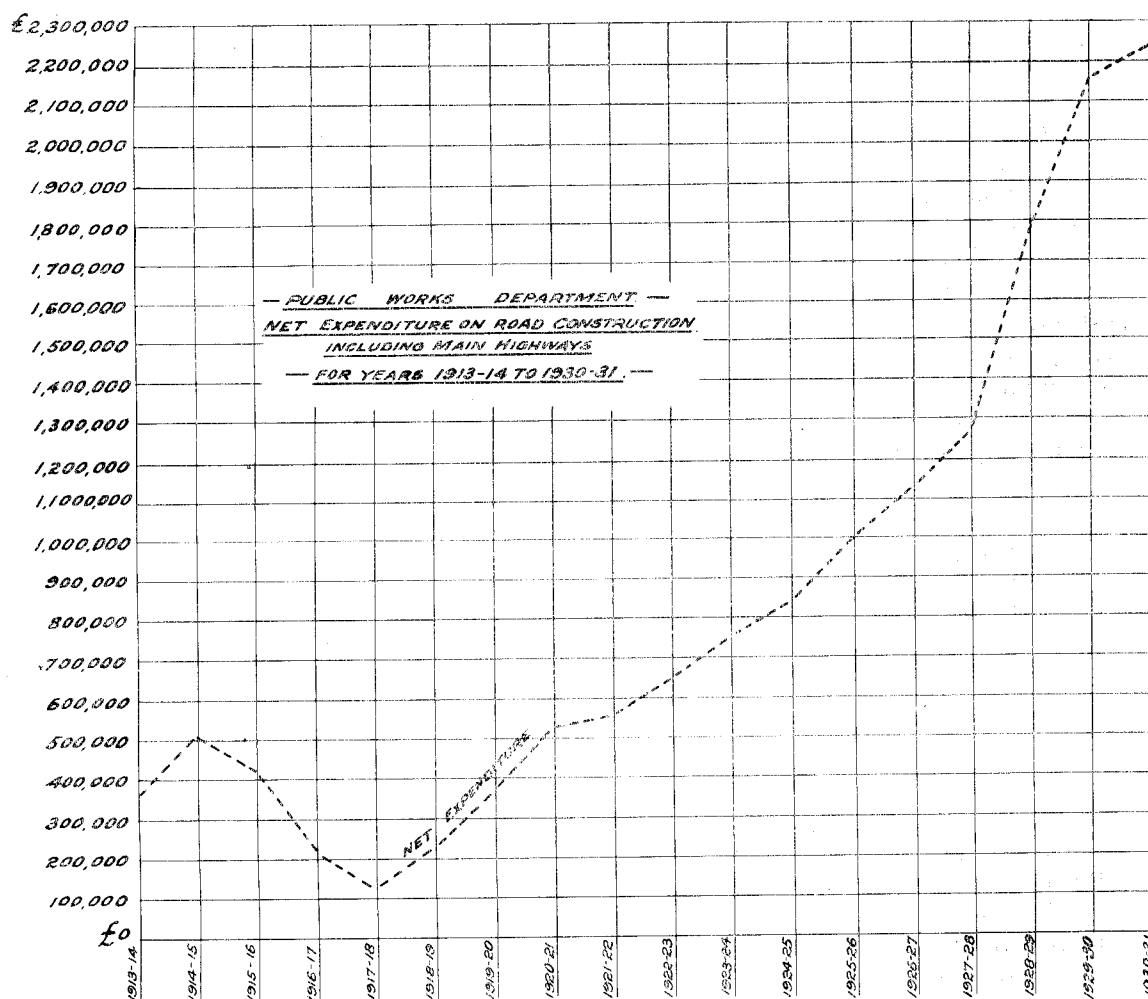


On the 3rd February, 1931, the Dominion was again visited by a disastrous earthquake, which played havoc with many roads and bridges in the Hawke's Bay, Wairoa, Dannevirke, and surrounding districts. Such widespread destruction as resulted is almost unprecedented in the history of New Zealand roads, and the reconstruction in the damaged area has placed, and is placing, a heavy burden upon the areas affected in particular, and upon the Dominion in general. Government assistance towards the cost of reconstruction of roads other than main highways has received consideration in connection with the estimates submitted to the House. The restoration of the main highways has been vigorously carried out. What has already been done in the matter of reconstruction has been done well, and the gratitude of the public has been expressed through the press on many occasions.

With regard to maintenance, it has not been possible to assist local bodies to the same extent as in the past. It must be recognized that the present financial position has had a distinct bearing upon this work, the general policy being to expend the funds available on major works suitable for unemployment-relief, thus assisting local bodies in their construction programmes and allowing local-body funds to be utilized in the maintenance of completed works.



PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL BUILDINGS.

The balance of purchase-money for the new offices of the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London (£77,500) was paid during the year.

At Auckland the lift in the Departmental Buildings was completed.

In Christchurch new offices were erected on the top of the Government Buildings for accommodating the officers of the Scientific and Industrial Research Department.

At Dunedin a shed and store for housing plant and equipment was erected.