)	..	..	..	5	20
					17	12