

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR RAILWAY-CONSTRUCTION.

In addition to the votes already mentioned, an appropriation of £110,000 is required for permanent-way materials for all lines ; also £2,500 for land-claims and liabilities on account of votes of previous years which have not been renewed ; also a vote of £2,500 for surveys of new lines, making the total proposed vote for railway-construction purposes £1,083,000.

OTHER RAILWAY-WORKS.

During the year under review the sum of £248,075 was spent in providing additional rolling-stock and workshop machinery for the working railways, and £112,851 in tablet appliances, signals and interlocking, telegraph and telephone extensions, water-services, sidings, wharves, reclamation-work, dwellings, reduction of grades and improving of curves, and additions to station accommodation, making the total expenditure under the heading "Additions to Open Lines" £360,926.

Considerable progress has been made with the Dunedin-Mosgiel duplication, and gangs of men are now engaged in the tunnel and formation-work between Burnside and Mosgiel.

The expenditure last year on railway duplications and contingent works was £95,347, made up as follows :—

	£
Wellington-Hutt duplication-works	19,511
New Hutt Road, including land for same	15,485
Auckland-Penrose duplication-works	75
Addington-Rolleston duplication-works....	1,805
Dunedin-Mosgiel duplication and deviation of line	58,471
	£95,347

For the current year provision has been made on the estimates to the extent of £85,324, namely :—

	£
Wellington-Hutt duplication-works	1,324
New Hutt Road	14,000
Dunedin-Mosgiel duplication and deviation of line	70,000
	£85,324

The amount proposed to be voted for the current year for "Additions to Open Lines" is £370,000, of which the sum of £225,000 is for new rolling-stock and additions to workshops machinery, and £20,000 for the new steamer for Lake Wakatipu.

DEVELOPMENT OF WATER-POWER.

In pursuance of the intention announced in my last year's Statement, to appoint an Electrical Engineer, Mr. Evan Parry has been appointed to the position, and entered on his duties in July last.

Much preliminary work has been carried out in connection with the Lake Coleridge scheme. The available market for power in the Canterbury District has been investigated and the requirements ascertained, and plans and specifications are in course of preparation for works to provide for an ultimate demand of 10,000-horse power, and tenders will shortly be invited for a first instalment of the plant. Arrangements are being made for completing the first section of the works in two years.

It is estimated that a capital expenditure of about £375,000 will be required to efficiently instal the full 10,000-horse-power plant, and that when installed the district between Rangiora in the north and Timaru in the south can be supplied with electrical energy, with branch lines to the different farming centres. It is hoped to make the system serviceable to country residents as well as to the inhabitants and industries of the cities and larger towns. In this we have very striking precedents in Switzerland, France, Germany, and, latterly in England, where farms and cottages in rural districts are supplied with electricity for lighting and power purposes at cheap rates.