

Improved stability has been provided for the trans-Tasman radio-telephone transmitter, and arrangements are in train to facilitate a quick change of wave-length which will be necessary to enable a 24-hour service to be provided. At Awarua-Radio the obsolete spark transmitter has been replaced by a valve transmitter of a power suitable for all normal traffic requirements. In addition, a modern short-wave transmitter has been provided, and when the installation of these sets has been completed the stations will be well equipped for all classes of radio-telephone service. The improvements at Chatham Islands-Radio during the year included the provision of a valve transmitter of 50-watt aerial rating in place of the spark apparatus, which has been retained for emergency use. Radio equipment has also been installed at Christchurch to provide an independent channel of communication in the event of any major dislocations of land line facilities.

SETTLEMENT OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS.

During the year steady progress was made with the development of the areas acquired by the Small Farms Board for settlement under the provisions of the Small Farms (Relief of Unemployment) Act, 1932-33.

The acquisition of additional properties, and an extension of the development programmes on some of the blocks mentioned in last year's Statement, resulted in an increase in the number of workmen employed from 570 to 1,264.

The cottages erected during the twelve months totalled 151, the average cost being £241, as against £214 for those erected during the year 1933-34. The increase may be accounted for by the rise in the cost of building materials, and a further improvement in the design of most of the cottages.

The following summary shows the expenditure under the vote, and the results for the year :—

Capital expenditure	£218,657
Small farmers established	127 on 12,128 acres.
Number of sections under development, and area	459 on 35,364 acres.
Number of share milkers established	7
Number of men employed on development	1,264

PLANT AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT.

Whilst maintaining the Government's policy regarding unemployment it was found necessary to utilize a quantity of mechanical plant in wet places, and upon those portions of works outside the scope of man power, and at the same time to facilitate the economic employment of as many men as possible.

The works upon which the plant was used comprised, principally, the clearing, stumping, draining, reclaiming, and irrigation of farm lands at many places scattered all over New Zealand, whilst the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges and the completion of hydro-electric works necessitated the use of a further quantity of plant.

The plant actually in use during the year represents a capital value of approximately £445,000, and consists principally of power pumps, quarry plant, electric generators, drag-lines, concrete-mixers, tractors, and log-haulers, the whole of which were available from the plant already held by the Department.

In maintaining the motor-vehicle fleet and road-maintenance machinery to the required standard of efficiency, replacement items were purchased at a total cost of £16,686.

The principal works upon which construction plant was used during the year comprised—Ahuriri Lagoon Reclamation, swamp drainage and removal of willows in the Taupiri district; Irrigation Works in Central Otago; Arapuni Power-house extension; Upper Waikaremoana and Waitaki Electric-power development, land clearing and stumping and farm-development generally; scattered stone-quarries, including major quarries at Tauraroa and Motutara Island; Te Anau—Milford new roadworks, and also bitumen-sealing and new-road-construction works generally; whilst a considerable quantity of plant was also used upon road-maintenance work throughout New Zealand.

The fact that the only high-speed, modern power graders available in New Zealand were being imported from the United States of America decided the Department to design a modern grader and advertise a contract for the manufacture of a number of these machines in New Zealand.