

the way of rent, on the improved value of the land let. The third item is to enable the Government to make small advances to co-operative workmen employed on the construction of roads through Crown lands, to enable them to bring their families on to the works and out of the cities, where they are paying rent. The advances will be refundable out of the men's earnings. It is proposed to lease to men who desire it a small area around each dwelling.

The roads which it is proposed to construct out of the Land-purchase Account will probably absorb £40,000 during the current year. This amount will be used in the laying-out of permanent roads, and the construction of tracks to show how best to subdivide and settle newly-acquired lands.

It is proposed to obtain under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act the full amount of £50,000 which the Act authorises. The land upon which this sum will be expended has been placed in the market, or disposed of, loaded with sums sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund, in accordance with regulations made under the Act.

It has often been said by persons, in whose district no railway works were under construction, that the Government was expending too much money on railways and too little on roads. I have, therefore, had a statement prepared showing the amounts voted for and expended on roads and railways respectively during the last five years, which I think will show that whatever blame may attach to former Governments in this respect, no such charge can be laid at the door of the present Government :—

Work.	1890-91.	1891-92.	1892-93.	1893-94.	1894-5.
<i>Amounts Voted.</i>					
	£	£	£	£	£
Railways	362,919	490,276	399,755	316,628	313,028
Roads	181,112	204,464	231,193	244,169	316,060
<i>Amounts Expended.</i>					
Railways	179,012	154,416	220,894	176,255	..
Roads	71,683	109,716	135,339	177,667	..

This table shows that, while the amounts voted for railways have generally declined during recent years, the amounts voted for roads have steadily increased. The same also applies to the expenditure, the expenditure on railways having been greater in 1890-91 than in 1893-94, whereas the road expenditure in the former year was less than half the amount expended in the latter.

ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS (MINES DEPARTMENT).

The expenditure authorised under the above head last year amounted to £47,000. The amount, however, included some items that do not properly come under the head of "Roads," and which this year are provided for under "Development of Goldfields." It was not practicable to expend the whole amount voted within the year, the net expenditure to the 31st March last having amounted to £20,387 only; but liabilities existed at the same date to the further amount of £20,081.

The opening-up of roads and tracks upon our goldfields, especially for prospecting purposes, is admitted on all hands to be of the utmost importance, as an avenue whereby the mining industry may be advanced, and the hidden wealth of the colony developed. We therefore propose a vote of £45,455 for works of this class this year.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The total appropriations for public buildings and domains last year was £143,375—viz., £92,485 under the Public Works Fund, and £50,890 under the Consolidated Fund. The actual expenditure within the year amounted to £92,021—viz., £44,032 under the Public Works Fund, and £47,989 under the Consolidated Fund.

Under the Consolidated Fund the sum of £30,999 was expended on school-buildings, the remainder of the expenditure under that fund being almost entirely for maintenance and repairs.

The principal works carried out under the Public Works Fund were—the new lunatic asylum at Porirua, and more or less extensive works at the asylums at Auckland, Sunnyside (Christchurch), and Seacliff (Dunedin); additions to the post-office at Invercargill; new post-offices at Danevirke and Kaikoura; new Customhouse at Westport; new Courthouse at