

The gross total expenditure out of vote Settlement of Unemployed Workers was £305,621, but this figure included wages, part of which was recovered from subsidies provided by the Employment Promotion and Consolidated Funds. The capital expenditure on development work was £199,003 gross.

The following are the results of the small-farms scheme as at 31st March, 1937 :—

	No.	Acres.
Individual holdings established	365	24,522
Sections included in blocks under development	594	53,799
Area under development but not sectionized	5,761
Total area under development	59,560
Sharemilker's cottage loans approved	66	..

PLANT AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT.

I find at the conclusion of the year now under review that the Government's policy of equipping all suitable works with modern construction plant has proved an unqualified success, both in the manner of performance and the speed and economy with which the major undertakings are advancing to successful completion.

At the commencement the Government realized fully that only by the use of the most economic and up-to-date methods could the success of the large public-works programme, for the economic employment of many thousands of men on the construction of valuable capital works, be assured.

The expenditure on modern plant for construction works approximates £500,000 for the year, and comprises over 1,000 items, of which typical examples are Diesel-powered mobile shovels and drag-lines, Diesel locomotives, large Diesel stationary engine units, Diesel-powered tractors and road-building equipment, Diesel-driven air-compressors, and Diesel-driven winches.

Each item purchased was obtained on best quotation from the principal firms not only in New Zealand but abroad, and the equipment was selected after a thorough investigation into its efficiency and ability to operate under New Zealand conditions.

The bulk of this plant ordered is now in operation on all classes of work, and, as an actual demonstration of the value of the Government's policy in the purchase of this modern machinery, I would quote typical examples of comparative cost. On road and highway formation Diesel tractor road-building combinations showed savings from 21·9 per cent. to 90·5 per cent. against the cost of manual methods for the same works.

On drainage schemes Diesel crawler-type excavators and drag-lines were responsible for savings from 16·7 per cent. to 85·7 per cent. as against the employment of hand labour.

On the construction of aerodromes Diesel tractor special scoops performed work at 15·16 per cent. to 91·7 per cent. saving of the cost of similar works by manual labour.

On railway-construction work similar comparative savings in cost were attained in using Diesel-powered plant, the percentage in some cases being as high as 74·3.

In all cases the saving in time was a considerable factor, and in one instance it is estimated that a machine will complete the work in one-fifth of the time required for the same job by manual labour, and at the same time show a comparative saving in cost of 57·1 per cent.

It is also of interest to quote the following costs : On a large drainage scheme the construction of a narrow drain holding over 2 ft. of water was excavated by a machine to the required depth, where, owing to the conditions, it would have been a most arduous and trying task to take out the bottom with manual methods. The machine costs show a saving of 60·8 per cent. against the estimated cost of manual labour for improperly completed work.