

For Lighthouses and Harbour Works (including Harbour Defences), with liabilities of £164,411, we ask for a vote of £127,800. The amount included in this for Harbour Defences is £120,000, as against liabilities at 31st March of £160,751, but as all the liabilities will not mature this year a vote for £120,000 will probably be sufficient.

For Charges and Expenses of raising Loans we ask for a vote of £30,000.

For Contingent Defence we ask for a vote of £12,500. This is for the purpose of supplementing the amount provided in Consolidated Fund Estimates for the Armed Constabulary Field Force, in consequence of their being employed on construction of batteries.

We also ask for a vote of £35,400 to cover payments in respect of rates payable to local bodies on Crown and Native lands.

The total amount proposed to be voted is thus, £1,538,700, which includes liabilities (comprising £36,455 for native lands) amounting to £892,445. It will thus be seen that it is contemplated to spend this year about £646,255 on new works, outside of those included in the liabilities existing at 31st March last.

Sir, I have trespassed on your patience and that of honourable members to a much greater extent than I should have felt justified in doing had I not been convinced that it was of the greatest importance to lay before the House a clear statement of the position of the works already in hand by the Government, and also our proposals for the future.

In conclusion, I venture to express the hope that before the time comes round for the next Public Works Statement the rise which has recently taken place in the great staple productions of the colony may prove to be the precursor of a general improvement in the position of all classes of the community, and that by careful administration during the year the Government may be able to come down to the House with a statement as favourable as that I have now delivered.

It only now remains for me to thank you, Sir, and the House for the kind consideration you have shown to me this evening.

The usual reports by the several permanent officers of the Department will be attached to this Statement, and also the usual tables showing cost of works, and results of working railways.

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