

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

The expenditure during the year amounted to £87,609, which included an amount of £58,925, being the repayment of a loan made to the Tongariro National Park Co., Ltd., by the Public Trust Office and guaranteed by the Government.

The main work carried out during the year was the erection of the juvenile portion of the new Blue Bath.

Other works completed were the erection of Malte Brun Hut at Mount Cook, improvements to reserve at Rotorua, erection of wharves at Golden Bay and Ulva Island (Stewart Island), and the electrical works and telephone-line were extended at Rotorua.

During the next financial year it is proposed to proceed with the erection of the new Blue Bath at Rotorua and complete other works commenced during the period under review.

TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

The expenditure for the financial year in extending and improving the telephone, telegraph, and wireless facilities throughout the Dominion amounted to £249,946, against £419,756 for the year ended the 31st March, 1931. Due to the tapering off in funds, activity in telegraph, telephone, and wireless development has necessarily been somewhat restricted.

A summary of the more important works upon which capital expenditure was incurred during the year is as follows: The erection or provision of new metallic circuits between Tauranga and Matamata, Hamilton and Morrinsville, Carterton and Masterton, and Gore and Lumsden; the reconstruction of 270 miles of toll and telegraph pole-line, which involved the replacement of 560 miles of wire; the conversion of the manual telephone exchanges at Hastings and Marton to automatic working; the extension of the switching equipment at six automatic telephone exchanges and eight manual telephone exchanges; the installation of twenty-one public call offices (coin-in-the-slot telephones); the laying of 22 miles of underground cable-ducts; the laying or erecting of 91 miles of lead-covered cable containing 33,589 miles of wire for telephone-exchange subscribers' circuits; and the erection of 164 miles of pole-line and 2,282 miles of open aerial wire for telephone-exchange subscribers' circuits.

The further extension of the long-distance telephone network within the Dominion has been temporarily suspended, and in the meantime attention has been directed to investigational work designed to provide additional carrier-current telephone channels over the existing Cook Strait telegraph-cables.

The prevailing economic depression has had the effect of retarding to some extent the development of the local telephone-exchange systems throughout the Dominion. The falling-off in subscribers has, however, not been appreciable, and it is expected that the reconnection of those subscribers who have relinquished their telephones will be one of the first indications of a return to prosperity. Owing to the fact that new subscribers to the telephone system have not been forthcoming as freely as heretofore, the expenditure of capital in extending telephone-exchange plant has been proportionately reduced.

The working of the Department's radio-stations has proceeded smoothly during the year; but, in view of the necessity for restricting expenditure as much as possible, there has been little work of a developmental nature undertaken. Additional aerials for short-wave working to the Pacific islands have been erected at Wellington Radio with a view to making greater use of directive transmission. At the Mount Crawford (Wellington) radio-telephone receiving-station the temporary receiving-apparatus previously in use has been replaced by new apparatus designed to give the highest possible grade of service. This equipment is specially designed to eliminate interfering noises of all descriptions, with a consequent improvement in the clarity of the received speech.

PLANT AND MECHANICAL APPARATUS.

The major works upon which plant was used during the year were Stratford Main Trunk Railway; Waitaki hydro-electric works; Wairoa River Bridge; Omakau irrigation works; Tawa Flat Railway Deviation works; Mohaka Viaduct foundations; Waihou and Ohinemuri River improvement works; and the Arapuni hydro-electric scheme, as well as the hydro-electric schemes already functioning at Mangahao, Waikaremoana, and Lake Coleridge. In addition, a quantity of plant was used for construction and maintenance of, and providing metal for, main highways and roads generally all over New Zealand.