

There is still necessity for some further expenditure, principally on bridges which were seriously damaged but were put into a condition to carry traffic temporarily. In view of the general financial situation, a number of these works are being postponed, but their postponement, of course, cannot be indefinite. The expenditure for the past three years was made up as follows:—

Highway.	1929-30.	1930-31.	1931-32.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
Westport-Nelson .. ..	51,907	44,539	9,950	106,396
Murchison-Reefton .. ..	11,652	5,685	150	17,487
Westport-Karamea .. ..	15,936	55,937	17,995	89,868
Other works .. ..	7,383	2,159	100	9,642
	86,878	108,320	28,195	223,393

Up to the 31st March, 1932, the major portion of the damage caused to the highways by the disastrous earthquake in Hawke's Bay District on the 3rd February, 1931, had been dealt with, with the exception of two large bridges. The total expenditure for the year, excluding the said bridges, was £30,821. The expenditure during the previous financial year was £7,473. The two large bridges are the Wairoa Bridge, on the Napier-Gisborne via Wairoa Main Highway, and the Redclyffe Bridge, on the Napier-Tukituki via Omaha Main Highway, the former estimated to cost £45,000 and the latter £15,000. Good progress was made with the Wairoa Bridge, the expenditure to the 31st March, 1932, being £14,930. The Redclyffe Bridge has not been commenced, but the plans and specifications are in course of preparation. The total expenditure by the Board on earthquake restoration in this district to the 31st March, 1932, was therefore £53,224. In addition to this sum the local authorities found £2,798.

The allocation of the expenditure is shown in the following tabulation:—

Highway.	1930-31.	1931-32.		Total.
	By Board.	By Board.	By Local Bodies.	
	£	£	£	£
Wairoa Bridge .. ..	..	14,930	..	14,930
Gisborne-Napier via Wairoa .. ..	6,578	20,642	..	27,220
Napier-Wellington via Wairarapa .. ..	..	851	284	1,135
Petane-Taupo .. ..	558	1,967	195	2,720
Napier-Tukituki via Omaha .. ..	15	5,027	1,676	6,718
Other works .. ..	322	2,334	643	3,299
	7,473	45,751	2,798	56,022

The total expenditure from the Board's funds to the 31st March, 1932, in respect of the two large earthquakes has been £276,617.

Since the above statement was prepared the Board has to report very serious damage to the partially constructed Wairoa Bridge, as a result of a further heavy earthquake shock on the 16th September, 1932.

#### PURCHASE OF PLANT.

The purchasing and hiring of plant to local authorities on the hire-purchase system has been continued, but, as is only to be expected, the transactions during the year were on a very much reduced scale as compared with previous years. The total value of plant purchased during 1931-32 under this system was £2,815, as compared with £15,878 expended last year. The grand total value of plant purchased for local authorities since the scheme was inaugurated is £158,509. Of this sum, £122,636 has been recovered from local authorities, leaving a balance outstanding of £35,873. These figures indicate that the Board's hire-purchase system has been operated very successfully, and has no doubt proved an excellent substitute for the previous system in many countries of financing plant by means of long-term loans.

The following list shows the plant hired to local authorities from the 1st April, 1931, to the 31st March, 1932: Power grader, 1; motor-lorries, 2; crusher, elevator, and screen, 1.

The Board purchased for its own use at a total cost of £1,154 the following items: Motor-cars, 2; portable spraying-machines, 2; concrete-mixer, 1; tractor, 1; drilling-machine, 1; road-magnet, 1.

#### TESTING OF HIGHWAY MATERIALS.

The Petrological Laboratory has continued to carry out the standard tests on roadmaking materials. The testing of samples of tar, road-oil, bitumen, bituminous emulsions, and bituminous concrete was efficiently undertaken as usual by the Dominion Analyst, Wellington. The reduction in construction work has, of course, been reflected in a reduction in the amount of testing work undertaken.