

DEPARTMENTAL MOTOR-VEHICLES.

Owing to the greater suitability for departmental purposes of the closed type of car, it is now the practice when purchasing new cars to obtain closed cars instead of cars of the touring type.

The provision of a new garage at Dunedin has enabled the postal and engineering vehicles in that city to be accommodated in one building under the control of the Chief Postmaster. In Dunedin, as in the other main centres, the Post and Telegraph Department supplies vehicles for the use of all Government Departments, and the new system, providing as it does for single control instead of the previous dual control, is expected to result in more economical and efficient handling of the fleet as a whole.

Some two years ago an arrangement was made by which a qualified officer was specially detailed for the work of travelling the Dominion at suitable intervals to inspect departmental motor-vehicles. Many of the Department's vehicles engaged on line construction and maintenance work are far removed from a departmental workshops centre, and the system of inspection was introduced particularly to meet such cases. The results obtained have been quite satisfactory, and the arrangement has now been made a permanent one. The scheme provides for vehicles to be inspected twice yearly by the travelling officer. In addition to examining the vehicles, the Inspector instructs drivers, where necessary, in the matter of the care of the vehicles.

During the year 110 new vehicles were purchased, while 79 which had outlived their period of economic life were withdrawn from service. These vehicles, in accordance with the usual practice, were disposed of by auction.

As at the 31st March, 1930, the departmental motor-vehicle fleet comprised 123 cars; 471 lorries, trucks, and vans; and 22 cycles—a total of 616 vehicles. The mileage performed by, and the cost of repairs and replacements to, the entire fleet of departmental vehicles for the years 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929 are shown in the following statement:—

Year.	Number of vehicles.	Mileage.	Cost of Repairs, &c.	Repair, &c., Cost per Mile.	Average Mileage per Vehicle.	Average Cost of Repairs, &c., per Vehicle.
			£	d.		£ d. d.
1926	530	3,295,560	19,810	1.442	6,218	37 7 6
1927	550	3,756,447	22,578	1.442	6,830	41 1 0
1928	580	4,138,275	24,251	1.406	7,135	41 16 2
1929	616	4,456,743	24,436	1.3159*	7,246	39 14 8

* A saving of 0.09d per mile, which represents a total saving over 1928 of £1,681.

Mileage shows an average annual increase of 387,061.

STORES BRANCH.

The following statement indicates the value of stores received and issued in the Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington Storekeeping Districts during the year ended the 31st March, 1930, and the value of stocks held at that date. For the purpose of comparison the particulars for the previous year are shown also:—

	1929-30.			1928-29.		
	Receipts.*	Issues.*	Stock in hand, 31st March, 1930.	Receipts.*	Issues*	Stock in hand, 31st March, 1929.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Auckland ..	234,302	232,618	102,565	229,089	254,924	100,882
Christchurch ..	164,972	154,976	93,820	151,933	143,869	83,824
Dunedin ..	93,209	87,718	46,542	82,805	101,751	41,051
Wellington ..	388,217	360,417	304,208	376,324	436,499	276,407
Dominion totals	880,700	835,729	547,135	840,151	937,043	502,164

* Excluding transfers within storekeeping districts.

PURCHASES.

The total value of stores purchased during the year was £533,967. Of this amount, £150,544 represented the cost of stores for supply from within the Dominion, while £383,423 represented the cost of stores for supply from overseas. The total value of stores purchased during the previous year was £484,218.