

A comparison of the actual receipts with the estimate produces also satisfactory results. The actual revenue from Customs, Railways, Stamps, and Land-tax yielded £184,348 more than was anticipated, and some other small items £2,063, making a total of £186,411 in excess of the estimate. On the other hand Income-tax, Registration and other Fees, and Miscellaneous had been overestimated to the amount of £4,652. The result is a net increase over the estimate of £181,759, as I have already stated. By authority of law £65,000 to provide for sinking-fund payments was credited to this account, as also some refunds and minor receipts amounting to £740.

Turning now to the expenditure side, I find that the permanent charges and annual appropriations totalled £7,122,340, in addition to which £500,000 was paid over to the Public Works Fund. Comparing the expenditure of £7,122,340 with the figures of the previous year (£6,635,902), an increase of expenditure of £486,438 is shown. Under Permanent Charges there was an increase of £199,135, consisting of £93,475 for interest and sinking fund, £59,988 for old-age pensions, under special Acts £24,547 (principally for subsidies to hospitals and payments for the promotion of education), and £21,125 distributed over "Civil List" and payments to local bodies, including subsidies and local territorial revenue. The expenditure under the annual appropriations showed a considerable increase—namely, £287,303—but I am sure that upon making a careful examination of the increased expenditure of the various Departments honourable members will not find fault. Take, for instance, the expenses connected with the general election; the postal and telegraph services; the cost of education; the care of the mentally afflicted; the increased expenditure on railways consequent upon increased revenue coming in; and, lastly, towards the development of the lands by survey, &c., and we shall find the whole of the increased expenditure accounted for. The small increases amongst the minor Departments are counter-balanced by the savings effected in the Defence and Public Health Departments.

Comparing the actual expenditure with the estimates, it will be seen that the permanent charges were exceeded by £18,800, while under the annual appropriations a saving of £189,000 was effected.

The tables attached to my Budget give very full particulars both of actual receipts and expenditure, and also for purposes of comparison.

1905-6 BALANCE.

As I have already stated, the revenue proper, together with other receipts, amounted to £7,650,099; to this amount the balance brought forward from the previous year must be added—namely, £761,036—making a total on the receipt side of £8,411,135. The expenditure, including payments of surplus revenue to the Public Works Fund, amounted to £7,622,340, which amount deducted from the £8,411,135 leaves a balance of £788,795. This I consider a very comfortable sum to commence the current year with; and I may mention that it is the largest balance brought forward at any time in the colony's history.

THE PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

My colleague the Minister for Public Works will presently have the opportunity of placing before honourable members a complete statement of the transactions in the Public Works Fund; it will therefore be sufficient for me to briefly outline the financial operations. We opened last year with a balance of £861,670, and received £850,851 of loan-moneys and £2,679 of miscellaneous receipts; £500,000 was also transferred from the surplus of the Consolidated Fund, thus making a total of £2,215,200 on the receipt side of the account. On the expenditure side the annual appropriations absorbed £1,722,590 and other charges £311, making a total expenditure of £1,722,901, and leaving a balance available of £492,299 to commence the current year with. In addition to this balance, £182,086 of the 1905 loan of one million had yet to be received, which will give a cash balance for public works expenditure of £674,385, irrespective of the contributions which may be made from the Consolidated Fund during the present year.