

PLANT AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT.

The policy of the present Government caused a change in the attitude adopted by the Department regarding the plant available from the major construction works that were closed down some years ago, and sales of surplus plant or equipment considered likely to prove of value upon future public works were stopped.

In anticipation of instructions to obtain modern construction plant, action was taken immediately after the change of Government to prepare the necessary specifications and advertise contracts for the supply of modern machinery, including diesel-engine-driven excavators on creeper track with shovel and drag-line equipment; diesel-engine and electric-motor-driven stationary air-compressors; diesel locomotives; pile-driving winches, pumping-sets, and portable air-compressors, all diesel-engine-driven; petrol-engine-driven concrete-mixers with power loading skips; portable rock crushing and screening plant; tunnel ventilating-fans, workshops machine tools, stationary diesel engines; diesel rollers and tractors; diesel-engine- and petrol-engine-driven road-graders; and motor-vehicles for use upon construction works generally.

Plant in Use.—During the year construction plant of various descriptions was used and maintained in good order upon the following works: Kirikopuni-Tangowahine Railway service; Tauraroa metal quarry; Motutara Island metal-quarry, including towing-launches and barges for metal transport; Wade-Waiwera-Warkworth to Waipu Main Highway improvement works; Devonport Naval Base; Auckland District road construction and maintenance; Mangere Aerodrome construction; motor-launch transport, Auckland and Hauraki Gulf; dredging at Thames Wharf tidal basin; swamp drainage, Taupiri district; Upper Waihou River, clearing and snagging; Arapuni Power-house extensions; Milsom Aerodrome; Tangahoe deviation work, Gisborne Aerodrome; Hobsonville Air Force Base; Wairoa-Waikokopu Railway service; Ahuriri Lagoon reclamation, drainage, and stop-banking; Bluff Hill slip, Napier; Esk River Railway bridge pier renewals; Upper Mangahao Power Scheme development work; power-line construction and renewals; Hutt Estuary reclamation; Wairoa River protection works; Ashley River Control Scheme; Lewis Pass Road; Levels Irrigation Scheme; Redcliff Irrigation Scheme; Omakau Irrigation Scheme; Ida Valley Irrigation Scheme; Teviot Irrigation Scheme; Butchers Dam; Fraser River Dam; Summit Road; Te Anau to Milford Road; Homer Tunnel; Waitaki Dam; Civil aerodromes and landing-grounds in Greymouth district; general roading works and road-maintenance works under Public Works vote and Main Highways votes throughout New Zealand.

Motor-vehicle Operations.—The introduction of fortnightly pays on the scattered public-works jobs throughout New Zealand, and also the general increase in works started up, has necessitated an increase in the Department's motor-vehicle fleet and a consequent increase in mileage for the year.

A general summary of the position is as follows:—

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S MOTOR-VEHICLES.

	1935-36.				
	At 1st July, 1934.	At 1st July, 1935.	Purchased.	Sold.	At 30th June, 1936.
Cars	138	141	40	27	154
Light delivery trucks	101	112	26	7	131
Trucks (1 ton and over)	69	72	20	13	79
Totals	308	325	86	47	364

The cost of operating the Public Works Department and Main Highways Board motor-vehicle fleet during the year is shown in the summary below, which also includes the results of the two previous year's operation for comparison.

The costs shown include the following:—

Running-charges: Petrol, oil, grease, tires, tubes, repairs, and maintenance.

Standing-charges—

Interest at 5 per cent. per annum and depreciation varying from a minimum of 20 per cent. to a maximum of 40 per cent. per annum on the capital cost.

Garage rent 5s. per week.

Registration and annual license fees.