

COAL-SUPPLIES.

The average consumption of coal per week during the year ended 31st March, 1936, was 8,515 tons, which was an increase of 483 tons per week compared with the previous year. A comparison of the purchases of New Zealand and imported fuel for eight years ended 31st March, 1936, is as follows :—

Year.		New Zealand. Tons.	Per Cent. of Total.	Imported. Tons.	Per Cent. of Total.	Total. Tons.
1928-29	..	.. 356,724	84.25	66,675	15.75	423,399
1929-30	..	.. 355,214	74.59	121,037	25.41	476,251
1930-31	..	.. 367,686	90.00	40,827	10.00	408,513
1931-32	..	.. 373,335	89.72	42,756	10.28	416,091
1932-33	..	.. 388,005	100.00	..	..	388,005
1933-34	..	.. 381,596	100.00	..	..	381,596
1934-35	..	.. 422,334	100.00	..	..	422,334
1935-36	..	.. 437,959	100.00	..	..	437,959

It will be noted that the purchases during the year were all in New Zealand coal. Of these purchases 175,661 tons were hard coal and 262,298 tons soft coal.

TIMBER AREAS.

As mentioned in last year's report, a survey was made of the Department's waste lands with a view to deciding which lands would be most suitable both from a general-utility and æsthetic point of view for afforestation purposes. The area of Crown land at Athenree (near Katikati) also mentioned in the report referred to has since been transferred to the Railway Department. A further area of 230 acres 22 perches of land at Athenree was purchased by the Department for a nominal sum, making a total area of approximately 2,962 acres of land available for afforestation purposes in this locality.

The Athenree area has been surveyed topographically and a small amount of planting of eucalypts has been carried out.

Two nurseries were established during the year, one at Lower Hutt and the other at Athenree, and a very satisfactory type of planting-stock will be available from these nurseries this season.

STAFF.

The total number of staff employed at the 31st March, 1936, including those on works chargeable to capital, was 17,908, as compared with 16,189 for the previous year. The average number actually at work throughout the year was 17,073, as compared with 16,048 the previous year.

Of the average number of staff at work during the year 11,954 were permanent and 5,119 were casual employees. The average number of men engaged on works chargeable to capital was 1,348, as compared with 930 during the previous year.

During the year 121 members of the permanent staff resigned, 81 retired on superannuation, 38 died, and 24 were dismissed or paid off.

Three hundred and eighty three employees were engaged.

Thirty-five members of the Second Division were promoted to the First Division.

During the year a total of £29,797 was paid under the Workers' Compensation Act to members of the Second Division who suffered injury in the course of their employment.

WORKSHOPS.

Five class K locomotives were completed in the workshops during the year, making a total of twenty-three locomotives of this class now in service. A further seven of these locomotives were under construction in the workshops at the end of the year. Twenty locomotives were scrapped during the year, making a total of 207 obsolete locomotives scrapped since 1926.

Five new boilers were built for replacement purposes, while five were under construction at the end of the year. Three hundred and ninety-four engines passed through the workshops during the year, and of these 204 received a major overhaul.

During the year one class WAB engine was fitted with new trailing bogies, while 130 engines were fitted with the new type of "Waikato" spark-arrester. Seventeen engines were fitted with electric headlights.

As at 31st March, 1936, there were 578 locomotives in service—562 steam, 11½ electric, and 5 electric-battery shunting engines.

The tractive effort of the locomotives in service during the year compared with the two previous years is as follows :—

	1936.	1935.	1934.
Number of locomotives in service ..	578	593	605
Total tractive power, in pounds ..	10,594,084	10,685,229	10,823,029
Average tractive power per locomotive, in pounds	18,234	18,172	17,889