

RAILWAYS: IMPROVEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO OPEN LINES.

The net expenditure out of the Public Works Fund under the heading " Railways : Improvements and Additions to Open Lines " for the year ended 31st March, 1939, was £2,670,832, this sum being made up as follows :

	£
Wellington new station	63,044
Wellington-Johnsonville Paekakariki electrification	29,966
Plimmerton-Paekakariki duplication	40,662
Scroggy Hill Deviation	7,085
Papakura-Horotiu duplication	138,817
Turakina-Okoia Deviation	124,717
Palmerston North Deviation	37,598
St. Leonards-Sawyer's Bay duplication	34,657
Stratford-Okahukura-Taumarunui automatic-signalling installation	25,315
Christchurch new station and yard	41,179
Oamaru foreshore protection	10,000
Dwellings	140,434
Rolling-stock	1,336,913
Workshops buildings and plant	199,493
Station rearrangements and sidings	92,109
Grade easements, improvements, &c.	28,542
Overbridges	22,170
Road services	275,532
Miscellaneous	22,599
	£2,670,832

Good progress has been made with the additional accommodation that is being provided at the new station at Wellington and the reorganization of the yard, while the electrification of the Wellington Paekakariki Section has advanced satisfactorily, along with the Plimmerton-Paekakariki duplication.

Further progress was made during the year with the duplication works between Papakura and Horotiu and St. Leonards-Sawyer's Bay, and also with the deviations at Scroggy Hill, Turakina-Okoia, and Palmerston North. Progress was also made with various grade-easement works throughout the system. The installation of automatic signalling between Stratford, Okahukura, and Taumarunui is now nearing completion, and it is expected that this work will be completed in two or three months' time. Progress has been made with the elimination of level crossings in various localities, a number of overbridges having been brought into use during the year.

The new terminal for the Department's road-passenger services at Dunedin is nearing completion, and the new building at Wellington for the road services and Stores Shipper is well in hand. During the year the road-passenger and goods services were extended considerably by the purchase of new vehicles and privately-owned services.

The programme for the building of dwellings for the staff and for the carrying-out of improvements to the existing dwellings has progressed during the year.

Further activity was maintained in the construction of rolling-stock, 5 rail cars, 39 cars and vans, and 1,373 wagons being turned out, while 50 locomotives, 106 cars, 81 vans, and 3,459 wagons were under construction or on order at the close of the year.

SETTLEMENT AND OTHER ROADS.

When presenting my first Statement after assuming my present office I made reference to the inadequate roading facilities then existing in respect of isolated and remote settlement. It was quite evident that primary production was most advanced in those areas where reasonably good all-weather roads met the needs of farming and settlement interests. Not only did such roading serve development requirements, but it also provided economic transport for the conveyance of commodities for marketing.

On the other hand, the lack of good roading meant that the development of potential areas was being seriously retarded, while the settler who was endeavouring to pioneer new territory was enormously handicapped through lack of road access.