

Summarizing the position, it may be stated that total receipts into the Consolidated Fund are estimated at £108,860,000 for this year, which represents an increase of £566,000 over actual receipts credited last year.

Expenditure

As to expenditure, debt services, which cover interest on the public debt, provision for debt redemption and administration costs, will amount to £22,782,000 this year. The comparable sum for debt services last year was £22,515,000. Payments under Civil List and other permanent appropriations are estimated at £740,000, whereas expenditure under the corresponding headings during 1946–47 was £6,415,000. There are two reasons for this large variation. In the first place, the £3,000,000 transferred to the War Expenses Account last year as part of the monetary gift to Britain is non-recurring. Secondly, it is no longer necessary to provide under this item for the transfer of funds to the Main Highways Account, because the cost of maintaining highways will, in future, as I will explain later, be paid directly from a new vote, Highways Maintenance, in the Consolidated Fund.

The amount provided in the annual appropriations or departmental votes this year is £81,994,000.

£16,000,000 is being transferred to the Social Security Fund, this being £2,000,000 less than the previous year's contribution from the Consolidated Fund. Other social services such as public and mental hospitals, education, and war pensions administration will account for £18,986,000 this year, the additional cost of nearly £2,000,000 mostly representing increased subsidies to hospital boards and provision of further educational facilities.

Nearly all Armed Services costs will be paid henceforth from Consolidated Fund, whereas last year War Expenses Account met a much larger proportion of the cost of maintaining our Navy, Army, and Air Forces. Hence estimated expenditure at £10,134,000 is about £3 million higher than in 1946–47. Actually, as could be expected from the reduction of the Forces, the combined expenditure from Consolidated Fund and War Expenses Account on the Armed Services is much less this year.

Other votes show an increase from £18,060,000 to £23,415,000. The new vote for highways maintenance accounts for £3,427,000 of the difference between current estimates and last year's expenditure in this group of Departments, and is offset by a corresponding saving under the Permanent Appropriations. Provision has also been made on a number of votes for extension of existing services such as