

A comparison with previous years' output of new construction is given hereunder :—

Year.					Locomotives.	Cars.	Vans.	Wagons.
1926	..	..	..	..	.. 6	46	18	367
1927	..	..	..	..	.. 12	6	6	216
1928	..	..	..	..	.. 2	4	21	252
1929	..	..	..	..		10	6	497
1930	..	..	..	..		11	3	399
1931	..	..	..	..	.. 12	48	24	1,436

In addition to the above, 15 new boilers, 405 new tarpaulins, and 10 new motor-bus bodies were constructed in the workshops. Also for public bodies and oil companies 10 20-ton tip-wagons and seven rail tank-wagons were constructed.

In addition to the foregoing, the workshops have fabricated for the Maintenance Branch a considerable number of girders in connection with bridge-strengthening programmes which they have in hand. Otahuhu delivered 223 tons of girders and Hutt workshops delivered 621 tons completely fabricated, ready for erection.

NEW LOCOMOTIVE CONSTRUCTION.

During the year twelve C Class shunting-locomotives were completed in our workshops, leaving twelve yet to be finished to finalize the original order. These engines are being built to replace obsolete shunting-locomotives, and their building permits a permanent stopping and writing-off of some very old locomotives, which were deficient in power for existing conditions and which were costly as regards maintenance. The engines already on the track have amply proved their usefulness, as they handle shunting operations with more marked despatch than was formerly the case.

During the year a survey was made of the general efficiency of all our locomotive stock, from both an operating and a maintenance point of view. This survey indicated that it was essential to take definite steps in the commencement of a renewal programme, so that the elimination of our obsolete and low-powered units could be effected as rapidly as financial circumstances would permit.

The design of a suitable general-service main-line locomotive was therefore put in hand, and the drawings in connection therewith are well advanced. The proposed locomotive will be of such power that the elimination of considerable "assisting" mileage will be possible. Apart from this factor, modern practice is being followed and ruggedness in construction aimed at.

COAL-GAS FOR CAR-LIGHTING.

Towards the end of the financial year a completion was made with the change-over from Pintsch gas to coal-gas for car-lighting purposes. The new system is functioning satisfactorily; but to obtain still better results minor modifications are being made to the apparatus.

A comparison of the expenditure for car-lighting during the latter portion of the year as against the corresponding portion of the previous year shows that with the use of coal-gas a saving of approximately £1,000 per four-weekly period is being obtained.

This saving is in line with the estimates initially made, and shows that the change-over was justified.

COAL-HANDLING APPLIANCES.

During the year consideration has been given to the question of employing more economical methods at the respective locomotive depots as regards the handling of coal for locomotives, the idea being to reduce costs by the elimination of manual handling as far as is possible. As the schemes for each depot are completed and as finance is available, such mechanical plant will be installed. To date proposals for several depots have been completed and the plant required is actually on order.

RECLAMATION OF OLD MATERIALS.

The Reclaim Department in each of the main workshops is now working on a satisfactory basis, and the reclaim operations, which commenced on the 1st April, 1930, have, as a result of the first year's operating, clearly demonstrated the need for the inclusion of such a department in the workshops organization. The work has principally been confined to the handling of the scrap from shops and depots, sorting and classifying same, the recovery and reconditioning of reclaimable material, and the issue of same as required for use in place of new materials.

During the year 27 obsolete locomotives and 12 condemned boilers were scrapped and completely handled by the Reclaim Departments at Hutt and Hillside. In addition, recoveries were generally made from various branches of the Department and from other Government Departments.

MAINTENANCE OF LOCOMOTIVES.

The output of locomotives overhauled in the two main locomotive workshops was 234, which number was considered reasonable to meet the traffic requirements and have due regard to the finance available.

Comparison of the output with previous years shows that this output figure compares favourably with that of former years, and the work on the engines overhauled generally has been heavier, as the engines individually have been called upon to run a greater mileage between overhauls.