

The following statement shows the total expenditure by the Board in each Island from both funds for the financial year ended 31st March, 1935. The figures include administration charges :—

| —                  | Expenditure<br>on<br>Maintenance. | Expenditure<br>on<br>Construction. | Total<br>Expenditure<br>in<br>each Island. | Percentage<br>of<br>Expenditure<br>in<br>each Island. | Percentage<br>of Motor-<br>taxation<br>derived from<br>each Island. |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    | £                                 | £                                  | £                                          |                                                       |                                                                     |
| North Island .. .. | 639,434                           | 198,969                            | 838,403                                    | 64·36                                                 | 68·47                                                               |
| South Island .. .. | 337,675                           | 126,514                            | 464,189                                    | 35·64                                                 | 31·53                                                               |
| Totals .. ..       | 977,109                           | 325,483                            | 1,302,592                                  | 100·00                                                | 100·00                                                              |

MAINTENANCE.

The Board's first duty is to maintain all highways to a reasonable standard, and while it is impossible to keep all gravel surfaces at the 100-per-cent. mark all the year round, there is no doubt that the highway surfaces have improved year by year as a result of the Board's activities.

The Board does not hesitate to call on any local authority to effect any maintenance that is considered necessary, but it is noticed that the occasions on which it is necessary to take up with maintaining authorities cases of apparent neglect are becoming fewer each year. As highway funds are supplying directly or indirectly practically the whole cost of highway maintenance there is no excuse for neglect of maintenance. Attention was drawn to this financial position in last year's report.

One of the most-neglected items of maintenance in the past has been the painting of steel bridges, and it is pleasing to note that most of the local authorities are giving this work the serious attention that it requires.

Many important items of major maintenance have been carried out. Many bridges have been repaired in order to extend their lives till such time as their renewal can be faced, while a few have been converted into permanent structures. For instance, the Taipo River Bridge of four 110 ft. spans, which was originally built with steel cylinders and a timber superstructure, has had the timber trusses removed and replaced with steel-plate girders and a reinforced concrete deck.

A matter which is giving the Board some concern is the rapid development that is taking place in motor-vehicle design. It appears that the designed speed of motor-vehicles has been substantially increased during the last few years, and this means that in the interests of public safety reasonable improvements in alignment and visibility must still be continued.

As in the past, care is being given to smoothness of surface where bituminous maintenance surfaces are being applied. In certain cases where pavements have been down six or seven years and have become uneven and wavy under traffic impact, smoothing coats have been applied with good results. In other cases where the unevenness has been caused by swamp subsidence, the depressions have been taken out with premixed emulsions and aggregate.

The season has been an abnormally bad one for the carrying out of work. Most districts suffered a prolonged dry spell of weather, and, while this assisted most phases of the work, it produced much ravelling on the traffic compacted surfaces, and in many cases necessitated the postponement of sealing operations.

On the other hand, in the North Auckland area floods were frequent, and the Board was faced with considerable extra expenditure for the replacement of gravel on the surfaces, the removal of slips, and the restoration of many bridges that were washed away.

The average expenditure on maintenance per mile per annum on the whole main highways system by the Board and local authorities since 1924 is shown in the following table :—

| Year.         | Average<br>Expenditure<br>per Mile<br>per Annum.<br>£ | Year.         | Average<br>Expenditure<br>per Mile<br>per Annum.<br>£ |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1924-25 .. .. | 51·7                                                  | 1930-31 .. .. | 103·1                                                 |
| 1925-26 .. .. | 73·2                                                  | 1931-32 .. .. | 92·5                                                  |
| 1926-27 .. .. | 111·9                                                 | 1932-33 .. .. | 70·7                                                  |
| 1927-28 .. .. | 119·9                                                 | 1933-34 .. .. | 78·6                                                  |
| 1928-29 .. .. | 100·1                                                 | 1934-35 .. .. | 100·3                                                 |
| 1929-30 .. .. | 128·6                                                 |               |                                                       |

SURFACING.

During the last financial year 204 miles of dustless surfacing, including 27 miles of road-mix or plant-mix and 172 miles of surface-sealing, were carried out.

The programme for the year was for 300 miles of dustless surfacing. A considerable mileage was completed immediately after 31st March, but is not included in the past year's figures.

There is also a considerable mileage of metallised surface reconstructed and prepared ready for sealing during the coming season. The seal coats on these sections were deferred because engineers indicated that further traffic compaction was desirable to ensure a good job. In the meantime the surfaces are being carefully maintained.