

## RAILWAYS IMPROVEMENT AND ADDITIONS TO OPENED LINES.

The net expenditure out of the Public Works Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1932, was £810,434, which excludes a special credit of £439,190 for depreciation. Expenditure on the construction of rolling-stock totalled £374,085. The sum of £194,522 was expended on Tawa Flat Deviation. The cost of strengthening and renewing bridges was £95,700, and £37,752 was spent on the signalling, telephone, and train-control extensions. Improvements at terminals and miscellaneous small works cost £108,375, and administration charges and the cost of raising loans amounted to £15,439.

## HARBOURS.

The expenditure on harbour-works has been comparatively small during the past year. At Westport the substantial drop in coal-export figures has rendered it necessary to exercise the most rigid economy and curtail staff wherever possible.

All work on the training-walls extension has been stopped and the quarry closed. Dredging has also been restricted as much as possible consistently with the necessity to maintain an adequate depth on the bar, in the channel, and at the berthages.

At Karamea work was completed on the restoration of the old training-wall and the work closed up. Unfortunately, the depositure of earthquake debris in the harbour still continues, and at present the position as regards the reopening of the port is not very hopeful. In the meantime timber and stores are being shipped from Little Wanganui, where minor works have been carried out. Plans and specifications were prepared for a large wharf at the Chatham Islands, and tenders called, but were declined. A few other works were carried out in various localities, but generally on a much reduced scale.

## LIGHTHOUSES.

Since the estimates for the current year were prepared it has been found necessary, for financial reasons, to curtail the programme of new works contained therein.

In accordance with the altered conditions, the only works of any magnitude completed were the installation of a new automatic light at East Head on Akaroa Peninsula and the conversion of Godley Head from a fixed oil-burning light to an automatic flashing one with an incandescent burner using compressed acetylene. In both these cases the apparatus had been ordered during the previous period, and only the installation was involved.

At Baring Head a new road was constructed to give access to the station. Plans were prepared for the new tower, keepers' houses, fog-signal building, &c., but it was deemed advisable to allow the purchase of the light apparatus and the erection of the buildings to stand over.

The need for economy in expenditure has been reflected in the works carried out during the year under the above heading.

## ROAD-CONSTRUCTION.

In the development of any young Dominion an important adjunct, if not the most important, is the construction of a complete network of roads to bring all land into production and within easy reach of the market. The past financial year saw this desirable goal brought a step nearer.

Several areas of new land were made available for settlement by the construction of new roads, and the position of settlers on partly developed land improved by metalling existing roads.

A total sum of £1,465,237 was expended during the year on the construction of roads and highways, as against £2,233,428 for the preceding year. Of this amount roads other than main highways accounted for £1,082,210 and main highways £383,027, compared with £1,475,522 and £757,906 for 1930-31.

It would not be out of place to state here that great benefit was derived from an allocation of £50,000 appropriated out of petrol-tax funds and expended on the metalling of backblock roads.