

The expenditure on stores shows an increase of £521,966 as compared with the previous year. The purchases during the past ten years were as under:—

	£		£
1926	4,690,569	1931	4,286,803
1927	3,877,275	1932	2,757,214
1928	3,947,117	1933	2,109,698
1929	4,199,822	1934	2,417,676
1930	4,345,030	1935	2,939,642

Except in cases where circumstances were too urgent to allow of the usual procedure being followed, tenders or quotations were invited for the whole of the stores purchased.

CONTRACTS.

At the 31st March, 1935, contracts arranged by the Board were in operation for the supply of the undermentioned items to all Departments:—

Batteries for motor-vehicles.
Bricks, fireclay, earthenware pipes and fittings.
Brushware—painters and general.
Candles, soap, and soda.
Cement.
Coal, coke, and firewood.
Cream-separators.
Cyclostyle stencils and correcting fluid.
Disinfectant.
Electric lamps.
Fencing-wire.
Fuel oil and lubricating-oil for small Diesel engines.
Ink—cyclostyle, fountain-pen, and writing (powder and fluids).
Motor-vehicle lubricating oils and greases.
Motor-spirit and kerosene.
Motor-tires.
Paper—carbon, toilet, and wrapping.
Photographic work.
Polish—metal, floor, and paste.
Sensitized papers and linens.
Spare parts for motor-vehicles.
Superphosphate.
Twine.
Typewriters and typewriter-ribbons.

In addition to the above, numerous departmental contracts were also arranged throughout the year, the principal items concerned being:—

Aviation-spirit.
Boots for Unemployment Board and Defence Department.
Crockery for Mental Hospitals Department.
Foodstuffs (sugar, milk, bread, meat, fish, hams and bacon, &c.).
Fuel oil for Navy and Government ships.
Lubricating-oil for m.v. "Maui Pomare."
Samoan banana-cases.
Tobacco for Mental Hospitals Department.
Uniforms for messengers.

Competition for all items has been exceptionally keen, and the service rendered by contractors during the year has, in general, been efficient and satisfactory.

The system of purchasing stores required by Government Departments under period contracts has been found in the past to be both economical and convenient, and now that market conditions are becoming more stabilized it is proposed to consider the question of arranging contracts during the forthcoming year for the supply of other items in common use.

PREFERENCE TO NEW ZEALAND AND BRITISH MANUFACTURERS.

During the year the policy of preference to New Zealand and British manufacturers has been maintained.

Local manufacturers are obtaining an ever-increasing share of Government business, and it is interesting to note that during the past two years plug tobacco supplied to the Mental Hospitals Department has been manufactured in the Dominion almost wholly from New-Zealand-grown leaf, whilst supplies of one of the major items of crockeryware required by this Department have also been obtained from a local manufacturer.

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