

has been paid out of the ordinary revenue without any contribution in aid from loan. This we were enabled to do in consequence of the large surplus of £203,683 brought forward from the year 1881–82; but the principle of paying the whole cost of the Armed Constabulary out of revenue has so much to commend it that I hope we shall not again consent to charging any part of that cost against loan while it is possible by any reasonable effort to provide the necessary means from ordinary revenue.

With regard to Railways, the amount expended was only slightly in excess of the vote, notwithstanding a very considerable increase of traffic during the year. Full particulars of the expenditure in connection with this service will be given by the Minister for Public Works when he makes his annual statement.

LIABILITIES OUTSTANDING ON 31ST MARCH, 1883.

Table No. 2.

The outstanding liabilities of the Ordinary Revenue Account on the 31st March, 1883, were estimated at £176,530, particulars of which have been laid before the House by the Audit Office under section 9 of "The Public Revenues Act, 1882." These liabilities are, as honourable members know, included in the estimated expenditure for the current year. The liabilities outstanding on the 31st March, 1882, amounted to £164,394; at the close of the previous year they amounted to £165,514. It will thus be seen that, in the ordinary course of things, without either hurrying or delaying expenditure, the liabilities on this account from year to year may fairly be estimated at from £160,000 to £180,000. The practice, begun in 1880–81, of making the payments within the financial year the expenditure of the year, without regard to date of service or supply—and so abandoning the method of throwing back on the revenue of the previous year expenditure made in respect of liabilities outstanding on the 31st March—has greatly simplified the public accounts, and has worked satisfactorily.

ORDINARY REVENUE OF THE YEAR 1882–83.

Table No. 3.

The estimated revenue for the year, exclusive of the cash derived from land sales, was £3,393,500. The actual amount paid into the Public Account, after deducting refunds, was £3,470,250, being £76,750 in excess of the estimate. A reference to the comparative return of estimated and actual receipts, which will be appended to this Statement when published, will show honourable members the extent to which the several heads of receipt exceeded or fell short of the estimate.

It will be observed from that return that the only class of revenue which fell short of the amount estimated was Customs, the receipts being £1,494,463 as against an estimate of £1,500,000, or £5,537 less than estimated. The total amount yielded in excess of the estimate by the other classes of revenue was £82,287. Of this sum £23,690 came from registration and other fees. This large increase is attributable to an under-estimate of the probable receipts of duty on leases and conveyances of Native lands. It will be remembered that the Stamp Act of 1881 offered the alternative of anticipating the annual payments of these duties by a composition paid once for all—a provision which has been acted on beyond my conjectural estimate. From this source of revenue we received £25,251 during the year. The revenue from stamps was £10,389 in excess of the estimated amount. Included in this class are the duties under the Stamp Act, postal revenue, fees and fines of the law-courts, and land transfer fees, for all of which there is now only one description of stamp in use. The Treasury is consequently unable to apportion the moneys received from sales of stamps to the classes of revenue to which they relate. The same course—that of permitting one kind of stamp to be used for all purposes—has been followed to some extent in other colonies and in England, and no practical inconvenience has resulted, while to the public the change has been a great advantage. The telegraph revenue was £8,135 in excess of the estimate. The receipts from depasturing licenses, rents, &c., were also in excess £10,073. The railway receipts, notwithstanding the large reductions in the tariff, yielded more than the estimate by £14,740. This has been due to a considerable increase in the passenger traffic, and in the tonnage or goods carried, and to an unprecedented increase in the quantities of live stock