

are certain types of national development works which, if the essential needs of the community are to be met, must be continued and even increased within the limit of the men and materials available. There are two main classes of work coming within this category—namely, housing, for which an expenditure programme approaching £4,000,000 is planned for the current year, and the further development of hydro-electricity, for which loan provision slightly in excess of £2,000,000 is being made. Housing and hydro-electric development are complementary and are important not only at present, but in the post-war era. The present shortage of electrical energy is well known, and to meet requirements for the contemplated housing programme and also for the expansion of industries in the post-war period it is essential that the construction of hydro-electric generating-plants should be pushed forward as fast as possible. In regard to housing, the Government are very perturbed about the present serious shortage, especially at Auckland and Wellington, and are anxious to facilitate as large a building programme as the available men and materials will permit. As fast as hospitals and other urgent defence works can be completed available men and material will be diverted to housing construction work. Comprehensive and complete plans are being worked out to meet the further demand of demobilized servicemen for homes, and plans are under way for the speedy construction of houses of a high standard. Details of votes affected appear in the estimates, where it will be seen that, apart from the headings mentioned, the other works votes are about the same as or even lower than last year.

Allowing for funds in hand, it is anticipated that a national development programme of £6,500,000 will require to be authorized for this year. This is £1,500,000 more than last year's authorization for the same purpose. This national development loan programme will be provided from departmental funds.

Details of the Consolidated and Social Security Funds will, as usual, be shown in the published accounts. In brief, however, it is estimated that the Consolidated Fund revenue will be some £800,000 less than that received last year owing principally to a prospective reduction in Customs revenue. While income-tax has been shown at the same total as for last year, it is anticipated that any possible falling off under this heading will be offset by the additional receipts consequent upon a proposed "drive" against defaulting taxpayers.

The following is a summary of the Consolidated Fund estimates :—

Consolidated
Fund, 1943-44,
revenue.

REVENUE				
Taxation—				
Customs	..	..	..	£ 6,600,000
Beer duty	..	..	..	1,800,000
Sales tax	..	..	..	3,500,000
Highways	..	..	..	1,600,000
Stamp duties	..	..	..	1,700,000
Land-tax	..	..	..	1,000,000
Income-tax	..	..	..	19,100,000
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	200,000
				35,500,000
Interest recoveries from trading activities, &c.	..	..	..	4,100,000
Other receipts	..	..	..	2,000,000
				6,100,000
				£41,600,000

Consolidated
Fund, 1943-44,
expenditure.

EXPENDITURE				
Permanent appropriations (including transfer of £1,500,000 to War Expenses Account)				 19,666,000
Annual votes	..	..	..	21,554,000
				41,220,000
Supplementary estimates and contingencies	..	..	..	380,000
				£41,600,000