

A general description of some of the more important activities in each highway district is given hereunder :—

*Whangarei District.*

During the past year work was continued on the raising of sections of highway which were subject to flooding, and good progress was made. This class of work is particularly important in the North Auckland district, where in the past frequent flooding has caused interruptions to traffic.

The construction of the Brynderwyn Deviation was well advanced, and proposals have been adopted for reconstructing the highway northwards from Topuni in order to obtain standard alignment. By deviating from the existing road, which is of irregular curvature and width, a much higher standard of construction can be obtained, and this will eventually connect with the improvements at the southern end of the Brynderwyn scheme.

Special attention was given to the State highways in the direction of raising the standard of maintenance, and noticeable improvements have been effected to the running-surface on the arterial highways throughout this district. For several miles across the Ruawai Flats the formation was widened, shoulders built up and strengthened, and proper superelevation on curves was provided. It is hoped that paving will be commenced during the current year on the Dargaville-Maungaturoto section and certain other sections which carry a large amount of traffic. Consequent upon the transfer of Rodney County to the No. 2 Highways District, a depot has been established at Maungaturoto in connection with the supervision of State highways radiating from that centre.

In the course of its visit of inspection towards the latter part of the financial year the Board was impressed with the urgent necessity for replacing numerous old single-way wooden bridges, which in many cases are dangerous for traffic not only on account of limited width, but also because of bad alignment. Proposals for renewals are under consideration with a view to expediting this important work.

*Auckland District.*

Further progress has been made with the extension of dustless surfacing on State highways, and in addition several local authorities have commenced reconstruction and paving other main highways with subsidy assistance from highways funds.

At the time the State highways scheme was introduced work on the Auckland-Helensville Highway had been commenced on various lengths some distance apart, this policy being based upon circumstances relating to the internal finances of the local authority concerned. The Board's policy has been to concentrate upon linking up the uncompleted sections, and satisfactory progress has been made.

Very considerable improvements have been made on the State highway between Birkenhead and Warkworth consequent upon the completion of heavy reconstruction and realignment on the Albany Hill, Johnstons Hill, Schedewy's Hill, &c. The reconstruction and sealing of the Wairau Road northwards from Takapuna was commenced by the Waitemata County Council in accordance with proposals sanctioned by the Board.

Reconstruction, bridging, and paving have been completed on the Great South Road to the southern extremity of the Waipa County, and this type of improvement is being continued southwards into the Otorohanga County.

On the State highway between Pokeno and Paeroa reconstruction has been continued in readiness for extending the paving from Pokeno, and further paving was completed in the vicinity of Waitakaruru.

The improvement of the arterial highway between Thames and Paeroa was advanced and the heavy reconstruction work through the Karangahake Gorge continued in preparation for paving during the current year.

Severe damage occurred on the Thames-Coromandel highway during a storm when exceptionally high tides were experienced, and it has been found necessary to place heavy stone protection along the coastal section immediately north of Thames.

Particulars of other general improvements throughout the district are shown in greater detail in the progress report.

*Tauranga District.*

Improvements to the main highway over the Kaimai Hills have been further advanced and good progress made with the heavy reconstruction work.

The widening and realignment of the Rotoma Hill section have been completed, and this notable improvement has been much appreciated by traffic. A commencement has been made with widening and generally improving the length of State highway along the Lakes section from Rotoma Hill towards Te Ngae and Rotorua.

Between Wairakei and Taupo a great deal of realignment has been carried out to meet the needs of tourist and holiday traffic, which has very much increased. The construction of approaches for a new bridge over the Waikato River at Atiamuri, and the widening, straightening, and strengthening of the highway from Atiamuri towards Putaruru, have been commenced and are now well under way.

The difficulty in maintaining a satisfactory standard of wearing surface on the State highways in the vicinity of Whakatane, combined with the dangerous conditions arising from the dust nuisance in the summer months, has necessitated consideration being given to a paving programme for the current year, and it is hoped to be able to complete several miles in the immediate vicinity of Whakatane itself.

Towards the end of the financial year under review proposals were formulated for accelerating improvements and bridging on the Opotiki-Te Araroa coastal highway. Better access is required for existing settlement on this route, which is also increasing in popularity as a holiday resort. Work has already commenced on widening and major maintenance and contracts have been arranged for a number of bridges.