

WATERWORKS ON GOLDFIELDS.

The expenditure on waterworks on the goldfields last year amounted to £3,811, and the liabilities at the end of the year were £1,796. As the revenue from some of the water-supplies controlled by the Government has been decreasing, it has been found necessary to extend the races to command fresh ground, and it is proposed to ask the House for a vote of £5,000 to cover the liabilities and carry out the extensions referred to.

TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

The expenditure out of the Public Works Fund on account of telegraph construction, and for the extension of the telephone exchange system throughout the colony, amounted during the financial year to £29,245, and of this sum an amount of £5,287 was expended on the telephone exchanges.

Of the new lines erected during the year for the extension of telegraphic communication, the most important are those to Toko, Awanui, Blackburn, and Birmingham in the North Island; and Banks Peninsula, Taipo, Shag Point, Five Rivers, and Stanley Brook in the South Island.

In the estimates for the present year an expenditure of £23,666 has been provided for, which is intended to cover the liabilities of £6,716 existing at the commencement of the financial year, and sundry extensions, including the line to Peel Forest, and a telephone-exchange at Mataura.

CONCLUSION.

The total appropriations proposed in the Public Works Estimates for the current year amount to £693,068, viz.: £591,468 under Part I., and £101,600 under Part II., as compared with £682,780 voted last year for actual expenditure within the year; and a total authorisation of £801,231 to cover the expenditure of the year and the liabilities which might exist at its close.

That the Government is able to propose to vote so large a sum of money for public-works purposes, after a six years' abstention from borrowing, and to draw so large a proportion of the amount from the general revenue, is a very striking testimony to the improved and very gratifying state of the finances of the colony. The Government thinks it can fairly claim that its self-reliant policy, careful administration, and progressive legislation have materially assisted to bring this about, and thus to place the position of New Zealand in favourable contrast with every other country south of the line. In most of the Australian Colonies expenditure has had to be enormously reduced, and even then deficits of considerable magnitude have been incurred.

The Government has every reason to believe that the present satisfactory condition of the colony will continue. The outlook on the whole is cheering. The producing-power of the colony is increasing. Our colonists are in good heart and confident. But in our prosperity we must not fail to remember that careful administration, prudence, and the strictest economy are absolutely necessary if the hardly-won recovery of the last few years is to be maintained and improved upon.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE FORM IN WHICH IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE FOURTH SECTION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION ACT SHOULD BE PASSED IN FUTURE.

4. It shall be lawful for the Governor, in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, to enter into any contract or contracts, or to incur any liabilities, for carrying on the works and services for which money is appropriated by this Act: Provided that the amount of liability so incurred in respect of each vote shall not, together with the sum appropriated by such vote, exceed the sum set down in the ninth column in the Fifth Schedule opposite to each railway or other work for which money is appropriated by this Act.