

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE ON RAILWAYS.

The expenditure we propose for the current year is as follows, and the sum named for each railway includes liabilities, which amounted in the aggregate, on the 30th June, to £530,333 4s. 4d. :—

Kawakawa ...	£6,113
Kaipara—Puniu ...	142,830
Waitara—Patea ...	50,000
Patea—Manawatu ...	141,956
Napier—Manawatu ...	75,633
Wellington—Masterton ...	162,677
Nelson—Foxhill ...	11,083
Pictou—Blenheim ...	29,235
Greymouth—Brunnerton ...	35,006
Westport—Ngakawau ...	38,234
Amberley—Waitaki and Northwards ...	182,754
Waitaki—Bluff and Branches ...	365,488
Winton—Kingston ...	39,296
Western Railways ...	37,587
Surveys ...	10,000
Land ...	42,208

—making a total of £1,370,100 for railways during the current year. The Government would have preferred to propose a smaller expenditure for the year, but taking into consideration that in the case of some of the most important railways the works are far advanced, and represent in their unfinished state a large unproductive expenditure, we consider it necessary to provide for their completion at as early a date as possible. We also think it requisite to push on the completion of the main line from Dunedin to Invercargill, and through to Kingston, and to advance the works on the different sections of the main trunk lines in both islands, and to provide the rolling stock and station accommodation which is necessary to secure the efficient working of the railways throughout the colony. With the exception that we undertake the completion of those branch railways in the South Island which were in course of construction by the Provincial Governments, our proposals are confined to works on the main trunk lines: we consider the colony is not in a position at present to undertake the responsibility of constructing branch lines, but must confine itself to steadily proceeding with the main trunks. We fully recognize, however, that many important districts in the colony may be immensely assisted in the development of their resources by the construction of branch or district railways, and to provide for this a District Railway Bill has been prepared, which, we believe, will enable any district that is in a position to support a railway to secure it. I purpose submitting this Bill to the House very shortly. If Parliament sanctions the works I have proposed, a very considerable increase will be added during the year to the mileage of working railways; and looking at the results of the past year, we may confidently expect a largely increased traffic, and such returns as will amply justify us in providing for the further extension of our railway system.
