

It is interesting to note that the efforts of the local authorities and the Board since the main highways scheme was inaugurated has resulted in the provision of 1,052 miles of dustless road. The maps at the end of the report show the extent of the dustless roads in each Island in 1924, when the main-highways scheme commenced, and also the position at the 31st March, 1932. The extent of the improvements in the eight-year period are most noticeable, but the maps also illustrate effectively the untreated gaps in the highway system which it is most desirable should be completed.

#### RAILWAY-CROSSING ELIMINATION AND PROTECTION.

The elimination of railway-crossings is a work which is usually financed jointly by the Railways Department, the Main Highways Board, and local authorities. At the commencement of the present depression the Railways Department notified the Main Highways Board that it was unable to finance any new elimination schemes, consequently the only work of this nature carried out during the year under review was the completion of the approaches to the new overhead bridge erected on the Auckland-Wellington Main Highway over the railway in the vicinity of the Borough of Waitara. The condition of the Main Highways Board's funds as a result of the large diversion authorized by Parliament will also preclude any work of this nature during the financial year 1932-33.

#### ADVANCES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Under section 2 of the Main Highways Amendment Act, 1926, which authorizes the Board to advance moneys by way of loan to local authorities for highway purposes, a sum of £39,204 was advanced, making a total to the 31st March, 1932, of £96,581. All loans are made on the instalment-repayment system, the local authorities being required to make equal annual payments, which include interest on the amount for the time being outstanding and part repayment of principal. The principal repaid to the 31st March, 1932, amounted to £16,183, leaving a balance outstanding of £80,398. Most of the advances made are in respect of work carried out in the South Island.

#### TRAFFIC-CONTROL.

As mentioned in previous reports, the Board has encouraged local authorities to form into groups for the purpose of appointing full-time Traffic Inspectors with a view to more efficient administration of the traffic regulations. In cases of approved joint schemes the Board indicated that it would subsidize the wages and expenses of a Traffic Inspector on a pound-for-pound basis. During the year under review the normal subsidy was increased to £2 for £1, the increase to date from the 1st October, 1931. In a few cases, however, on account of special circumstances, the Board's subsidy remains at a lower rate. As a result of the Board's policy, four further group schemes have been inaugurated. The following list shows the group traffic schemes which are now in operation:—

*Otamatea Group*, including Otamatea, Whangarei, and Hobson Counties.

*Waikato Group*, including Waikato, Waipa, and Raglan Counties, Ngaruawahia and Huntly Boroughs.

*Thames Group*, including Thames and Ohinemuri Counties.

*Rotorua Group*, including Rotorua and Taupo Counties and Rotorua Borough.

*Cook Group*, including Cook, Waikohu, Uawa, and Waiapu Counties.

*Hawke's Bay Group*, including Hawke's Bay, Woodville, Weber, Dannevirke, Waipukurau, Patangata, and Waipawa Counties.

*Taumarunui Group*, including Taumarunui, Ohura, and Kaitieke Counties, Taumarunui Borough, and Manunui Town District.

*Wanganui Group*, including Wanganui, Patea, and Waitotara Counties.

*Manawatu Group*, including Manawatu, Oroua, Kairanga, Pohangina, and Kiwitea Counties.

*Masterton Group*, including Masterton, Wairarapa South, Featherston, Eketahuna, Pahiatua, Akitio, Mauriceville, and Castlepoint Counties.

*Blenheim Group*, including Blenheim Borough and Awatere and Marlborough Counties.

*Waimea Group*, including Waimea County, Richmond and Motueka Boroughs.

*Waimairi Group*, including Waimairi and Paparua Counties.

*Temuka Group*, including Mackenzie, Geraldine, Levels, and Waimate Counties. Geraldine, Temuka, and Waimate Boroughs, and Pleasant Point Town District.

*Waitaki Group*, including Waitaki, Waihemo, Waikouaiti, Maniototo, Vincent, and Lake Counties, Palmerston and Waikouaiti Boroughs.

In addition to these subsidized schemes administered by local authorities, the Board employs three full-time Inspectors, who operate in the Auckland, Wellington, and West Coast districts, while a number of departmental officers controlling certain sections of highways throughout the country are vested with the powers of a Traffic Inspector for the purpose of general traffic supervision.

#### SIGNPOSTING AND CENTRE-LINE MARKING.

Signposting and centre-line marking on highways carry the same rate of subsidy from the Board as is applicable to ordinary general maintenance.

#### EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE.

The restoration of the damage to main highways caused by the earthquake of the 17th June, 1929, was continued in the Nelson and West Coast districts. The total expenditure by the Board for the year was £28,195. The expenditure on restoration work in these districts up to the 31st March, 1931, was £195,198, so that to the 31st March, 1932, the Murchison earthquake has cost the Board £223,393.