

FLOOD DAMAGE.

Brief reference was made to flood damage under "Maintenance." The cost of flood damage for the year was £159,707, which is approximately £13 per mile of highway, or one-seventh of the Board's total cost of maintenance. Viewing the cost in this way shows what an appreciable amount is expended each year upon restoration of flood damage.

During the year under review the districts which featured most prominently in this field were Taumarunui, £33,027 ; Taranaki, £24,500 ; Wanganui, £20,000 ; Napier, £18,505 ; and Nelson, £10,815.

On the forthcoming estimates the Board proposes to take a special item to cover the cost of flood-damage restoration throughout the highways system, and any future expenditure under this heading will no longer remain as a charge against districts' allocations. It is felt that this procedure will enable districts to more accurately estimate their maintenance requirements in any given year.

CONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION, IMPROVEMENTS, AND RENEWALS.

The expenditure on the three items construction, reconstruction, and improvements was £1,431,266, as compared with £3,106,471 in the previous year, indicating a reduction of over 50 per cent. in this phase of the Board's activities.

Details of more important individual works will be found later under the various district reports. A summary of the work completed is as follows:—

Improved formation	..	..	..	..	186 miles 36 chains.
Metalling	..	..	..	..	128 miles.
Dustless surfacing (mileage added)	..	..	..	..	243 miles.
Bridges	..	..	..	..	9,405 lineal feet.

The length of dustless surfacing added during the year was 243 miles, which, due to restriction of finance, is very little more than half the length carried out in the previous year. The total length of dustless surfacing is now 3,476 miles, which represents just over 28 per cent. of the total length of highways.

Indications are that new sealing will be drastically restricted until such time as finance permits resumption of operations in this field.

Bridge construction is an item upon which work must of necessity be undertaken as there are a large number of timber bridges on the highways system which have come to the end of their useful life.

As an illustration of this there were two failures of such bridges under load during the year.

The preparation of proposals for bridges was largely held up on account of the design staff being engaged on work which claimed priority, and as a consequence the programme effected was not as extensive as was desirable. The aggregate length of bridges completed was 9,405 lineal feet, as compared with 11,676 lineal feet in the previous year.

The bridge programme of the immediate future is likely to be adversely affected by lack of skilled men for construction and also by difficulty in obtaining the materials, but every effort will be made to maintain an extensive programme as otherwise the Board would find so many bridges requiring renewal at the same time that the position would be impossible. The relative importance of a number of bridges due for replacement has been carefully considered with a view to including the most urgent in the coming year's programme.

TABLE 2.—CONSTRUCTION WORK COMPLETED DURING YEAR 1940-41.

Highway District.	Formation and Widening.	Gravelling and Metalling.	Tar and Bitu-minous Sealing.	Road-and Plant-mix Bitu-minous Surfacing.	Bitu-minous Macadam (Penetration).	Footpaths.	Bridges.	Engineer-ing Surveys.
	M. ch.	M. ch.	M. ch.	M. ch.	M. ch.	M. ch.	Ft.	M. ch.
1. Auckland North	2 74	4 29	14 38	..	..	2 0	789	14 0
2. Auckland South	8 49	16 61	30 26	..	..	2 34	789	22 45
3. Tauranga	6 24	8 65	11 23	..	..	0 27	600	..
4. Gisborne	3 78	4 24	7 50	..	..	0 56	256	1 42
5. Napier	9 3	9 17	14 64	0 50	..	1 24	1,936	10 67
6. King-country	7 0	7 46	15 25	..	..	..	256	0 11
7. Taranaki	27 2	5 12	21 52	0 45	3 74	..	135	..
8. Wanganui	12 39	..	13 23	..	..	0 78	278	38 5
9. Wellington West	10 32	..	13 74	..	..	5 31	308	2 2
10. Wellington East	5 70	0 49	1 0	..	..	..	389	6 47
11. Nelson	14 66	20 15	10 1	..	..	0 16	1,138	6 30
12. West Coast	10 35	15 35	27 67	..	..	1 13	563	7 72
13. Canterbury North	6 42	1 21	9 12	..	..	0 22	170	13 53
14. Canterbury Central	1 33	0 79	15 51	3 76	..	..	402	26 79
15. Canterbury South	8 61	..	9 23	5 16	..	1 23	576	21 70
16. Otago Central	12 78	15 52	14 20	..	..	0 8	423	6 50
17. Otago South	13 8	15 21	17 51	..	..	2 35	105	8 65
18. Southland	24 62	2 34	11 20	0 28	..	0 8	292	10 59
	186 36	128 0	258 60	10 55	3 74	18 55	9,405	198 57