

The capital cost of the construction plant actually in use during the year amounts to approximately £600,000.

A quantity of more or less obsolete plant, and plant not further required by the Department has been sold, efforts in that direction having been made by utilizing the services of merchants, also by getting in touch with probable users and by newspaper advertisements.

The total sum realized for registered plant items sold during the year was approximately £5,023.

During the year thirty-five motor-vehicles reached the end of their economic lives, and were sold to the highest bidders after calling for public tenders in the newspapers circulating in the locality of each, the total amount realized on these being £436 12s.

Useable plant, consisting principally of steam-shovels and light locomotives, rendered idle after the last closing-down of railway-construction works, was laid up securely during the year on the various works to safeguard them against the weather, all bright parts, as well as cylinder-bores, being well coated with suitable weatherproof compositions, and the whole, wherever economically possible, was brought into depots at accessible places on the works to allow of easy transport should a sale be effected or future transfer required.

New plant items (being principally replacements) as follows were purchased by public tender during the year for use by the Department—viz., one air-lock, one electric hoist, eight motor-cars, six motor-trucks, one pump, and two road-maintainers.

A good deal of plant was hired during the year, principally to small syndicates operating upon mining ventures and to co-operative parties carrying out small contracts.

District Plant Inspectors have been kept going at high pressure in coping with the additional work involved in making inspections and issuing certificates of fitness of motor-omnibuses under the Transport Licensing Act of the 11th November, 1931.

Mechanical work of an advisory nature and involving the purchase of plant has been carried out for other Government Departments, including the Cook Islands and Samoan Administration, as well as for local bodies that have obtained plant upon hire-purchase agreement through the Main Highways Board.

#### HAWKE'S BAY EARTHQUAKE.—OPERATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE.

The bulk of work of restoration of private houses damaged by the earthquake of the 3rd February, 1931, was completed by the 10th December, 1931. After that date the Public Works Department, on behalf of the Relief Committee, inspected hundreds of houses in the Hawke's Bay, Waipukurau, Waipawa, Wairoa, and Patangata Counties; also in the Hastings, Waipawa, Waipukurau, and Wairoa Boroughs.

These inspections were for the purposes of checking claims on the relief funds by property-owners who had undertaken their own repairs. These inspections were completed by the 22nd April last.

The number of private houses actually repaired by the Public Works Department was as under :—

Napier Borough	..	..	..	..	..	..	965
Hastings Borough	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,330
Wairoa Borough	..	..	..	..	..	..	470
Hawke's Bay County (including Havelock and Taradale Town Boards)	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,005
Wairoa County	..	..	..	..	..	..	54
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,824

As appendices to this Statement honourable members will find full details of the principal works carried out by the Department, together with reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, the Chief Electrical Engineer, the Government Architect, and the Main Highways Board.