

DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDFIELDS.

The gold-mining industry maintains its position, the returns for last year being in excess of those for the previous year. This is very gratifying, in view of the fact that many places have suffered industrial depression.

The amount expended last financial year on the development of our gold-fields was £18,598, and a vote of £25,000 is proposed for the current year.

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

The net expenditure on works and services under the above heading for the year 1909-10 amounted to £14,507, or £9,778 less than the year 1908-9.

The expenditure on electrical works was £6,255, which was for the installing of a new turbine-engine at Rotorua and for the extension and improvement of the existing plant. This work, which is nearing completion, was necessary owing to the increasing demands for electricity, both for power and lighting purposes. The construction of the Maori pa at Whakarewarewa is now complete. At the Waitomo and Ruakuri Caves a new hostel for the convenience of visitors has been erected and furnished, and the grounds have been fenced and planted and generally improved. The purchase of the Te Puia Native Township of 709 acres is at present being negotiated. The hostel at Mount Cook Hermitage has been slightly improved, and mountain huts are being erected and suitably furnished to make an additional attraction to this popular holiday resort. Provision is made on the current year's estimates for a new hostelry at Mount Cook, on the Governor's Bush site.

The works provided for on this year's vote total to £22,860, on account of which a vote of £12,500 is required.

TELEGRAPH-EXTENSION.

During the year £123,422 was expended on telegraphs and telephone extension.

The mileage of extensions and trunk circuits erected was 497 miles of line and 2,134 miles of wire; and of the telephone-exchange circuits 103 miles of line and 5,037 miles of wire. New telegraph and telephone offices to the number of 121, and 17 new telephone exchanges were opened.

The number of telephone-exchange subscribers increased by 2,104.

The principal works carried out were: Auckland Exchange, underground metallic circuit; Hastings Exchange, metallic circuit and installation of central-battery system; Auckland-Mangonui-Doubtless Bay, Otorohanga-Raurimu, Napier-Gisborne, metallic circuit; Raetihi-Ohakune-Taihape, metallic circuit; Hawera-Manaia-Opunake, Wellington-Levin, Christchurch-Timaru, metallic circuit; and Clifden-Blackmount.

Owing to the great importance of wireless telegraphy for defence, naval, and mercantile-marine purposes, the Government decided to call for tenders for two high-power stations in the neighbourhood of Doubtless Bay and Bluff, and three medium-power stations in the neighbourhood of Gisborne, Cape Farewell, and Sumner. The high-power stations will have a range of 1,250 nautical miles, which will enable communication to be kept up with stations to be erected at Sydney and Fiji, and with war-ships or mercantile vessels at any point within the range. The medium-power stations will be sufficiently equipped to command ships at sea for 500 miles. The tenders referred to were called for in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and America, and close at Wellington on the 15th of next month. Tenderers have to state the time required for the completion of the work. As the competition now existing among manufacturers of wireless apparatus is considerable, no great delay should arise. It is expected that several, if not all, the stations will be in full working order before the end of 1911. The necessary buildings are to be erected by the Public Works Department, and will be put in hand immediately a contract is let for the wireless-telegraphy apparatus.

This year's proposals total to £151,000, including £5,000 on account of wireless-telegraph stations—the actual vote submitted for approval being £140,000.