

APPENDIX B

ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLIC WORKS BY THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF

The ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF to the Hon. the MINISTER OF WORKS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report upon the various public works completed and in progress throughout the Dominion during the year ended 31st March, 1943:—

RAILWAYS

Dargaville Branch Railway.—During the past year the Railways Department has operated passenger and goods services over the entire branch, while the Public Works department has carried out all maintenance.

On the Kirikopuni loop-elimination all construction work, platelaying, and ballasting has been completed, and yards, roads, and buildings maintained to standard. The control of this branch line was handed over to the Railways Department towards the end of March, 1943.

Turakina-Okoia Railway Deviation.—Practically all work on this deviation has been suspended on account of the war, but the only works still to complete are ballasting, platelaying, erection of station buildings, and the completion of the bridges over the Turakina and Wangaeahu Rivers.

Napier-Gisborne Railway.—This line was taken over by the Railways Department on 1st February, 1943, for traffic, but a certain amount of construction work and clearing up of plant and material is still incomplete, and a number of men are still engaged on this work.

The principal activities on this line during the period were the completion of platelaying and ballasting, the completion of station yards and buildings, fences, overbridges, culverts, &c., together with a limited amount of earthwork.

South Island Main Trunk Railway.—Progress on this work was very much reduced during the past year owing to the necessity of transferring most of the men, material, and staff to urgent defence works.

The Wharamui to Clarence section was taken over by the Railways Department, and regular services were instituted on 19th October, 1942.

Since that period there has been a renewal of activities on the portion generally between the railheads at Okarahia and Clarence Bridge. The platelaying and ballasting in particular on the south end has been pushed on vigorously, and the line will be available for traffic as far as Oaro very early in the ensuing period.

Formation and bridging, which is well in hand over the balance of the length, are being manned to an increasing extent as men and material become available.

Westport-Inangahua Railway.—Although this section of railway has not been fully completed, freight-services have been operated since July, and rail-car service since September, without any delays.

The various uncompleted works—bridges, ballasting, and the removal of slips—have been steadily pushed on, and only minor works and general clearing up are now required. It is anticipated that with reasonable weather conditions work should be finally completed by about the end of June next.

IRRIGATION

Central Otago.—Lack of snow on the high country and abnormally low rainfall during the winter necessitated the conservation of water by reducing the normal quota by 5 per cent. this year.

No new construction was carried out, and in some schemes maintenance was hampered by shortage of labour. Irrigation water was supplied to 506 irrigators, and the total area irrigated was 43,377 acres out of a total of 45,052 acres commanded.

Financial results of the year's working are as follows: Revenue, £27,150; expenditure, £21,635; profit on working £5,515.

On the Omakau Scheme, where water is sold on demand, the total sales were 7,440 acre feet, showing a decline of 2,540 acre feet on last year's figures.

Canterbury.—Redcliff Scheme: The sale of water was equal to last year's figure, but the area irrigated dropped by 250 acres.

Levels Scheme: The return from sales was below last year's figure, but the area irrigated increased by 350 acres. Statistics for these schemes are as follows: Revenue, £572; expenditure, £2,491; area irrigated, 3,500 acres; area commanded, 17,400 acres; number of irrigators, 63.