

only £1,509; but, as already stated (under the heading of the North Island Trunk Railway), the Government now proposes to ask the House to authorise a further allocation of £100,000 out of Part II. of the Public Works Fund for these land purchases, and if this is granted the amount available will thus be £101,509.

Out of this amount there would then be recouped to the General Land Purchase Fund the sum of £20,285 expended out of that fund on lands along the line of the railway, acquired before the passing of "The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Act, 1886," but which are still in the hands of the Government, and available to be dealt with under the provisions of that Act. If these proposals are assented to, vigorous efforts will be made to acquire land along the line of the railway at both ends; but, to avoid unprofitable expenditure, no payment will be made upon land until the title is ascertained in accordance with section 4 of "The Native Land Court Act, 1886."

The total expenditure on land along the North Island Trunk Railway, to the 31st March last, has therefore been £118,776. Of this amount £87,499 has been paid for 630,283 acres of which the purchases are complete, and £31,277 has been paid on account of further areas of which the purchases are as yet incomplete.

IMMIGRATION.

Immigration is now discontinued, except to a very limited extent in favour of separated families. It is in fact restricted to cases where the father of a family has his wife and children in the United Kingdom.

Owing to intimation through the Agent-General in May last year that all nominations would lapse unless taken advantage of within three months, a large number of applications for refunds of deposits were received. This has greatly reduced the liability of the department in respect to outstanding nominations.

The liabilities and commitments, both in London and in the colony at this date amount to £2,830. This includes the cost of passages for 58½ adults, whose nominations still hold good, and for the passages of whom the Government is liable should application be made under the nominations.

It is proposed to take a further vote of £1,000 for the passages of separated families.

Nominations in favour of ten separated families have been accepted, on which the sum of £340 was deposited in the colony.

Since the date of my last Statement (18th August, 1888) 250 persons have arrived under the ordinary regulations, and 14 persons under the regulations for the introduction of small farmers, which are not now in force. This makes a total of 264 persons who have arrived in the colony during the year. There is one family of four persons now afloat.

Details of nationalities, and classes of immigrants introduced up to the 30th April last, will be found as usual in Parliamentary Paper D.—3, 1889.

TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

In the extension of the telegraph system of the colony a sum of £12,047 was expended during the last financial year, and it is estimated that a sum of £12,700 will be required to carry out the proposals for the present year. The expenditure of last year included a sum of £6,293 on account of the telephone exchanges of the colony, bringing the total capital cost of these exchanges, including the stock of material in hand for them, to £59,581 on the 31st March, 1889.

The work of last year, like that of the year preceding it, consisted principally of the extension of telegraph communication to several small villages by means of telephones. Of the lines erected for this purpose, the most important were to Middlemarch, Pigeon Bay, Marsden Point, Norsewood, Wairau Valley, Inangahua Junction, and to Hakaru and Pukekaruro, and the completion of the line to Kaipara Heads.

The only line erected for connection by means of the ordinary telegraph instruments was to Mahakipawa, for the convenience of the population on the goldfields there.