

The testing of bituminous materials was carried out by the Dominion Analyst, as in past years. Though the reduced sealing programme was reflected to some extent in the number of samples submitted, extra work was involved in some cases by the necessity of making and testing trial mixtures to enable all available materials to be utilized.

OPERATIONS OF MAGNETIC TRUCK.

During the year the Board's magnetic truck, used for clearing highways of iron or steel puncture-producing articles, operated on main highways for a period of about three months only, largely in the South Island. Early in the year it was decided to discontinue the use of the truck for the duration of the war, it being felt that, taking into consideration the urgent necessity of conserving petrol and the expense involved, the continued use of the truck under existing conditions was not warranted. After this decision was made the Air Department made use of the truck for the purpose of clearing nails, &c., from the buildings area and flying-fields adjacent to the following R.N.Z.A.F. Stations: Wigram, Harewood, Woodbourne, Rongotai (Stores Depot), Ohakea, New Plymouth, Whenuapai, and Hobsonville. Trentham, Papakura, and Ngauruawahia Military Camps were also swept.

The length of highways actually cleared was 1,323 miles, the weight of material picked up being 3,881 lb.

The average yield per mile was 2.9 lb., compared with 3.1 lb. for the previous year.

EXAMINATION FOR FOREMEN AND OVERSEERS OF ROAD-CONSTRUCTION.

Owing no doubt to war conditions, only thirty candidates, as compared with seventy-three the previous year, sat for the fifteenth examination for Foreman and Overseers of Road Construction, held on 30th October, 1940.

Fifteen candidates sat for the paper on general road construction and maintenance only, eight for that on tar, bituminous, and concrete road construction only, and seven for both papers.

Of the seven candidates who sat papers Nos. 1 and 2, two were successful in passing both. Five candidates passed paper No. 1 only, while three passed paper No. 2 only. These three had previously been successful in passing paper No. 1, and thus completed the examination.

Certificates of Competency were awarded to all candidates who passed or completed the examination, the recipients being Messrs. A. Amos, C. W. Gray, E. M. Le Grice, G. P. McIntosh, and E. Sherson.

A certificate was also awarded to Mr. J. W. Weaver, who had completed the examination previously. The issue of a certificate earlier had been withheld while Mr. Weaver acquired more experience.

To date 141 certificates have been issued.

DECLARATIONS AND REVOCATIONS OF MAIN HIGHWAYS.

Owing to the heavy commitments against reduced highways funds arising from the immediate requirements of the existing highways system, only a very small mileage of new highways was declared during the year. A number of small adjustments were found necessary.

During the year also a general reorganization of highways, involving alterations in nomenclature, &c., was effected. State highways were declared under the names by which they are more generally known, routes of highways more clearly defined, especially in town districts and the smaller boroughs, terminal points shown more exactly, and mileages corrected.

The more important declarations of highways during the year ended 31st March, 1941, were:—

Main Highways declared.

| | | | | | | | Miles | ch. |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|-----|
| No. 1 Highways District— | | | | | | | | |
| Blackbridge-Paihia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 8 | 57 |
| No. 2 Highways District— | | | | | | | | |
| McLennan main highway | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | 3 |
| No. 6 Highways District— | | | | | | | | |
| Bruce main highway | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | 5 |
| No. 9 Highways District— | | | | | | | | |
| Masterton-Wellington | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 7 |
| Wellington-Paekakariki Centennial | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10 | 0 |
| Haywards-Paremata via Pahautanui | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6 | 40 |

Consequent on the completion of the new coastal route to Paekakariki, this road was declared a main highway, and subsequently classified as a State highway under the title "Wellington-Paekakariki Centennial State highway." The Paekakariki Hill route, formerly the State highway, was revoked, but later redeclared as an ordinary main highway. The Hutt Road between Ngahauranga and Petone was declared a main highway, and this length, along with the highway between Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt, was classified as part of the Masterton-Wellington State highway.

The Board acknowledges the continued co-operation of the Public Works Department in matters relating to main-highways administration, and records its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by officers of the Department in carrying out the Board's programme during the period under review.

The accompanying tables contain statistical information relative to finance, lengths of highways, and results of stone-testing carried out during the year.

Signed on behalf of the Main Highways Board:

W. L. NEWNHAM, Chairman.