

Rangiora; purchase of site for a new Courthouse at Pahiatua; and new police-stations at Dargaville, Westport, Greymouth, and Naseby. An amount of £15,000 was also provided out of this fund for school-buildings, to supplement the vote under the Consolidated Fund.

The total appropriations proposed for public buildings this year amount to £153,925—namely, £50,500 under the Consolidated Fund, and £103,425 under the Public Works Fund. The Consolidated Fund vote provides £31,000 for school-buildings, and the usual votes for maintenance and repairs of public buildings generally. Under the Public Works Fund provision is made for the new laundry and other works at the Sunnyside Asylum; for sundry works at the asylums at Auckland, Seacliff, and elsewhere; for a new prison at Dunedin; for completing the Government Printing Office, and for sundry works at the Parliamentary Buildings; and new Courthouses, police-stations, post-offices, &c., at numerous places throughout the colony. A vote of £15,000 is also proposed for school-buildings—the same as last year.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES ON THE PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

LIGHTHOUSES AND HARBOUR-WORKS.

The vote for the various works under the above heading last year amounted to £7,400, and the expenditure brought to charge within the year was £6,588—namely, £2,612 on lighthouses, and £3,976 on harbour defences. The lighthouse expenditure was wholly on the new light on Stephen's Island (Cook Strait), which was completed within the year, the light having been regularly exhibited since the 29th January last.

The expenditure on harbour defences at the different ports was as follows :—

	£
Auckland	897
Wellington	2,251
Lyttelton	647
Dunedin	181
Total	£3,976

The vote proposed for the current year is £13,500—namely, £3,500 for sundry harbour-works and towards the erection of a wharf at Howick, and £10,000 for further works under the head of harbour defences.

It is intended during the current year to push on with the defences at the four principal ports. The first in importance are those at Wellington, and next those at Lyttelton, and after these those at Auckland and Dunedin respectively. The works will be carried out on the suggestions of the Military Adviser of the Government, and in accordance with the recommendations of the recent conference on the subject of our defences.

PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS.

The operations of the Native Land Purchase Department since the passing of "The Native Land Purchases Act, 1892," have been carried on out of funds raised under the provisions of that Act.

During the year ended the 31st March last the area added to the public estate through purchases finally completed was 345,850 acres, including the bulk of the better portions of the Awarua Block, in all 143,000 acres, and the Ngaere Swamp, 7,500 acres. Settlement is now rapidly proceeding on these lands.

Full details as to completed and uncompleted negotiations will be found in the return G.—3, 1894, presented to Parliament on the 12th July last. Considerable progress, since the date of the above return, has been made with the purchase of the balance of the Awarua Block and other lands in various parts of the North Island, especially in the Waiapu district and the King-country.

The further provision made by the Lands Improvement and Native Lands Acquisition Act this session for the purchase of Native lands must result in a commensurate impetus to *bond fide* settlement in the North Island.

DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDFIELDS.

A vote of £5,000 was taken last year for waterworks on goldfields, and rather more than that amount was spent, the actual expenditure having amounted to £5,272.

Further works in the shape of water-races and reservoirs are necessary in order to command the auriferous drifts, of which we have such large areas in the Middle Island, and which can only be profitably worked by hydraulic sluicing on a large scale. We therefore ask this year for a vote of £10,000 for water-races.