

—	Board's Contribution.	Local Authorities' Contribution.	Total.	Percentage of Board's Contri- bution to Total.	Percentage of Local Authorities' Contribution to Total.
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(2) *Additional Highways declared, 1928.*

	£	£	£		
North Island .. ..	21,244	11,678	32,922	64.53	35.47
South Island .. ..	22,793	6,630	29,423	77.47	22.53
Totals .. ..	44,037	18,308	62,345	70.63	29.37

(3) *Complete System.*

North Island .. ..	383,313	95,078	478,391	80.13	19.87
South Island .. ..	284,588	55,906	340,494	83.58	16.42
Totals .. ..	667,901	150,984	818,885	81.56	18.44

The amount provided by local authorities towards the cost of construction works on the original highway system shows a reduction of £39,000, as against a reduction of £19,000 in the previous year. On construction work on secondary highways the local authorities found £13,000 less than in the previous year, so that on the whole highway system the amount provided by local authorities for construction has dropped £52,000, as compared with the previous year. The percentage of construction-cost provided by the Board has increased from 70 per cent. in 1924–25 to 83 per cent. for 1929–30 and 81 per cent. for 1930–31.

## MAINTENANCE.

During the first half of the year the main highways generally were kept up to standard as regards maintenance. During the latter half of the year, however, there has been evidence that the local authorities have curtailed maintenance work to some extent, principally, of course, on account of the depression and the difficulty in collecting rates. When the final figures for the year were obtained, it was found that the curtailment in expenditure had been most marked.

The amount of benzine imported into the country is probably a very fair indication of the volume of the Dominion's motor traffic. The gross importations of benzine since 1926 are as follows :—

	Gallons.		Gallons.
1926 .. ..	44,800,000	1929 .. ..	62,400,000
1927 .. ..	48,000,000	1930 .. ..	68,300,000
1928 .. ..	54,500,000		

In the same period the total expenditure on maintenance of primary highways, including local authority contributions, but excluding special earthquake damage, has been as follows :—

	£		£
1926–27 .. ..	715,111	1929–30 .. ..	990,953
1927–28 .. ..	792,646	1930–31 .. ..	806,366
1928–29 .. ..	832,618		

From the above figures it will be seen that the total expenditure on maintenance of primary highways in 1927–28 was practically the same as the expenditure in 1930–31, yet in the latter year the traffic was 40 per cent. greater than in 1927–28. It will also be seen that in the year under review the primary highways received £184,000 less than they did in the previous year, in spite of the fact that the traffic appreciably increased. It is manifest therefore that the highways were not adequately maintained during the past year. The fact that the local authorities curtailed their own expenditure resulted in lower claims upon the Board's funds, with the effect that the Board found itself with approximately £130,000 more in its Revenue Fund at the end of the year than it anticipated. The anomalous position has therefore arisen that the roads have had less money than they needed and the Board has a somewhat larger surplus than it deems necessary. Since the figures have become available the position has been carefully considered and, with a view to bringing up the maintenance expenditure to the amount which is obviously necessary taking the volume of traffic into consideration, and at the same time relieving the local authorities during a period of economic stress, the Board on the 19th August, 1931, decided to increase the subsidy for ordinary maintenance from £2 for £1 to £3 for £1.

The average cost of maintenance per mile per annum since 1924 on the primary system is as follows :—

	£		£
1924–25 .. ..	51.7	1928–29 .. ..	125.2
1925–26 .. ..	73.2	1929–30 .. ..	151.2
1926–27 .. ..	111.9	1930–31 .. ..	121.4
1927–28 .. ..	119.9		

Again, it will be seen that for the first time on record the maintenance cost of the primary highways has been substantially reduced.

With regard to secondary highways, a total length of 3,778 miles was maintained at an average cost of £71 per mile, the figures for the two previous years being : 1928–29, £55.5 per mile, and 1929–30, £88.5 per mile.