

The development of aerodromes and emergency landing-grounds is being primarily concentrated to provide a chain of fields along the air routes which are either already in operation or shortly to be commenced. Forty aerodromes or landing-grounds were actually under construction during the year, and construction proposals are under consideration for an additional sixty or seventy fields. Work was provided on aerodrome-construction for a maximum number of 2,400 men, who might otherwise have been engaged on less productive work.

Much of the greater portion of the expenditure to cover this work was made available from the Unemployment Funds, and a total of £202,860 was expended from this source. In addition, £3,464 was expended from the Consolidated Fund to cover the provision of tools, plant, materials, and overhead, £79,581 from Defence Department funds (including the £5,000 Civil Aviation vote), and an additional £4,854 from the Public Works funds, most of which is recoverable.

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, 1936, was £292,909. Almost the whole of this expenditure was incurred on the new terminal facilities at Wellington, which comprise three major works: the Wellington new station building and yard; the Tawa Flat deviation; and the Wellington-Paekakariki electrification. Some preliminary expenditure was incurred on the Wellington-Johnsonville electrification. The only other work of importance in hand during the year was the Puketeraki deviation, which was nearing completion at the 31st March, 1936.

Good progress was made during the year by the contractor with the erection of the new station building at Wellington. At the same time the layout of the new yard was proceeded with by the Railways Department and station platforms and verandas erected. The new signal-cabin was completed and a contract let for the erection of the locomotive depot. The construction of Bunny Street on a new alignment was completed, and at the close of the financial year the construction of a new taxi road was in hand.

The work of electrifying the section between Wellington and Paekakariki was continued according to schedule, the laying of the 33,000-volt cable being completed during the year and the overhead gear and rail bonding proceeded with. Sub-stations for traction power were nearing completion, and the outdoor steelwork for the electrical equipment was completed at two sub-stations.

On the Tawa Flat deviation one line was opened for night goods traffic on 22nd July, 1935. The Thermit welding of the rails on this section of line was completed and ballasting was proceeding. The new Tawa Flat station was nearly completed at the end of the financial year.

LIGHTHOUSES.

The net expenditure on lighthouses for the year was £3,320. At Baring Head additional oil storage was provided and a telephone-line eight miles in length erected to the Exchange at Eastbourne.

At Tiritiri Island a reinforced-concrete building was erected to house the fog-signal apparatus.

HARBOUR WORKS.

During the year the French Pass Wharf and Mangonui Wharf were completed, and the Te Hapua Wharf is now under construction. As far as the Public Works Fund was concerned no new expenditure was incurred on harbour works.