

CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF ROADS

Further progress has been made with reconstruction and improvement of roads, and a considerable mileage of new roading has been added providing access to farms and soldiers' settlement blocks in back-country areas. Maintenance and retmetalling of existing roads has been continued.

During the year 83 miles of new formation have been constructed and 154 miles of new metalling or reconstruction and metalling have been completed. Twenty-one bridges, of a total length of 1,291 ft., have been erected.

In the Waitomo County, 3 miles 26 chains of formation and 5 miles 19 chains of metalling have been done during the year on the Mangapeehi-Maraeroa Road, making nearly 7 miles completed to date. The road provides access to State forests.

The new road from Haast to Haast Pass has been completed for 2½ miles, and surveys are in hand for the uncompleted section of the Paringa-Haast Road.

The access road from Seddonville to Charming Creek Coal-mine has progressed well: 4½ miles are complete, leaving only 25 chains to be finished.

Considerable progress was made on the construction of roads at the Chatham Islands. Waitangi - Te Ngaio Road (6 miles 40 chains); 50 per cent. of the work has been done and this road now serves four major farms. Waitangi-Kairakau Road (10 miles): formation and drainage was completed to 8 miles. Waitangi-Owenga (12½ miles): formation between 0-8 miles and 11-12½ miles was completed. Seven miles of this road have been metalled. Police Access Road: except for fencing and metalling of odd patches, the work has been finished. Township-Wharf Road (1½ miles): this road has been formed and metalled excepting the last 16 chains and a sea wall 120 ft. long was erected.

PLANT AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

During the year some 9,250 items of construction plant, valued originally at about £4,850,000, have been employed on hydro-electric construction, highways, aerodrome-maintenance, land-clearing, water-supply schemes, State housing settlements, and opencast mining.

New machines have been purchased, mostly as replacements for plant worn out in service. These comprise heavy power graders, Diesel crawler and wheeled tractors and allied equipment, Diesel compressors (portable and stationary), large Diesel generators, Diesel excavators, Diesel transporters of up to 40 tons capacity, pumping equipment, road-rollers, elevators and conveyors, loaders, road-brooms, bitumen sealing plants, crushers, battery locomotives, tunnel muckers, air-tool equipment, heavy Diesel dump wagons, Diesel dump-tors, workshop machine-tools and equipment, welding-sets, and concrete-mixers; the cost of these machines was about £780,000.

Heavy machine-tools, acquired as German war reparations, have been of great assistance in equipping the plant depots at Mangere, Gracefield, and Sockburn, and also the smaller workshops established in districts where running repairs are effected.

The Mechanical Design Office has been fully occupied in designing equipment such as cableways, concrete-batching plant, gravel crushing and screening plant, cranes, and tunnelling plant for hydro-electric-construction works. Design has also been carried out for other Departments.

The Department has arranged the purchase of plant and equipment on behalf of the Departments of Agriculture, Mines, Maori Affairs, Health, and Air, and the State Forest Service, and Catchment Boards and other local bodies.

Repair and maintenance work has been done for a number of these Departments; and power-generating plants have been equipped and installed on behalf of the State Forest Service and the Rarotonga Administration.