

The formation of the Addington–Rolleston duplication has been completed. The Addington and Hornby station-yards are now being remodelled, and the new station buildings required in connection with the duplication are in course of construction. The platelaying of the line is making satisfactory progress, and it is anticipated that the work will be completed and the line opened for traffic during the current year.

In connection with the Dunedin–Mosgiel duplication, the foundations and abutments of bridges between Dunedin and Caversham are ready for the superstructures, which are being made under contract. A large proportion of the earthworks between Dunedin and Caversham has been completed, the new Caversham Tunnel has been driven about eight chains at the north end, and arrangements are being made to commence driving at the south end. The formation between Cattle-yards and Abbotsford is also in hand, and arrangements are being made to commence the driving of the new Chain Hills Tunnel and the formation of the earthworks at the Wingatui end of the line.

The amounts expended during the last financial year on the works above referred to were as follows:—

	£
Hutt Railway and Road improvement	46,221
Auckland–Penrose duplication	54,302
Addington–Rolleston duplication	11,031
Dunedin–Mosgiel duplication	74,720

For the current year provision has been made on the estimates to the extent of £235,000, namely—

	£
Auckland–Penrose duplication	25,000
Wellington–Hutt duplication	70,000
Addington–Rolleston duplication	35,000
Dunedin–Mosgiel duplication	105,000

WELLINGTON-MANAWATU RAILWAY.

In pursuance of the announcement made in last year's Statement, formal notice of intention to purchase the Wellington–Manawatu Railway under the provisions of "The Railways Construction and Land Act, 1881," was served upon the company on the 7th December last.

Negotiations have since been proceeding between the Government and the company, as the result of which an arrangement has been made to acquire the railway for the sum of £900,000. The company, however, particularly desired to retain possession of its property until the end of February next, but, as the Government could not agree to this, in view of the completion of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, and the intention to inaugurate the through express train service between Wellington and Auckland by Christmas next, it was finally arranged to pay an extra £15,000, in consideration of the company relinquishing possession on 7th December next. The Government also takes over the company's stores in hand at the amount at which they are valued in the company's books, the sum involved being approximately £10,000, thus bringing the total payment up to about £925,000. The necessary Bill to give legal effect to the arrangement made has now been passed.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The total expenditure on public buildings out of votes controlled by the Minister of Public Works amounted during last financial year to £266,624—namely, £47,476 under the Consolidated Fund, and £219,148 under the Public Works Fund. This is slightly in excess of the previous year's figures. For the current year votes totalling to £52,637 under the Consolidated Fund and £292,450 under the Public Works Fund are proposed.

GENERAL.

The expenditure on buildings coming under this class is steadily increasing, and seems likely to continue so to do for the next two or three years, in consequence of the late fire at the Parliament Buildings, and the proposal to locate the