

“(5) Every local authority that receives a subsidy under the foregoing provisions of this section shall grant to the ratepayers concerned a rebate or refund, as the case may require, of an amount equal to twelve and one-half per centum of the rates made and levied by it on its own account for the current financial year on any land with respect to which this section applies.”

The total amount of subsidies paid from the Main Highways Revenue Fund during the year 1934–35 under the authority of the foregoing legislation was £178,246.

FINANCE.

The actual income of the Board's Revenue Fund from external sources for the year 1934–35 amounted to £1,419,473. The table below shows how this amount is made up, and the corresponding figures for previous years are also shown :—

—	1924–25.	1925–26.	1926–27.	1927–28.	1928–29.	1929–30.	1930–31.	1931–32.	1932–33.	1933–34.	1934–35.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Transfer from Consolidated Fund	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	†	†	†	†	†
Proceeds of tax on tyres and tubes collected through the Customs Department	161,986	223,699	188,450	219,658	196,747	155,722	129,188	84,649	63,253	62,979	91,693
Registration and license fees of motor-vehicles, &c.	268,178	78,038*	283,963	303,861	341,017	378,135	397,139	372,224	354,216	354,444	355,990
Motor-spirits tax ..	..	..	..	130,461	730,414	873,369	1,219,209	1,231,202	644,126	669,868	970,506
Mileage-tax ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,133	1,284
Totals ..	465,164	336,737	507,413	688,980	1,303,178	1,442,226	1,745,536	1,688,075	1,061,595	1,088,424	1,419,473

* This low figure was due to delay in the issue of number-plates for motor-vehicles.

† Further transfers abolished by amending legislation.

The receipts from the Customs tax on tyres and tubes show a marked increase on the corresponding amounts for the past three years.

Registration, license fees, &c., totalled approximately £1,500 more than for the preceding year, although the amounts received from this source for the last three years have remained almost constant.

The proceeds from the motor-spirits tax were very much higher for the year ended 31st March, 1935. The amount shown in the above table excludes the sum of £321,754, which was retained in the Consolidated Fund in terms of section 16 of the Finance Act (No. 2), 1934.

The amount thus retained, together with the special farm-lands subsidy (referred to under Legislation), which involved the payment of £178,246 from the Highways Revenue Fund, make up £500,000, so that in effect the actual position was similar to that which existed last year, when £500,000 was wholly retained in the Consolidated Fund.

As has been pointed out on previous occasions, the quantity of petrol imported into New Zealand is probably the most reliable index of the volume of the Dominion's motor traffic, with which is closely associated the cost of road maintenance. The gross importations of motor-spirit since 1926 have been as follow :—

	Gallons.		Gallons.
1926 (January to December)	44,800,000	1931 (January to December)	61,800,000
1927 ..	48,000,000	1932 ..	58,400,000
1928 ..	54,500,000	1933 ..	55,400,000
1929 ..	62,400,000	1934 ..	64,600,000
1930 ..	68,300,000		

It will be noted that the importations of motor-spirit for the calendar year of 1934 were much greater than for the previous three years. As a matter of fact, the figures for the last calendar year have only once previously been exceeded—in 1930.

For the year ended 31st March, 1935, the summarized expenditure under the Revenue Fund was as follows :—

	Expenditure.
	£
Maintenance works—	
North Island ..	610,356
South Island ..	322,319
Administration and general charges ..	44,434
Loan charges (including commutation of toll-gate charges and Hutt Road fees)..	281,871
Subsidies on rates..	181,105
Special subsidy on farm-land rates (Finance Act (No. 3), 1934)..	178,246
	<u>£1,618,331</u>