

SALE OF OBSOLETE AND UNSERVICEABLE MATERIAL.

A number of auction sales of obsolete and unserviceable material, including worn-out motor-vehicles from various Departments, was held during the year. The total value of property disposed of was £3,183 18s. 9d. This sum includes the value of scrap lead, copper, and other metals.

MARINE INSURANCE FUND.

The insurable value of stores from countries within the Empire and from the United States of America covered under the New Zealand Government Marine Insurance Fund was £36,664.

WORKSHOPS.

The various departmental workshops throughout the Dominion continue to render efficient service. As was the case last year, the activities of the principal workshops—those situated at Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin—were confined to a very large extent to work of a maintenance character, and the reconditioning of telegraph and telephone equipment to avoid expenditure in the purchase of new equipment from overseas. The maintenance work undertaken was comprised chiefly of repairs and attention to motor-vehicles, typewriters, and other mechanical office-appliances, telegraph and telephone instruments, office furniture and equipment, and general electrical repairs.

The Department's subsidiary workshops at Whangarei, Hamilton, Paeroa, Wanganui, Napier, Gisborne, Masterton, Palmerston North, Greymouth, Timaru, and Invercargill are equipped for undertaking motor-repair work only, and were fully occupied during the year. The workshops at Hamilton, Wanganui, Napier, Palmerston North, and Invercargill are equipped to undertake all classes of repair work to motor-vehicles, while the activities of the other subsidiary workshops are confined to running repairs. The operation of these subsidiary workshops has resulted in a high standard of maintenance of the Department's motor fleet and in considerable saving in expenditure.

The total value of the work performed in the various workshops during the year amounted to £77,098, of which £7,563 represents the value of services rendered to other Government Departments.

BUILDINGS AND LAND.

The erection of new post-office buildings at High Street (Christchurch) and Westport, the reconditioning of the Napier Chief Post-office building, and the reconstruction of the Hastings Post-office building were completed during the year.

The clock-towers on the chief post-office buildings at Gisborne and Timaru were found to be defective; and, as they constituted an earthquake hazard, they were removed. The clock-tower on the Masterton Post-office building was strengthened, the local authority bearing the cost above the estimated cost of removal.

The top floor of the Napier Chief Post-office building was fitted for occupation by the Department of Lands and Survey and the Lands and Deeds and Stamp Duties Departments, that portion occupied by the latter Departments being made fireproof by the provision of a concrete floor and steel partitions, &c. The Departments mentioned took occupation of the accommodation in February.

The old post-office building at Courtenay Place, Wellington, was converted into shops and offices and leased to a private tenant.

The post-office buildings at Papahaoa, St. Bathans, and Wellington North were no longer required, and were disposed of.

The remaining buildings on the former radio-station site at Awanui have now been disposed of. The station itself was closed in 1929; and the engineer's residence was sold for removal in 1931.

Areas of land were acquired as follow: Clydevale, site for post-office building; Mataura, extension of post-office site; Ngatea, extension of storage-site.

Areas of land no longer required at the following places were disposed of: Ahaura, Awanui, Buckland, Clydevale, Gorge Road, Napier, Owaka, Patetonga, St. Albans (street widening), St. Bathans, Sydenham (street widening), Wellington North, Whatawhata.

The Wellington North property was transferred to the Police Department.

DEPARTMENTAL MOTOR-VEHICLES.

There has been little change under this heading. Twenty-eight new $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks for general utility purposes in the maintenance of telegraph and telephone lines were purchased and put into commission in June. They replaced worn-out vehicles which were either past economical repair or had reached a stage beyond which it was not safe to use them. Due to the exacting conditions of working of many of the vehicles at country stations, several are showing signs of hard wear, and a number are soon to be replaced. Because of the restriction of expenditure on new purchases, a number of motor-vehicles has during the last few years been retained in commission longer than would otherwise have been the case; and this has had the effect of providing work for mechanics throughout the Dominion, both within and without the Department. There is, however, a limit beyond which this practice cannot be carried, even in the present difficult times.

The Department's purchases of motor transport are confined to vehicles manufactured in Great Britain.

The number of departmental motor-vehicles in commission at the close of the year was 537, comprising 441 lorries, trucks, and vans, 93 cars, and 3 motor-cycles. The number of miles traversed by the fleet during the year was 3,862,439. Forty-eight vehicles were withdrawn from service, representing a net fleet reduction of 20.