

Over £5,000,000 has been raised by the Government for investment on mortgage to 31st March, 1909, for advances to settlers, and nearly £500,000 for advances to workers.

There is still authority to raise, on behalf of the advances to settlers, £841,200, being the balance of the six millions authorised by the Act, which, with the annual repayments from mortgagors, will enable the Department to make further advances during the present year to the extent of £1,500,000.

There is also authority under the Act to borrow £500,000 for advances to workers during the current financial year and this I propose to do. I am sure it will both help workers to get homes for themselves, and give a considerable amount of employment in the building-trade throughout the Dominion.

PROVISION FOR THE RECESS.

The Public Revenues Act provides for carrying on to 30th June. After that date no payments can be made for any service until further provision is made. It is therefore necessary to provide for the carrying-on of the public services till Parliament meets again, and I propose to ask the House to extend the provisions of the Public Revenues Act to the 14th October next. The Act contains the safeguard that no payment shall be made for any service other than those for which provision was made in the respective Appropriation Acts and estimates of the preceding year, or in excess of the scale therein set forth.

Authority to increase the amount to be spent under the head of Unauthorised Expenditure will also be asked for, as it has been found that with the restrictive provisions of the Act the amount allowed is insufficient. All such expenditure, as well as that under the extended appropriations, is required by law to be included in the estimates laid before Parliament in the next session.

I estimate the cash issues out of the Ordinary Revenue Account for the period 1st April to 14th October at £4,600,000. To meet this, I anticipate revenue receipts to the amount of £3,900,000; in so estimating, I feel it desirable to keep on the safe side, which, with the cash balance at credit on the 1st April, 1909, £387,163, will give a total available ways and means of £4,284,000, or £312,837 less than I estimate the expenditure for that period. This will be met by the temporary issue of Treasury bills, which I hope to pay off before the end of the financial year as the incoming revenue will permit, the largest portion of which comes in during the last six months of the year. The reductions in the public expenditure to the amount of about £250,000 per annum should assist to ensure an equilibrium between the expenditure and revenue, and I hope that the present reduction of revenue will be fully provided for.

As to the Public Works Fund, the balance on 31st March, 1909, including advances in hands of Government officers and loan money to receive, was £433,709, an amount insufficient to carry on our public works beyond the present month. I therefore propose to ask Parliament for authority to raise £1,250,000, to be expended in reproductive works. This will enable the Government to provide for the employment over the winter of those men at present out of work who are willing to accept same.

To enable the equipment of our lines of railways to be more efficient £250,000 is included in the £1,250,000 proposed loan, as the increasing calls for further rolling-stock and equipping of lines requires this amount.

I am also including in the amount of loan asked for a sum of £100,000 to be expended in the purchase of Native Lands, as it is desirable in the interests of the people to secure these lands.

The funds for duplication of lines are practically exhausted; and, as it is desirable to push on with the necessary works already authorised, additional borrowing-power of £75,000 will be asked for.

So far as the other separate accounts are concerned, there are sufficient ways and means to carry on with.