

ESTIMATED REVENUE, 1904-5.

The estimated revenue for 1904-5 mounts higher and higher, but I do not hear that the collection of it presses unduly upon our colonists. Customs duties last year yielded £2,601,325, this year it is estimated they will reach £2,610,000, or an increase of nearly £9,000.

Our working railways produced £2,168,000, while for this current period my colleague anticipates obtaining £2,180,000, a very handsome result, considering the valuable concessions which have been freely given so as to promote our industries and to assist in bringing our produce as cheaply as possible to our markets. Last year's stamps revenue exceeded a million, and for this year it has been put down at £1,095,000. I anticipate that "Beer Duty" and "Registration and other Fees" will this year be slightly exceeded.

On the other hand, I have reduced our estimates slightly in the case of Land-tax, in consequence of the purchase of some large estates by the Government, which of course cease to pay land-tax; also Marine, Miscellaneous, and Territorial. Under the last-named head of revenue, seeing that those persons having the right to acquire the freehold of the lands held by them under occupation licenses have exercised their rights very freely, I do not think the revenue under the head of "Territorial" will yield anything like that of last year. I have therefore thought it wise to keep to an estimate of £230,000.

The net result of increases over decreases, as shown in Table No. 8 (attached hereto), is £16,015, not a very large amount I admit; but I prefer to be cautious, and will keep on the safe side. Inflated estimates of receipts incite to increased expenditure and extravagance, whilst keeping the estimates at a reasonably low rate promotes economy.

Our estimated expenditure being	£ 6,601,412
And our estimated revenue	7,098,000
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The excess of revenue over expenditure is	496,588
To which the amount brought forward is to be added	649,740
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Producing an estimated balance of	1,146,328
We should be able to assist the Public Works Fund with	650,000
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Leaving a balance of	£496,328

This balance (which is some £80,000 less than last year's estimate) will be amply sufficient to provide for supplementary expenditure and for subsequent assistance to the ways and means of the Public Works Fund.

FURTHER WAYS AND MEANS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

As I have already stated, the balance at the credit of the Public Works Fund on the 31st March last was £393,800, in addition to which there remained to be sold £416,050 of the moiety of the million loan which was authorised last session. This loan is being freely availed of by the *bona fide* investing public, and I am pleased to see it is taken advantage of by this class of investors. I may mention that up to the present time some 250 persons have placed their savings with us, representing over £200,000 invested of the half-million which is offered for sale.

The facilities we have offered for receiving investors' moneys at any post-office money-order office, as well as at the various branches of the Bank of New Zealand, and for sums of £25, £50, £100, and upwards, have, I am quite sure, popularised the issue, and have proved of considerable advantage to persons of thrifty habits who desire to make the most of their hard-earned savings. I find I am, however, digressing, and must get back to the ways and means of the Public Works Fund. The available balance of this fund, including the balance of loan-money to be raised, was £809,852, to which I anticipate adding a contribution from the Consolidated Fund of £650,000, which would raise our ways and means to £1,459,852 to provide for our current year's expenditure.

But I must point out that our requirements cannot stop when we reach the 31st March next: we must be financially strong enough to carry on a care-