

supplies under them. Three purchasing Departments have been appointed—viz., the Railway, Public Works, and Post and Telegraph Departments—and it is left to each of these Departments to call for tenders for particular items. Contracts are let for specific quantities and for estimated quantities, the latter usually being on annual or two-yearly contracts. In each of the Store districts there is a Supplies and Tenders Committee, this being composed of the District Storekeeper, Railways; District Storekeeper, Public Works Department; and the District Engineer, Post and Telegraph Department. They meet regularly to deal with stores matters and to agree on purchases.

The following table shows the stores and materials purchased during the year ended 31st March, 1924 :—

STORES BRANCH.—PURCHASE OF STORES AND MATERIAL DURING YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1924.

Classification.	Payments made in New Zealand.	Payments made through High Commissioner.	Totals.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
General stores	304,023 17 6	119,963 10 3	423,987 7 9
Oils	54,272 9 10	83 6 5	54,355 16 3
Permanent-way material	2,625 19 1	113,635 1 11	116,261 1 0
Sleepers, native	8,129 3 10	..	8,129 3 10
Sleepers, Australian	49,195 8 7	..	49,195 8 7
Timber, native	21,533 14 7	..	21,533 14 7
Timber, imported	19,921 9 0	..	19,921 9 0
Stationery	32,001 1 0	6,944 7 11	38,945 8 11
Stores expenses—including salaries, wages, transport costs, maintenance, inspection, and all charges	57,341 18 10	4,940 15 4	62,282 14 2
Intermediate totals	549,045 2 3	245,567 1 10	794,612 4 1
Sawmills	148,213 15 1	..	148,213 15 1
Coal and coke	637,492 1 8	..	637,492 1 8
Intermediate totals	1,334,750 19 0	245,567 1 10	1,580,318 0 10
A.O.L. stores	88,920 13 11	91,517 10 3	180,438 4 2
A.O.L. sawmill and factory	12,593 9 8	..	12,593 9 8
R.I.A. stores	9,920 1 3	372 19 11	10,293 1 2
Grand totals	1,446,185 3 10	337,457 12 0	1,783,642 15 10

The annexed table gives the value of stores stock on hand and sawmill balances for the last eleven years. These figures, of course, exclude value of stores in hands of other branches, as previously noted.

STORES BRANCH.—VALUE OF STORES STOCK ON HAND AND SAWMILL BALANCES AT THE END OF FINANCIAL YEARS 1914–24.

Year ending 31st March.	Stores, Stock, including Coal.	Value, Sawmills, Plant, and Timber.	A.O.L. Stocks.	R.I.A. Stocks.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1914	403,454	43,561	38,205	..	485,220
1915	351,270	62,708	13,689	..	427,667
1916	345,153	80,372	25,945	..	451,470
1917	287,272	98,023	15,212	..	400,507
1918	312,204	111,924	13,244	..	437,372
1919	418,897	131,544	19,439	..	569,880
1920	721,062	113,323	46,378	14,176	894,939
1921	1,436,890	116,832	137,264	13,525	1,704,511
1922	1,375,644	169,864	542,770	11,920	2,100,198
1923	793,156	214,433	132,729	12,383	1,152,701
1924	558,258	257,408	93,132 56,770*	9,173	974,741
Totals	7,959,253	1,401,646	1,242,090	61,177	10,664,166

* Sawmill and factory.