

Extensive improvement work is being carried out on the Queenstown-Invercargill State Highway. Between Lumsden and Caroline, reforming and base-course metalling have been completed for 8 miles 19 chains, extending through Josephville, and a contract has been let for the supply of top-course metal and sealing chips. Between Caroline and Benmore improvements and metalling were completed over a length of 10 miles 50 chains, of which 8 miles 42 chains were sealed. Reconstruction was completed over 2 miles 44 chains between Centre Bush and Limehills. A length of 3 miles was reconstructed between Winton and Lochiel and metalling is now proceeding. Between Lochiel and Buxton's Corner removal of clay shoulders, widening, and remetalling is well advanced over a length of 7 miles 54 chains. Between Lorne and Invercargill City boundary carriage-way widening and reforming, and the provision of cycle-tracks and footpaths, is well advanced, and the work done has provided greatly improved road-safety conditions. Sealing was carried out over 1 mile through Athol Township. At Blackmore Creek an old wooden bridge was replaced by a 6 ft. culvert, and at the Makarewa River a Bailey bridge 140 ft. long has been erected for use until the new permanent bridge can be constructed. A contract has been let for the construction of the Erye Creek Bridge, 225 ft. long.

On the Lorne-Riverton State Highway the Makarewa Stream Bridge is being erected, but progress has been hampered by continued flood conditions. Between Wrights' Bush and Waimatuku 65 chains were reconstructed and sealed, and between Waimatuku and Thorbury 1 mile 58 chains were sealed. Metal strengthening was carried out between Wallacetown and Iron Bridge and 42 chains were reconstructed and sealed between Wallacetown and Tomoporakau.

Extensive repairs were carried out on several bridges on the Riverton-Tuatapere State Highway.

The Lumsden - Te Anau - Milford Sound highway suffered considerable damage from frequent severe floods from November to March, and extensive repair work has been necessary. The programme of repairing and rebuilding timber bridges on this highway was continued. Four hundred and eighteen linear feet of bridging was overhauled on the Te Anau - Eglinton Valley section, two bridges totalling 120 ft. were rebuilt over the Upper Hollyford River, and twenty bridges totalling 410 linear feet were rebuilt in the Homer-Milford section. The sawmill set up in the Eglinton Valley provided 243,000 super feet of bridge and building timber for this work.

OVERLOADING OF HIGHWAYS

The extensive damage to the highways caused by the increasing numbers of heavier and larger commercial vehicles during the past three or four years is causing the Main Highways Board grave anxiety. Many of the highways constructed in pre-war years for a very different kind of traffic were never intended to carry the long, wide, and heavy trucks and buses of to-day, which operate at high speeds. This is not a problem peculiar to New Zealand.

In Canada, the United States of America, and Australia the roading authorities are exercised at the deterioration of the pre-war roads as a result of the operation of the totally different post-war traffic. Mr. Thomas H. MacDonald, Commissioner of Public Roads for the United States of America, recently pointed out that his statement of 1940, that roads are destroyed by climatic and soil conditions, no longer applies. Loads carried then, he said, were seldom heavy or large enough to overtax the structural capacity of the highways. Now, he complained, the causes of road deterioration are found primarily in overloading.