

taken place abroad in the design of efficient and economically operated aeroplanes, and the improvements that have been effected in the mechanical technique of instrument flying, have been such as to put this new means of transport in a position where it can no longer be ignored if this Dominion is to remain progressive.

The services that have already commenced operation on the east coast of the North Island and the west coast of the South Island have clearly demonstrated the great use that this new form of transport will have in further opening up the country. The case of the South Westland air service is unique in that the entire passenger and mail transport needs of the scattered community in the far South can be met at a fraction of the cost that would be necessary for the provision of roads, without considering the cost of bridging the many deep and turbulent rivers in the district.

During the coming year very great developments in civil aviation in this country can be expected, and I must place on record the very great assistance and close co-operation the officers of my Department have received in this work from the staff of the Unemployment Board.

RAILWAYS—IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The net expenditure out of the Public Works Fund under the above heading for the year ended 31st March, 1935, was £154,973. The charges for Public Works administration costs were £500, making the total expenditure £155,473. Practically the whole of the expenditure was incurred in connection with the new terminal facilities at Wellington.

At the beginning of the year the contractors for the new station (Messrs. The Fletcher Construction Co., Ltd.) were engaged in excavating and pile-driving. In October the erection of steel work was begun, and by March the work of concreting was under way. At the same time the Railway Department was engaged on the alterations to the yard. Sidings were laid down and ballasting-work proceeded with, and by January the new car-yard had been completed. Pile-driving for the new locomotive depot was begun. At the 31st March the erection of a signal cabin was proceeding and platform fronts were being erected. Considerable work was also done on roading.

Satisfactory progress was also made on the electrification of the Wellington-Paekakariki area, the erection of poles to carry the 33,000-volt transmission-lines being carried on throughout the year. All drilling and grouting preparatory to the erection of overhead gear in the tunnels was completed, and sections of the 11,000-volt armoured cables have been laid.

During the year rails were laid on the Wellington—Tawa Flat deviation, and at the end of the year sufficient progress had been made to indicate that one line would be available for goods traffic in July of this year. From the Wellington yard to the north end of No. 2 tunnel the line has been laid with 100 lb. rails. A novel feature in so far as New Zealand is concerned is the welding of complete sections of line in the tunnels.

LIGHTHOUSES.

The net expenditure on lighthouses for the year was £4,021. At Baring Head the new lighthouse was completed and put into operation on 18th June last, with the simultaneous closing-down of Pencarrow Light.

At Tiritiri Island a fog signal is in the course of preparation. The machinery and equipment is to hand and is being placed in position.

HARBOUR WORKS.

The expenditure on harbour works for the year was £2,581. The works completed are Pitt Island Jetty at Chatham Islands and Tryphena Wharf, Great Barrier Island. At Westport the suction dredge was engaged during the period clearing the bar and dredging in the floating basin and berthages. Shipping at this port showed a slight improvement on that of the previous year.