

The expenditure on stores shows an increase of £312,172 as compared with the previous year. The purchases during the past ten years were as under:—

	£		£
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
1931	4,286,803	1936	3,251,814

CONTRACTS.

At the 31st March, 1936, contracts arranged by the Board were in operation for the supply of the undermentioned items to all Departments:—

Batteries for motor-vehicles.
Bricks, 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.
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 paper and linens.
Spare parts for motor-vehicles.
Superphosphate and compound superphosphate fertilizers.
Twine.
Typewriters and typewriter ribbons.

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

Aviation-spirit.
Boots for Labour and Defence Departments.
Crockery for Mental Hospitals Department.
Foodstuffs (sugar, milk, bread, butter, meat, fish, hams and bacon, &c.).
Fuel oil for Navy and Government ships.
Lubricating-oil for m.v. "Maui Pomare."
Medicines for Native schools.
Radio receivers and equipment for use in schools.
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.

PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL SEEDS.

Since December, 1931, the purchase of agricultural seeds for all Government Departments has been undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and this method of purchase has worked smoothly and efficiently. It is satisfactory to note that check tests undertaken during the year with samples drawn from actual deliveries have shown that the germination and purity percentages of the bulk supplies have substantially agreed with the particulars specified by the suppliers.

PREFERENCE TO NEW ZEALAND AND BRITISH MANUFACTURERS.

In the purchase of stores for Government use preference is given to New Zealand and British manufacturers, and this policy has been maintained throughout the year. Inquiries have also been instituted with the object of further extending the use of locally manufactured goods.

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