



DEPARTMENTAL MOTOR-VEHICLES.

At the 31st March, 1927, the following vehicles were in use in the Department : Motor-cars, 104 ; motor-cycles, 96 ; motor-lorries and vans, &c., 340 : total, 540—an increase of 52 compared with the number of vehicles in use at the 31st March, 1926.

During the year 138 new vehicles were purchased to replace those withdrawn from service owing to their having outlived their period of usefulness and to meet the growing requirements of the Department in the matter of motor transport. Approximately 86 vehicles were withdrawn from service and disposed of at auction.

The Department is gradually dispensing with the use of horse-drawn vehicles in connection with line-construction and maintenance work. Apart from districts in which the roads are not suitable for motor-vehicles, very few horses and carts are now used by line parties.

WORKSHOPS.

There are now departmental workshops at Auckland, Napier, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. The total value of work performed in these workshops was £116,707, of which £10,337 represented the value of work done for other Departments. The workshops are suitably equipped with modern appliances, the Wellington workshop being particularly well fitted up for the various classes of work required to be undertaken. The work done in the several workshops is most varied in character, and included jobs from the repairing of adding-machines and other office equipment to the building of truck and van bodies and the manufacture of furniture and of parts for telegraph instruments.

The Department's fleet of motor-vehicles was kept in good running order. Considerable repair work was done to vehicles of other Departments; whilst there was a steady output of special motor-vehicle bodies to meet the requirements of Government Departments generally. Similarly, the workshops provided a sufficient output of parcel-post hampers, parcel-post boxes, and rural-delivery boxes. The conversion of certain telephone exchanges from manual to automatic working necessitated the renovating of a large quantity of telephone apparatus. Other work on a large scale was involved in the maintenance of wireless-stations and telegraph apparatus, including Murray multiplex machine-printing instruments, and, incidentally, it was necessary to manufacture a number of parts required for repair work. Coin-in-the-slot telephone instruments were manufactured and public-call telephone cabinets erected by the workshops staffs. The Wellington workshop made a large number of fittings for the new post-office building at Marton, as well as fittings and furniture for a number of other buildings.

STORES BRANCH.

The following figures indicate the value of stores purchased and issued at Wellington during the year ended the 31st March, 1927, and the value of the stock held at Wellington on that date. For the purposes of comparison the figures for the previous year are shown also :—

	1926-27.	1925-26.
	£	£
Balance, 1st April	207,500	243,590
Purchases	599,047	701,301
Issues	593,994	737,391
Balance, 31st March	212,553	207,500

The figures for the Auckland Stores Branch for 1926-27 are as follow :—

	£
Balance, 1st April, 1926	160,322
Purchases	176,047
Issues	201,175
Balance, 31st March, 1927	135,194

As the Stores Branch at Auckland was not in existence during the whole of the previous year, comparative figures cannot be furnished.