

£200,000 deficiency bills temporarily—for the Act is a temporary Act, as honorable gentlemen will see, if they read it. We propose to issue these bills in order to enable us to carry on the necessary payments during the months of October and November. That is all that amount is calculated to meet. By that time I hope the House will have determined how the deficiency is to be dealt with. It seemed to the Government that it would have been improper to do more in the present state of matters than to submit a temporary remedy, merely to provide the cash to go on with, until the House had determined how the matter should be finally disposed of. That was my reason for asking the House to pass this Bill. I find that during these two months the probable receipts will not equal the certain expenditure by the sum of £150,000 or £200,000; I have, therefore, asked for £200,000. And now, Sir, I will state the position of the Public Works Account.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

We had a short, and, as I think the House considers, a satisfactory statement of the general position of this account from the Minister for Public Works last session; but I propose to mention the transactions of last year, in order that honorable members may get the matter thoroughly into their minds. We began the year 1878–79 with a credit to the Public Works Fund of £2,056,940. Some of us then hoped that that Fund was going to be augmented by some £700,000 which it was proposed to get from the Land Fund, and by £100,000 which it was proposed to take from the Consolidated Fund—from the surplus of the year before last. I need hardly tell the House that no relief was received from the Land Fund, and that the £100,000 was not paid over, so that we only had the £2,056,940 at our disposal in the Public Works Fund. We began this year with a credit in the Public Works Fund of £506,205 nominally; but, of this, £298,543 was advances outstanding, which, as honorable gentlemen are aware, is really money paid away and not yet brought to account; so that we really only began with £207,662 to the good. We actually spent during the last year £1,601,207. Sir, the expenditure for the last quarter—and I wish particularly to call the attention of honorable members to this point, because we are now spending the new five-million loan—the net expenditure for the September quarter, including advances outstanding at that date, which is money spent, amounted to £712,395. That is to say, we began the year 1879–80 with a credit balance of £207,662, and at the close of the quarter we had a debit balance of £504,733; so that we had actually spent, by the 30th of September, £504,733 of the five-million loan. I find, upon inquiry, that we have entered into engagements from which there is no escape whatever, as I am informed, for which we must find £733,553 by the 31st of December next, and that there are further engagements upon which we shall have to pay £921,818 more by the 30th of next June. In other words, by the 30th of June, upon works and services to which we are already committed, without including any new works or contracts or the cost of raising the loan, but including contingent Defence, we shall have spent £2,220,104 of the new five-million loan.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Quite a mistake.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course I speak subject to correction. The honorable gentleman says these figures are incorrect, but I can only go by the figures furnished to me from his own office by his Under Secretary and other officers; and I may add that these figures have been carefully gone through by myself