

Right through the construction programme in New Zealand to-day the introduction of modern plant, of which the larger units comprise Diesel crawler-type excavators and drag-lines, Diesel crawler-type tractors and road-building equipment, Diesel locomotives, winches, and graders, and pneumatic-tired scrapers, has shown a tremendous saving in cost and time in carrying out the work.

It might be assumed that the use of this large amount of plant would reduce the number of men employed on public works. This is not the case, however, as the Government's policy in mechanizing the construction works absorbs the men available by the increased number of projects that can be undertaken and completed at a cost no greater than what in the past was the cost of one undertaking with manual labour without any assistance from modern equipment.

Actually the average number of men employed has increased, the figures for the last three years being: 1935-36, 12,889; 1936-37, 17,452; 1937-38, 19,881.

In my visits to various works during the year I have had the opportunity of observing the operation and performance of the various types of machines in use. I was exceptionally pleased to see the progress that is being made and the manner in which the machines are functioning. This is attributable in no small degree to the high state of efficiency of the Department's organization and the ability of the machine operators.

### HARBOUR-WORKS.

During the year the harbour at Westport was maintained by the Government. Operation of the Port at Waikokopu has been carried out by the Wairoa Harbour Board on behalf of the Public Works Department.

The contract for the new reinforced-concrete wharf at Mangonui was almost completed during the year, and a new wharf was completed at Whangaparapara. General repairs have been carried out to the wharves at Waitaria Bay, Portage, and Little Wanganui Harbour, and a scheme has been prepared for the renewal of a portion of the south training-wall at Hokitika. A survey and preparation for a wharf and access thereto was carried out at Jackson's Bay.

### LIGHTHOUSES.

The radio-beacon towers at Baring Head have been erected, the radio equipment has been installed, and a beacon put into operation.

Erection of the power-house at Cape Campbell was completed during the year. Investigations were carried out in connection with proposals to electrify the light and install a radio beacon at Cape Maria van Diemen, Cuvier Island, and Moko Hinau.

Plans for the renewal of the lighthouse at Ponui have been finalized, the new tower has been fabricated, and the erection of the structure will be undertaken at an early date.

*Stevens Island.*—An engineering survey has been made for the purpose of installing a new tower and radio beacon. A power-house has been designed, all machinery and the steel mast ordered, and the necessary building will proceed immediately.

### NATIVE-LAND SETTLEMENT.

The net expenditure from the Public Works Fund for the year under review was £254,869, as compared with £112,319 for the previous year. The gross expenditure this year was £814,177, as against £521,962 last year. The difference between the gross expenditure and the net capital expenditure this year—viz., £559,308—is represented by grants from the Employment Promotion Fund amounting to £335,500 and farm receipts from Native lands in course of development totalling £223,808.