

represents principally a large purchase of rolling-stock to make up the shortage created during the war period.

The Public Works Statement is primarily a report to Parliament of the operations of the past year, and a forecast of policy intentions of the ensuing year. It may, however, be of interest to honourable members if I take the opportunity of outlining, briefly, the achievement of the Department during the past ten years.

During the period 1912-1922, £18,178,422 has been expended in public works. This amount does not include expenditure on additions to open lines, telegraph extension, immigration, workers' dwellings, or school buildings. For this sum we have had 235 miles 18 chains of railway completed and handed over to the Working Railways Department, while between forty and fifty miles have been brought to the stage of being used for public traffic under the direction of the Public Works Department, although not yet handed over. In addition, there is a very large mileage of formation over which there is not yet traffic.

Practically the whole of the hydro-electric work of the Department has been done since April, 1912. This includes the ultimate development of 16,000 horse-power at Coleridge, where very shortly there will be an actual development of 12,000 horse-power. The headworks for the whole 16,000 have been completed, and the reticulation for the disposal of the whole practically completed. In addition, the Government has purchased the Horahora power-station of 8,000 horse-power, constructed transmission-lines permitting the sale of the whole output, and has in hand the extension of both power-house and headworks. The preliminary development of 1,000 horse-power at Lake Waikaremoana has been constructed and will shortly be in commission. The development of 24,000 horse-power to supply Wellington and surrounding districts from Mangahao is in hand. These works have been vigorously prosecuted during the last two years. The constructional works necessary at Mangahao are very considerable, consisting of over two miles and a half of tunnel, three large concrete dams, three-quarters of a mile of pressure pipe-line—part double and part quadruple—together with the necessary power-house, &c. The whole of this work is well advanced. A considerable amount of the material necessary for the hundreds of miles of transmission-lines is in hand, and erection has commenced. Complete surveys for the duplication of Lake Coleridge, and for development at Hawea-Wanaka, Teviot, Gowan, Aratiatia, Arapuni, and Hutt Rivers have been carried out. The detail plans in connection with Arapuni are well advanced, and an arrangement has already been made for the sale of a large portion of the power when available. Local-body proposals have been investigated, and approved or disapproved as circumstances required.

An immense amount of roadwork has been carried out. Over 5,100 miles of road have been formed, and over 2,500 miles metalled. On these roads—not including small bridges and culverts—a length of 111,881 ft., or over twenty-one miles, of bridges have been erected. Some of the bridges are of very considerable magnitude: three are between 950 ft. and 1,000 ft. long, two are 1,200 ft., while twenty-four are over 300 ft.

Irrigation works involving over one hundred miles of water-races, some of very large capacity, have been constructed. A number of concrete dams were built. One of these is over 100 ft. high and holds 1,800,000,000 cubic feet of water, enabling the irrigation of 20,000 acres of land to be effected. Other schemes, providing for the irrigation of many thousands of acres, have been investigated, and for some the survey is completed.

During the whole of the war period, and since, the erection of public buildings has been deferred to as great an extent as possible, but nevertheless 283 Government buildings of various classes have been erected, including 131 post-offices.

Irrigation provision, like hydro-electricity supply, is a matter upon which educational effort is necessary, even to the extent, in the general public interest, of undertakings which, for the time being, do not completely pay their way. Irrigation works are of a peculiar nature. They are very similar to development roads in that they enable settlement to take place and production to be effected, which would be impossible without the water-supply which they provide. It is, of course, desirable that in addition to paying their way they should also provide interest and sinking fund, but in this respect the call for repayment of interest should not be so strong as in the case of hydro-electric undertakings. If electric power is