

to £197,000, and that, if the Government succeeded in carrying out the retrenchments it had in view, the Estimates for the annual appropriations for this year would be £252,000 less than those for 1880–81 as introduced last year. I am happy to say that my anticipations in this respect have been more than realized. The estimates as brought down last year for the twelve classes of services—under the control respectively of the Speakers of both Houses, the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer, the Minister of Justice, the Postmaster-General and Commissioner of Telegraphs, the Commissioner of Customs, the Commissioner of Stamps, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Native Affairs, the Minister of Mines, the Minister for Public Works, and the Minister of Defence—amounted to £2,108,613, full particulars of which will be found in Table No. 7 attached to this Statement. The estimates for the same services are, for this year, £1,774,612 only, or, in other words, £334,001 less than those of last year. Honorable members will see, upon reference to the table, that upon every class, without exception, there is a reduction, and that in Class XI., that of the Minister for Public Works, there is a reduction of £53,491, notwithstanding the fact that the estimates for the current year are for an average mileage of ninety-three miles greater than was worked during the past year, and that ample provision is made for their efficient working and maintenance. I should not, perhaps, include in this sum the item £52,500 for Contingent Defence, which has been removed from the Estimates, this being one of those cases in which it may be said that no reduction of expenditure had been made, because the item was placed on last year's Estimates to provide for a contingency merely; but I think we may in fairness claim to include the amount, in consideration of the fact that our being able to dispense with the item is due to better prospects of continued amicable relations with the Natives. Such a result, then, as the reduction of £281,501, or, including £52,500 for Contingent Defence, £334,001, in twelve classes of the Estimates, in one year, is a work upon which I think I am fairly entitled to congratulate the House. These reductions have not been accomplished without much hard work and painful thought, and could certainly never have been made at all but for the hearty co-operation of the Committee of Supply and the House with the Government in effecting these necessary economies. The total proposed votes for the year inclusive of liabilities, which now appear in the ordinary votes, is £3,270,531 (Table No. 8), divisible into two parts—Permanent Charges, amounting to £1,570,919, and Annual Appropriations, amounting to £1,699,612, in which latter division alone can reductions be made at present. As I have said, great reductions have been made under this division during the past year, but, notwithstanding this fact, the Government believe that they can during the present year effect still further reductions. I cannot, however, do more on the present occasion than point out that the line in which the Government is moving is in the direction of the simplification of the services, the consolidation of offices, and, consequently, the diminution of the number of employés. There are, I think, no special items of expenditure to which I need call the attention of the House, except that the item of Interest and Sinking Fund has increased by £46,157, while that of Constabulary has decreased (including the sum of £52,500 for Contingent Defence already referred to) by about £113,000, through the steady reductions the Government have been enabled to make in this force in consequence of our improved relations with the Maoris. This fact will, I am sure, be heard by every honorable member with great satisfaction.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE FROM THE LAND FUND, 1881–82.

I ought, Sir, perhaps to have said before this that, in speaking of the ordinary revenue, I have not included the proceeds of land sales. If the scheme which I have submitted for the consideration of this House should be adopted, the Government will propose that any balance there may be left from land sales, after payment of the charges it is intended to place upon them, shall by law be paid into the Public Works Fund, but without prejudice to the public creditor. The estimated expenditure chargeable against land sales is as follows, as honorable members will see upon reference to Table No. 9: for Charges fixed by Acts of the General Assembly, £84,966, for the Crown Lands and Survey