

ESTIMATED RESULTS FOR CURRENT YEAR.

Having now placed before honourable members the estimates of revenue and expenditure, I proceed to set forth the estimated results on the 31st March next:—

Estimated revenue ....	....	....	....	£8,200,000
Estimated expenditure .....	....	....	....	7,987,347
				212,653
Excess of revenue over expenditure .....	....	....	....	212,653
Add balance from last year .....	....	....	....	717,825
				-£930,478
Total .....	....	....	....	-£930,478

From this amount I propose to transfer £700,000 to the Public Works Fund, set aside £30,000 for Civil Service Superannuation Fund, then leave a balance of £200,478, from which, of course, provision will have to be made for the usual supplementary estimates.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Due provision must of course be made for carrying on our public works. The balance on the 31st March last, as already stated, was £359,400. To this may be added £56,400, balance of the million loan authorised last session. As already stated, I propose to aid the fund by transferring from the Consolidated Fund £700,000 of the surplus of last year, thus making the total available ways and means £1,115,800.

This amount, however, is insufficient to meet our requirements, and I therefore propose asking Parliament for a further loan, and, as it will be necessary to provide for the expenditure after the close of the year till Parliament meets, I shall ask for one million.

It is not my intention to place this loan on the London market, as I have every reason to believe that the greater part of the money we require can be obtained in our own country, so keeping the interest amongst our own people.

CONCLUSION.

It may be convenient if I focus the chief fiscal and other financial concessions that I have placed before honourable members. The remissions of taxation are—Customs, £375,000; sheep-tax, £20,000; rates of interest to local bodies, £6,000; Post and Telegraph rates, £20,000; fees, inspection of dairies, £8,000—totalling £429,000; and the increases—Customs, £121,000; land and income tax, £70,000—total, £191,000. I can assure honourable members that I am not losing sight of the necessity of maintaining a strong finance. The concessions are justified by the steady prosperity of New Zealand, a prosperity which has a broad and solid base in the great natural advantages of the country, and the energy and skill with which these advantages are being developed by our people.

I have now concluded what I feel to be necessary in order to place before honourable members a fair and accurate statement of the financial position. My endeavour has been to place everything plainly before them, and to avoid anything in the shape of an overestimate. In making his estimate for the current year the Treasurer is as usual in the difficult position of dealing with the future, which necessarily involves conjecture; but I have taken every care to keep well on the safe side. Honourable members will agree with me that matters of the greatest importance are contained in the proposals I have submitted. I feel persuaded that, if given effect to, they will add to the general comfort of the masses of our people; will assist in the speedy and satisfactory settlement of the land; and will give relief in every home by the substantial concessions that have been made upon the duties on the necessaries of life, as the result of which New Zealand will be in the happy position of having in reality a free breakfast table.

It is the aim of the Government to promote in every legitimate way the advancement of the country and the happiness of the people. Hence these proposals, and I submit them in the confident assurance that Parliament will give effect to them.