

The number of men employed by the Public Works Department under financial arrangements made with the Unemployment Board increased gradually from 853 in January, 1932, to 5,690 at the end of June last, the weekly average for the eighteen months being 3,260; and the following schedule of some of the work accomplished during that period may, I venture to say, be regarded as conclusive evidence of the careful consideration given to placing the men in useful employment:—

Dray-road—			River-control works—		
Formed	90 miles.		Channel improvement ex-		
Widened	153 miles.		cavation	103,491 cub. yd.	
Metalled	307 miles.		Stop-banking	6 miles.	
Stumping and logging—			Willow-clearing	41 miles.	
Heavy	1,624 acres.		Land-drainage: Excavation of		
Light	1,044 acres.		drains	117 miles.	
Scrub-cutting	10,955 acres.		Tree-planting	250 acres.	
Bushfelling	347 acres.		Gold-prospecting—		
Fireblight protection: Haw-			Water-race constructed	4 miles.	
thorn-hedge cutting	69 miles.		Fluming erected	11 chains.	
Sand-dune reclamation: Mar-			Irrigation works—		
ram-grass planting	6,276 acres.		Dams for reservoirs—		
Farm lands cleared of boulders	812 acres.		Rock quarried	200 cub. yd.	
Land-levelling	135 acres.		Rock excavated	7,700 cub. yd.	
Land cleared of noxious weeds	6,325 acres.		Concrete placed	510 cub. yd.	
Fencing	15 miles.		Race construction and		
			widening	30 miles.	

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

The net expenditure for the current year was £69,603, being £882,785 less than that of the previous year, due to the fact that construction work was stopped on all lines except the Stratford—Main Trunk Railway. Sales of workers' hut accommodation, surplus plant, and stocks realized £66,858. The total lengths of all lines under construction over which goods and passenger traffic has been carried was 85 miles, and these services have been well maintained.

The work of the year on the several lines in the course of construction as fully set out in the Engineer-in-Chief's report—Appendix B—may be summarized as follows:—

North Auckland Main Trunk Railway, Okaihau Northwards.—Owing to suspension of construction works in January, 1931, the work carried out on this railway consisted mainly of overhauling machinery and plant and the disposal of surplus stores, material, and temporary buildings.

Dargaville Branch Railway.—The work on this line between Kirikopuni and Tangowahine consisted chiefly of maintenance of permanent-way, repairs to workers' dwellings, water-supply and sanitary services, and the operation of goods and passenger services over a distance of 10 miles 10 chains. The services were well patronized, a large quantity of stock being carried.

Stratford—Main Trunk Railway.—Good progress was made with the construction of this railway. All tunnels were completed, bridges finally attended to and painted in readiness for handing over to the Railway Department. The rails were joined up on the 7th November, 1932. On the 12th December last the Railway Department commenced to run through goods-trains daily between Stratford and Taumarunui. These services carried up to 500 tons per trip, necessitating the use of two engines. On the 22nd March last exceptional floods were experienced on 6 miles of this line near Okahukura end, stopping all train services until the 15th May. The Okahukura Tunnel, which is on this length, suffered badly, being filled with debris and slush for its entire length (76 chains). The line from Tahora to the Main Trunk Railway, a distance of $41\frac{1}{2}$ miles, was finally handed over to the Railway Department for operation of passenger and goods services on the 3rd September, 1933.