

Rangiriri, Mokau, Marakopa, and German Bay (Akaroa); a launch-landing at Kohukohu; improvements to the rivers at Awakino and Karamea, and to the channel between Lake Waihola and the Taieri River.

The sum of £10,000 will be required to provide for harbour-works during the current year.

HARBOUR DEFENCES.

A small amount of work was executed last year entailing an expenditure of £1,144. This work consisted of carrying on the construction of the 6 in., Mk. VII, battery at Auckland, provision of improved telephonic communication between forts, alterations to engine and dynamo rooms, also the formation and maintenance of roads and tracks on Defence reserves. A moderate expenditure will be necessary during the current year to provide for the completion of the works now in hand. A vote of £2,000 for this purpose is provided on the estimates.

WAIHOU AND OHINEMURI RIVERS IMPROVEMENT-WORKS.

Work has been commenced under the scheme specially authorized by the Legislature for the improvement of the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers. The work so far done consists principally in the poisoning and removal of willows along the beds and banks of both rivers, and the clearing of the bush on the site of the Ngararahi and Koutou diversions. The excavations of these diversions down to ordinary water-level (so as to take flood-water only at present) has also been commenced.

Plans and specifications for the suction dredge to complete the Ngararahi and Koutou cuts and to remove the silt from the beds of the rivers have been prepared, and tenders for the construction of the dredge will shortly be invited.

Last year's expenditure amounted to £3,769, and for the current year a vote of £20,000 is proposed.

The special Act authorizing these improvement-works also empowers the Governor to take, as for a public work, at its present value, all the land that is likely to be largely improved by the carrying-out of the river-improvement works. A committee consisting of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district, the Public Works Land Purchase Officer, and the local Engineer in charge of the improvement-works has recently been set up to advise what area of land should be taken under this provision, and their report is just to hand. The matter is an important one, and will receive the careful consideration of Ministers, as it is desirable that the State, which is incurring large expense in this matter, should secure the principal share of the enhancement in the value of the adjoining property due to the Government's operations.

GROSS TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS.

In addition to the votes specifically referred to, the estimates make provision for the undermentioned services:—

	£
Departmental	54,000
Immigration	20,000
Lands Improvement	49,000
Contingent Defence	55,000

thus bringing the total amount of the proposed appropriations, including special accounts, up to £3,049,500, as against £3,265,317 voted and £2,319,941 actually expended last year.

CONCLUSION.

I have endeavoured to distribute the funds at my disposal in such directions as will, in my opinion, conduce most effectively to assist settlement throughout the Dominion, having regard especially to the pressing requirements of the several localities.

Whilst impressed with the advisability of expediting the construction of the several works specified in the estimates it is imperative not to lose sight of the fact that only one-half of our ways and means are immediately available, possession of the remainder being dependent on raising the proposed loan of £1,750,000. The heavy commitments for roads and bridges alone, to which I have drawn attention, involve responsibilities which cannot be ignored when requisitions for new authorities are being made, and in view of the disquieting aspect of affairs in Eastern Europe it will be necessary for the Cabinet to closely observe the financial pulse of the Dominion.