

£35,000 and £11,707 respectively, and this will exhaust the loan funds at present available for this class of works. The £35,000 proposed to be expended this year is required to cover liabilities, at the end of March last, amounting to £13,574, and to complete roads on which large sums of money have been expended, so that they can be fully utilized.

WATERWORKS ON GOLDFIELDS.

On account of waterworks on the goldfields, the expenditure during the five years ending the 31st March last was, in round numbers, £42,000, of which about £1,000 was expended during last year. It is not proposed to undertake any new works of this character, but merely to complete some of the more important works now in hand. The amount required to be provided for the present year is £755, leaving £229 for next year.

EXPENDITURE ON ROADS OF ALL CLASSES.

On account of roads of all classes the amount voted out of Public Works Fund last year was £263,620, and the amount expended was £219,519. For this year, with liabilities at end of March last amounting to £120,670, we propose to ask for votes to extent of £168,654. This will leave, under present loan allocations, £151,741 available for appropriation for road works in succeeding years.

PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS, NORTH ISLAND.

In the North Island generally.—Under the heading of purchase of Native lands in the North Island generally, as distinct from purchases out of the loan for the North Island Trunk Railway, I find that during the year ended the 31st March last the purchase of 210,000 acres, on which large sums had previously been advanced, was completed at a total cost of about £40,000, equivalent to about 3s. 9d. per acre. This area includes some valuable auriferous land at Coromandel.

The expenditure during last year, including £15,072 recovered from the vote for Purchase of Lands along the North Island Trunk Railway, was £16,587, and the balance remaining for expenditure under loan allocation of last session, is £14,485. Of this amount £9,000 is proposed to be voted for expenditure during the current year, leaving £5,485 for next year.

The object of the Government in regard to these land purchases has been, and still is, to use every effort to close up old transactions. On many of these, in former years large sums have been paid, and, it is feared, in some cases thrown away. So far as time and opportunity offers the Native Land Court will be moved to award to the Crown an equivalent area of land for the money that has been paid, and it is hoped that substantial recoveries will be made with the assistance of the legislation proposed during the current session. It is not the intention of the Government to undertake new purchases under this heading, except in special cases where it is very desirable in the public interest that the lands should be acquired, and where they can be obtained at a reasonable rate.

Along North Island Trunk Railway.—Coming now to the land purchases out of the loan for the North Island Trunk Railway, we completed during last year the purchase of 100,000 acres at a total cost of £8,000, or about 1s. 7d. per acre. The expenditure during the year, exclusive of £15,072 repaid to the general Land Purchase Fund, to recoup former advances, was £9,057.

Of the £100,000 taken from the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan, and set apart for the purchase of Native lands along that line, the sum of £5,571 still remains available, and is proposed to be voted for expenditure during the current year; and, by the 31st March next, as the result of the expenditure of this £100,000, it is estimated that a total area of 700,000 acres will have been acquired. This would mean an average price per acre of about 2s. 10d.