

WAYS AND MEANS.

At the 31st March, 1905, the available balance of ways and means for public-works purposes was £861,670, and further funds were received as under :—

	£
Balance of £1,000,000 raised under the Act of 1904	32,937
Amount raised under the Act of 1905	817,914
To provide for debentures falling due	265,300
Transferred from revenue	500,000
Miscellaneous receipts	2,679
Making a gross total of	£2,480,500

The ordinary expenditure of the year amounted to £1,722,590. In addition to this, debentures to the amount of £116,300 were paid off, others to the amount of £149,000 were renewed, and net charges and expenses in connection with financing amounted to £311, thus bringing the total disbursements up to £1,988,201, leaving a credit balance at the end of the year of £492,299.

For the current year it is proposed to provide additional funds as under :—

	£
Balance of 1905 loan	182,086
New loan of 1906	1,000,000
Transfer from Consolidated Fund	775,000

This will give a total available ways and means of £2,449,385. The estimated expenditure for public works for the current year (excluding separate accounts having their own ways and means) amounts to £2,284,558, thus leaving a balance of £164,827 to be carried forward to next year.

RAILWAYS.

Last year was a busy one as regards most descriptions of public works, but especially so as regards railway-construction, the expenditure on new railway-works having amounted to £670,221, which is the largest amount expended on work of that class during any year since 1881. In addition to this, the following sums were expended by the Railway Department on railway-improvement works :—

	£
Additions to open lines	351,044
Hutt Railway and Road Improvement Account	44,739
Railways Improvements Authorisation Act Account	8,566

making a gross total expenditure on railway works of £1,074,570.

During the year thirty-one miles and a half of railway were opened for traffic, and the work of construction throughout the colony was vigorously proceeded with. I will now refer more in detail to the different lines that have been in hand and the proposals of the Government with regard to each for the current year.

KAWAKAWA—GRAHAMTOWN.

At the northern end of this railway nearly eight miles of rails are laid, and goods-trains are run over this length as occasion requires. From the rail-head formation-works are in hand for about another three miles, and are well advanced towards completion. During the past year work has been put in hand from Hukerenui towards Towai. Not very much has yet been done, but operations are now well in hand. The formation-work previously in progress between Opuā and Grahamtown has been continued, but the ground is still very treacherous, and some bad slips have occurred. The wharf at Grahamtown has not yet been commenced, but the plans are ready, and it is proposed to invite tenders for the work shortly.

The expenditure on this railway last year amounted to £9,513. A vote of £20,000 is provided on the estimates for the current year.

HELENSVILLE NORTHWARDS.

Good progress has been made on this line, the expenditure during the year having been considerably more than double that of the previous year. The length of three miles between Woodcocks and Kaipara Flats was opened for