

in, the Government being called upon to subsidise these moneys with equivalent grants. There is also an excess to be found in the amounts paid over in connection with the receipts from the endowments of the West Coast Harbour Boards.

A reference to the Statement of the Appropriation Account of last year, which has been placed before honourable members, will show the various votes upon which savings have been effected, and where the expenditure has been in excess of the amount voted. In comparing the expenditure of the year 1895-96 with the previous year, it will be sufficient for me to mention the classes wherein the principal saving or over-expenditure has been made. In Class V., of the Postmaster-General, an excess of expenditure amounting to £32,296 occurs. The conveyance of mails by sea and by land is responsible for £23,000, £11,000 of which was provided for payment to the railways in excess of the amount paid the previous year. The Railway Department had hitherto been carrying the parcel post at very low rates. It must not be forgotten that this expenditure is returned to the colony as Railways revenue. The Postal and Telegraph Department, being at the disposal of the public at every inhabited point in the colony, has to be served by a large staff of employés, hence the small increases authorised by the Classification Act amount yearly to a large sum in the aggregate. In the Education Department what may be termed the normal increase occurs, and so long as our population goes on increasing I do not imagine honourable members will begrudge payment for the facilities we afford in educating the children of the colony. In Class XI., Working Railways, will be found an increase of expenditure. This, of course, may be expected if we find that increased revenue has been earned. I am glad to see that the increased spending-power of the public has enabled them to make good use of our iron roads; the increase of freight and of traffic will serve as a great inducement for the Government to afford still further concessions. In Class XV., under the control of the Minister of Lands, the expenditure has again expanded, and I feel sure my colleague will not be blamed for a small increase of expenditure which arises from the successful settlement of the people upon the land. A good round sum of this expenditure has really been recouped by the deposits received from selectors of unsurveyed land, but these deposits are by law carried to revenue instead of being used in reduction of the cost of survey. I hope the Government will not be blamed for a slight increase in the expenditure of the Police and Defence Departments. It had become manifest that the Police Force of the colony needed strengthening; and with regard to the Defence Department the Minister recognised that in these stirring times it would not do to be behind the age, so the Home authorities were urged to at once supply the arms and ammunition, which had been ordered some time ago, to place our Colonial Forces upon a satisfactory footing in regard to modern equipments. It is to be earnestly hoped that occasion will never arise to test the efficiency of our local defence, but it cannot be gainsaid that we should be forearmed as well as forewarned. Other heads of expenditure under votes call for little comment.

Under the head of "Services not provided for" is set down the unusually large sum of £22,422. Of this amount £11,333 was expended in the purchase of Martini-Henry rifles; £7,693 for the first progress-payment in respect of the contract for the building of the new cable-steamer and lighthouse-tender, the "Tutanekai"; and £2,077 for expenses in connection with the Native disturbances at Ruatoki and Te Whaiti.

As I have said before, the usual detailed statements and tables will be laid before honourable members, either attached to my Budget or in separate parliamentary papers, and I feel sure honourable members will be pleased to make themselves acquainted with all particulars relating to the receipts and expenditure of the principal public account of the colony, namely, the Revenue Account of the Consolidated Fund, the statement of which members will find subjoined:—