

STORES BRANCH.

An analysis of the amount expended in connection with the purchases of stores during the year is as under :—

	£	s.	d.
To merchants, manufacturers, and others in New Zealand ..	633,094	16	5
Through Trade Commissioner in Australia	110,143	6	5
Through High Commissioner in London	651,226	11	8
Material manufactured in railway workshops	332,062	19	1
Coal and coke	529,037	8	1
Manufactured and used material recovered from other branches, &c. ..	90,019	17	3
Timber from railway sawmill and stores used	29,913	0	11
	<u>£2,375,497</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>10</u>

The net increase in the year's expenditure compared with the previous year was £567,907 12s. 2d. The principal increases were—To merchants, manufacturers, and others in New Zealand, £171,806 1s. 4d.; through High Commissioner in London, £205,171 10s. 3d.; material manufactured in railway workshops, £117,256 10s. 4d.; coal and coke, £57,258 1s. 2d.; and timber from railway sawmill and stores used, £19,095 17s. 5d. There was a decrease of £6,012 19s. 4d. under the head "Through Trade Commissioner in Australia."

The increases enumerated above are due to the purchase of (1) materials for building programmes, (2) extra stocks of native and hardwood timber, and (3) imported materials. The payment of exchange in connection with purchases arranged through the High Commissioner, London, also involved considerable expenditure. There has been a general increase in the costs of material.

The total issues to all branches for the year amounted to £2,301,504 9s. 7d., compared with £1,900,970 2s. 9d. for the previous year, an increase of £400,534 6s. 10d.

A summary for six years showing the value of purchases and issues of stores (exclusive of coal), together with the value of stocks on hand (stores and coal), at the close of each year, is as under :—

Year.	Purchases.	Issues.	Stocks on Hand.		
			Stores.	Coal.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1932	852,044	1,018,616	481,056	181,073	662,129
1933	755,100	875,285	360,871	165,576	526,447
1934	1,059,879	969,067	451,683	157,637	609,320
1935	1,269,171	1,136,243	584,611	160,177	744,788
1936	1,436,696	1,400,858	622,899	144,888	767,787
1937	1,971,314	1,719,414	874,800	107,653	982,453

COAL-SUPPLIES.

The average consumption of coal per week during the year ended 31st March, 1937, was 8,830 tons, which was an increase of 315 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, 1937, is as follows :—

Year.	New Zealand. Tons.	Per Cent. of Total.	Imported. Tons.	Per Cent. of Total.	Total. Tons.
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
1936-37	433,795	100·00	..	..	433,795

It will be noted that the purchases during the year were again all in New Zealand coal. Of these purchases 212,060 tons were hard coal and 221,735 tons soft coal.

FORESTRY BRANCH.

During the year 112 piles for use by the Maintenance Branch were cut at the Ngongotaha and Rotorua plantations.

Thinning and clear felling operations were carried out at certain plantations in the South Island, and the following firewood was cut: Rolleston, 38 cords; Burnham, 991 cords; Chertsey, 504 cords; and Stewart's Gully, 164 cords. In addition, certain trees were cleared away from the signal-wires at Weedons and Rolleston, these trees, up to 31st December, 1936, having yielded 62 cords of firewood and 24 piles. At Temuka 30 cords of firewood were cut.