

Our harbour defences have been proceeding slowly during recent years. The amount voted last year was £4,000 only, and £3,314 was expended. It is desirable, however, that these works should be proceeded with somewhat more diligently, and this year a vote of £5,000 is asked for.

A vote of £5,000 was also obtained last year, under the head of "Contingent defence," for the purchase of Martini-Henry rifles for our Volunteer forces. The amount voted was only an instalment on account, however, and this year we ask for £23,000 to complete the equipment of ordnance and other warlike stores.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I may be permitted to draw attention to the duty we owe to the colony of seeing that due provision is made for opening up the country by providing for settlers reasonable facilities for carrying their produce to market. Every chain of road formed, and every mile of railway constructed, assist to place our fellow-colonists in a better position to compete in the markets of the world.

The total appropriations proposed in the estimates accompanying this Statement amount to £1,113,861, as compared with £792,596 voted last year. The amounts under the several accounts are as follows :—

	£
Public Works Fund, Part I.	677,676
Public Works Fund, Part II.	13,923
Lands Improvement Acco.	209,986
Government Loans to Local Bodies Account	50,000
Native Lands Purchase Account	162,276
Total	£1,113,861

It may be that some work has been omitted which should have been provided for, or it may be considered that the votes for some works are insufficient; I have, however, endeavoured to do the best I could with the funds at our disposal.