

The introduction of hydraulic sluicing in the alluvial mining centres has rendered it necessary to make provision for the large quantity of tailings and *débris* which must find their way into the ordinary watercourses, sometimes raising the beds of these streams to such an extent as to injure the occupiers of low-lying lands adjacent thereto. It would be suicidal to allow the stoppage of mining operations in such places, and provision is therefore made in the estimates for meeting some of the cases which most urgently require to be dealt with.

For many years past our mining population has been demanding that provision should be made for testing auriferous lodes at deeper levels than hitherto worked in our quartz-mining centres. Hopes have also been held out by various Governments that some assistance in this direction would be granted. The vote proposed for prospecting deep levels, for dealing with the tailings difficulty, and to provide for resumption of land for mining purposes, is £30,000.

TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

The amount voted under this head last year was £30,078, but the expenditure coming to charge within the year amounted to £16,127 only (including £4,559 on the Telephone Exchanges), but liabilities existed at the close of the year to the amount of £9,581.

The most important new lines of telegraph constructed during the year were those from Matakana to Leigh, the line to Tokatoka, Otaki to Shannon, extension to Peel Forest, Owaka to Ratanui, Middlemarch to Hyde, Winton to Brown's Siding and Hokonui, the Island Block line, and Riversdale to Waikaia.

The vote proposed for the current year is £31,000, which, in addition to covering the liabilities, provides for a new cable across Cook Strait, for additions to existing telephone exchanges, the construction of telephone lines from Ross to Hende's Ferry, Culverden to Hanmer Plain, and others, and for improvements and additions to existing telegraph lines.

CONCLUSION.

The total appropriations proposed in the Estimates accompanying this Statement amount to £940,163, as compared with £710,460 voted last year. If the proposed expenditure is not distributed over the whole colony in exactly even proportion, honourable members will perceive that the reason for this is the great and pressing need of those localities where settlement is proceeding most rapidly. The utmost efforts have been made to deal fairly with every district, and each district's special needs and claims have received most careful consideration.
