

were started recently. The connection of the Marlborough and Canterbury districts by means of the South Island Main Trunk Railway has also been taken in hand. A total of £600,000 for all such works for the current year will be provided in the Public Works Estimates which will be presented later in the session.

The intended provision of £610,700 for additions and improvements to opened railway-lines compares with a net expenditure of £292,909 last year, and will be applied in completion of the new station and yards at Wellington, the provision of additional rolling-stock and equipment, the electrification of the line between Wellington and Paekakariki, including the length to Johnsonville, and other works. In addition, expenditure out of renewal funds of the railways upon new rolling-stock, bridge-renewals, and other works will amount this year to £1,000,000.

The initiation of a greater volume of useful building work is a policy in which the Government is particularly interested, by reason of the great number of subsidiary industries and businesses which are affected by the increase of such activity. Furthermore, there is need and ample scope for expansion for our schools, mental hospitals, and public buildings generally, which at present leave much to be desired. Accordingly, the building programme has been considerably expanded, the loan allocation for this year being £1,200,000 as against a net expenditure last year of £346,880. There is a continuous demand for new post-office buildings and works, and the new loan-money provision for these purposes for this year will be £300,000, which will be supplemented to the extent of £100,000 from the post-office depreciation reserve established for the purpose of renewals. Additions and extensions to schools and erection of new buildings have been provided for to the extent of £500,000, and £400,000 has been allocated for general buildings, including large office buildings in Auckland and Wellington, which, when completed, will save the payment of rentals in various private buildings scattered through both of these cities.

**Public
buildings.**

Concerning mental hospitals, there are at the present time in our hospitals 935 patients in excess of what is considered to be proper accommodation, a state of overcrowding that calls for immediate action. In addition, provision has to be made for an annual increase of about 250 patients. Definite steps are being taken by the Government to improve the position, and at the present time there is under construction accommodation for approximately 600 patients. These works include four villas for 100 men and 100 women at Kingseat, Auckland; two villas for 100 men at Tokanui in the Waikato; three villas for 150 women at Ngawhatu, Nelson; one villa for 50 women at Hokitika; and two villas for 100 men at Templeton Farm, Christchurch. The latter institution was started in 1930, and two of the villas at present under construction are set apart for children. There is now at this home an adult section as well as the children's section, and when the present villas are completed there will be proper accommodation for 400 feeble-minded persons. Apart from accommodation for patients, many of the administrative buildings, such as stores, kitchens, and bakehouses, have become inadequate to deal with present requirements. Furthermore, some of the buildings (particularly at Seacliff and Nelson) have reached a stage where replacement is becoming necessary. Thus, if overcrowding is to be avoided and a proper standard of accommodation maintained, we must have an extensive building programme for some time to come.

**Mental
hospitals.**

In addition to these building activities, the Government is planning an extensive programme for the construction of houses to meet the present inadequate accommodation. The only limit to the erection of useful and necessary buildings is the number of tradesmen and the materials available.

Housing.

The improvement of transport routes, in both densely and sparsely populated areas, is one of the most important services which can be provided for the community. Roading expenditure is divided between two main accounts—the Main Highways Account providing for about 12,000 miles of roads of primary and secondary importance, and the "Roads" vote providing for a certain number of new "tourist" roads and numerous small metalling, formation, and bridge works in outlying areas. The provision for the "Roads" vote has been set down at £765,000 out of capital funds, together with some little assistance from current

**Highways and
roads.**