

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

As regards public buildings, the increasing requirements of settlement, together with the necessity for renewing the older wooden structures, create continuous demands on the votes, and, until many renewals still urgently required have been effected, this demand must continue.

The amount voted for public buildings out of loan last year was £48,351, of which £35,473 was expended, and liabilities existed at the end of the year to the amount of £10,086 in addition. Out of the Consolidated Fund £34,075 was also voted for public buildings and domains, and £25,000 for school-buildings; the expenditure being £32,182 and £24,434 respectively; while liabilities existed at the end of the year to the amounts of £3,976 and £1,031 in addition. The total votes from both funds last year was £107,426, and the total expenditure £92,089.

The works carried out during the year out of loan-moneys have been the completion of the departmental buildings at Auckland; the erection of new Courthouses at Onehunga and Kaiapoi, and the rearrangement and improvement of those at Auckland, Westport, and Dunedin; new police-stations at Waipawa, Pembroke, Mosgiel, Balclutha, Invercargill, and several other places; new post-offices at Palmerston North, Clyde, and Pembroke; the restoration of the west wing of Sunnyside Asylum, the rebuilding of the damaged portion of the asylum at Seacliff; and the carrying on of the work at the new gaols at Auckland and Wellington. The two latter buildings are expected to be completed, as far as it is at present intended to carry them, during the year.

The principal works executed, chargeable to the Consolidated Fund, have been the interior and exterior renovation of the Government Houses at Auckland and Wellington, and the improvement of their sanitary arrangements; improving the sanitary condition of various Government buildings in Wellington and Dunedin; the completion of the restoration of the General Post Office; the renovation of portions of the Parliamentary Buildings; and the execution of an extensive variety of additions and repairs to numerous Government buildings throughout the colony.

Contracts have also been entered into for the new Sanatorium at Rotorua, new Customhouse at Greymouth, a stamp-printing office, in connection with the Government Printing Office, in Wellington, and for a central police-station at Dunedin.

The more important works proposed to be proceeded with this year, and for which provision has been made on the estimates, are as follow: Out of Loan Funds—New lunatic asylum at Porirua, and further works at the asylums at Sunnyside and Seacliff, and at the gaols in Auckland and Wellington. Out of Consolidated Fund—£40,000 is provided for school-buildings, also £2,000 for Native schools, and £8,000 for an institution for deaf-mutes; besides these amounts, £34,000 is also provided for ordinary additions, repairs, fittings, and furniture.

HARBOUR DEFENCES.

The policy of carrying on the defence-works by means of convict-labour, announced in last year's Statement, has been followed during the year with satisfactory results, and considerable progress has been made in the execution of several of the more important works; but, while much has been done, there yet remains a good deal to do.

The amount voted out of loan funds last year for works of this class was £6,452, but the expenditure has amounted to £7,293. The excess has been caused by a compensation claim for land taken (and which it was hoped would have been settled by an exchange of land, without any money-payment) having to be settled by a payment of over £1,500. A considerable saving has, however, been made on the vote out of the Consolidated Fund for this class of works, the amount voted having been £10,000, and the expenditure £8,459 only.

The liabilities existing on the 31st March last were £1,850 upon *matériel* of war from England, and £1,418 upon works in the colony.

The total expenditure on harbour defences to the end of last financial year