

Schedule Showing Amounts involved in Special Schemes approved by the Board after the Passing of the Motor-spirits Tazation.

Highways District.	Estimated Cost.	Board.
No. 1—	£	£
Auckland—Maungaturoto ..	249,000	249,000
Other paving-works ..	115,000	80,000
No. 2	400,000	300,000
No. 4	40,000	30,000
No. 5	75,000	56,000
No. 6 (Te Kuiti - Bulls) ..	200,000	200,000
No. 7	44,000	33,000
No. 8	100,000	75,000
No. 9*	65,000	49,000
No. 10	24,000	18,000
No. 11	30,000	22,500
No. 13	30,000	22,500
No. 14	324,000	243,000
No. 15	243,750	183,000
No. 16	65,000	56,000
No. 17	180,000	150,000
No. 18	50,000	37,500
	<u>£2,234,750</u>	<u>£1,804,500</u>

* Also Wellington City and Suburban Highways Board paving schemes, on which there are at present annual charges amounting to approximately £22,000.

Commenting on the foregoing, I would point out that if the sum of £150,000 or any sum approximating that amount has to be found for the purpose of outside roads it will mean that the balance of £155,000 at the end of this year will be reduced accordingly. Even so, with our expenditures to-day we are not able to contribute all the requirements of local bodies in connection with road-construction. The amount that has been applied for this last year in respect of works in the different districts throughout New Zealand are as follows: Applied for, £1,857,986; approved, £1,260,995. The actual cash allocation which will be available is £960,000. Those figures refer to construction. On maintenance account the figures are: Applied for, £1,420,999; approved, £1,307,844; and the amount approved in respect of secondary highways is £337,664. We cannot cut down the allocations in connection with maintenance, because maintenance is absolutely essential to the keeping of the roads in order. The actual amounts in connection with the second column of the main-highways estimates table are not the amounts actually allotted, but the amount of cash which we anticipate will be used for that purpose. The local bodies, through the institution of the petrol-tax, have been receiving the benefit of the secondary highways during the last year, but they have not found the full effect of that particular benefit; and, as a proof of that, I would mention that during 1928-29 the amount which was expended on secondary highways, and which was for the special purpose of relieving the counties, was £147,873, and the amount which has been applied for this year for the maintenance of the same roads is £337,664. So it is quite evident that the local bodies are finding the benefit of these additional highways. With regard to the actual amount of construction work in connection with the operation of the petrol-tax, which was to be applied for the purpose of construction of high-class paving for the carrying of heavy traffic, that programme was laid down last year in order to absorb the amount which had been accumulated in the fund, and also for the expenditure of from £180,000 to £200,000 a year. One-quarter of the petrol-tax was set aside for that purpose. Those programmes, which have practically all been accepted, amount to £2,234,750, of which £1,804,500 is being found by the Board. If, therefore, our funds have to be utilized for the payment of works in connection with other than main highways the result will be that we will have to cut down our expenditure in other directions, because we will not have the money available to transfer from our Revenue Account to our Construction Account in the following years. We cannot, as I have said, cut down the maintenance, because that is absolutely essential to maintain the roads. At the present time, on our Construction Account we have not been able this year to give the amount that our District Engineers are requiring throughout New Zealand to maintain our construction work to the extent we would like. That matter would be accentuated in the future if further money could not be found. The other particular phases of this question have been dealt with by Mr. Harley. Clause 54 is to the effect that the Main Highways Board is, as its name implies, a Board for the construction and maintenance of "main highways." If other roads are allowed to come into the matter the purposes of the Main Highways Board are to a certain extent affected, and an enormous number of applications and other details will have to be gone into which would make the work very cumbersome indeed, and which would grant very little relief to the local bodies, because the money we would have available would be very small indeed. I am only dealing with this clause of the Bill, but there is another important matter dealt with by the other witnesses, and it is evidently in the minds of some of the members of the Committee—I refer to the question of the Public Works Department and the Transport Department. From my knowledge and experience on the Board I consider it would be absolutely essential, if the Highways Board is transferred to the control of the Transport Department, that the head or one of the high officials of the Public Works Department should be a member of the Board, in order that there may be a direct relationship between the two Departments.