

Of the longer and more important lines mention may be made of Ongarue—Mangaroa, Kaiataia—Herekino, Te Awamutu—Taumarunui, Tarata—Matau, Hunterville—Koeke, Manaroa—Forsyth Bay, Stillwater—Moana, Rakaia—Highbank, Hazelburn, Clinton—Clydevale, Mosgiel—Momona, Waimahaka—Waikawa, Mossburn—Te Anau, and metallic circuits and trunk wires on several main lines.

To the telephone-exchanges a total of 1,910 subscribers were added. The installation of metallic circuits is still in progress, with most satisfactory results wherever connections have been completed. There are now in the colony 15,333 subscribers.

Table No. 6 attached to this Statement indicates the great activity which has been displayed during the past year in the direction of telegraph-extension. In this connection I may remark that the amount expended on the extension of the telegraph system since the advent of the Liberal party to power has exceeded the total expenditure on the same class of work by all their predecessors in office since the inauguration of the public-works policy.

The amount asked for this year is £120,000, which includes £25,000 specially set apart for the extension of communication with outlying districts, also a sum to cover the cost of materials under order for the completion of authorised works.

LIGHTHOUSES, HARBOUR-WORKS, AND HARBOUR DEFENCES.

The expenditure on lighthouse-works during the year was £962, incurred in connection with the completion of the new tower at Cape Campbell. A new fog-signal has been erected at Taiaroa Head at a cost of £690, and is working satisfactorily, the cost having been defrayed out of the Consolidated Fund. The low-level light mentioned in my Statement last year has been erected at Pencarrow Head by the Wellington Harbour Board, by whom it is to be maintained.

For the current year a vote of £2,100 is proposed. This makes provision for the connection of some of the lighthouses with the colonial telegraph system, for the erection of a new dwelling for the principal keeper at Nugget Point, and for fog-signals at Godley Head and Moko Hinou.

The expenditure during the year on harbour-works amounted to £2,684, the following being the principal works undertaken: Improvement of Waipu and Karamea Rivers, erection of a wharf at Mercury Bay, removal of rocks in Manukau Harbour, protective works at Western Spit (Napier), extension of the wharf at Chatham Islands, and harbour-improvement works at Waikokopu (Hawke's Bay). The removal of rocks at Onehunga was carried out by contract under the supervision of the Department, and the other works were executed by the local authorities, to whom grants were made for the purpose.

For the current year it is proposed to renew several of last year's votes which were unexpended, and to provide for the following in addition: Removal of rocks in Helensville Creek; improvement of the Wade, Puhoi, Waitotara, and Waikouaiti Rivers, and Takaka, Point Elizabeth, and Okarito Harbours; wharves at Kaikoura and Tautuku; Port Waikato and Waikawa Wharf repairs, and a grant for the protective works at the Western Spit, Napier. The amount proposed for expenditure during the year is £5,000.

Under the head of Harbour Defences the expenditure was very small, having amounted to £1,300 only. For the current year a vote of £4,000 is proposed.

GROSS TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS.

In addition to the votes already mentioned, the estimates include the following charges:—

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Public Works, Departmental	14,500
Immigration	10,000
Purchase of Native lands	10,000
Rates on Native lands	1,000
Contingent defence	35,000
Lands improvement	21,200

thus bringing the total amount of the proposed appropriations up to £2,484,858, as against £2,602,156 last year.