

more energy should be shown in prosecuting works which are in hand ; but it must be admitted that we cannot continue a public-works policy without being properly provided with the always-necessary pounds, shillings, and pence.

I have, at some length and at the risk of wearying you, endeavoured to place before you our true financial position, and you will be able to recognise that we have, as before, maintained a very strong finance, albeit that the calls upon the public purse have been of late exceptionally large. Our position this year is just as firm and satisfactory, and in every direction the steady onward progress of our colony is shown. Our revenue is buoyant and increasing, and can easily bear the strain of further interest charges without in any way imposing further taxation upon the people.

Under these circumstances, and after very careful consideration, the Government have come to the conclusion to ask the authority of Parliament for a loan of £1,750,000, to be allocated for the following purposes:—

For the construction and completion of trunk and other lines of railway	£	750,000
For the construction of roads, tracks, and bridges	450,000	
For the cost of additional rolling-stock and the relaying of permanent-way	450,000	
For the purpose of developing the goldfields	50,000	
For telegraph extension	50,000	
		£1,750,000

There can be no question as to the propriety of the public purposes I have enumerated ; and I feel quite certain that the expenditure of the money will be more than justified by the beneficial results to our colonists which must ultimately ensue.

It will be seen that the greater proportion of the moneys to be raised will at once earn interest upon their expenditure, and no additional taxation will be required.

Experience has shown that a portion of the money can be borrowed locally, and this is the course which will be followed. It has the advantage of insuring the retention of the interest in the colony, and of effecting a very large saving in the cost of raising.

I feel sure the House will have no hesitation in authorising the amount I have named.

CONCLUSION.

My task is now completed. The facts, figures, and information which have been placed before you will, I trust, enable you to form deliberate judgment as to the financial position and the material progress of the colony. It is, I take it, the duty of the Government to control and direct our public affairs in a manner that will promote, as far as possible, the best interests of the people, and to do so consistently with a policy which one may term "safe." The resources of New Zealand are almost illimitable. Its greatest strength is to be found in the wonderful fertility and productiveness of its soil. I am confident that all will agree with me in saying that the best interests of the country can be promoted by the exercise of a judiciously progressive policy—such a policy as will make provision for the constructing of roads in the interior, pushing forward our railways (particularly the trunk lines), by assisting the mining, agricultural, and other great industries so as to insure the highest possible return to the individuals engaged in them, and thereby adding to the financial resources of the public exchequer. If one and all will approach the many-sided questions which are ever presenting themselves for solution in a reasonable spirit, I feel certain that, as the years go by, the properly directed efforts of our people will result in bettering the condition of themselves and promoting the general well-being of our colony.