NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In last year's Budget I indicated that the sum of £26,875,000 was estimated to be required to cover loan expenditure on development works. Of this amount £25,947,000 was actually raised, and the balance not required at the end of the year, £2,122,000, was used for debt redemption. For the current financial year the loan programme has increased to approximately £33,000,000. The figures compared with last year's expenditure are:—

	Expenditure, 1947–48.	Estimated, 1948–49.
	£	£
Housing	6,600,000	8,000,000
Electric supply	5,500,000	6,000,000
Land for settlements	1,700,000	3,500,000
State coal-mines	1,600,000	3,000,000
Railway improvements	1,800,000	2,500,000
Education buildings	1,000,000	1,300,000
State forests	1,000,000	1,200,000
Highways construction	1,300,000	1,750,000
Other works	3,300,000	5,750,000
	£23,800,000	£33,000,000

It will be seen that there is a substantial increase of £9,200,000. The last item "Other works" showing an increase of £2,450,000, covers various public works activities and the balance of the share capital in the National Airways Corporation and the British Petroleum Company of New Zealand, Limited.

This extensive programme will be financed from the current "tap" loan issue of 3-per-cent. stock and from State departmental issues.

State Coal-mines

In the Financial Statement of last year, I referred to the offer by the Westport Coal Company, Limited, to sell its undertaking, and the Government's decision to accept the offer on a share basis at the price of £2 per share.

During the year the shareholders adopted their directors' proposals and the Government acquired the shares of the company for cash and Government stock. With a few exceptions where estates have yet to be cleared or where shareholders cannot be located, the shares have now been transferred to the Crown. In order to provide for the early dissolution of the company an Act was passed this session vesting the outstanding shares in the Crown, but protecting the rights of these shareholders.