

during the year added to the balance of authorities unexpended at 31st March, 1913, totalled £962,811. The expenditure for the twelve months amounted to £493,638, leaving an unexpended balance of authorities at 31st March last of £469,173.

Between 1st April and 30th September a further £301,719 was authorized for expenditure, and a further £316,713 brought to charge, making the total expenditure between 1st April, 1913, and 30th September, 1914, £810,351.

Honourable members are aware that owing to the unsettled condition of the money-market after the close of last session it was not considered advisable to float the loan for public-works purposes until the end of January. Prudence dictated that the authorization of expenditure of new money should in the interim be restricted to urgent works, until such time as further loan-moneys were available. Between the passing of the public-works appropriations and the raising of the loan, therefore, only metalling and other urgent works were authorized. This did not, however, mean that any very great restriction was placed upon expenditure, as there was a very large sum indeed in the hands of local bodies in the shape of authorities previously issued but unexpended. The prudence then exercised has resulted in our being able at the present juncture to keep public works going, and so relieve "unemployed" difficulties arising as a result of the European war.

I have on previous occasions referred to disabilities imposed by the present system of making grants for road and bridge works, and trust that the Local Grants and Subsidies Bill now before Parliament will afford machinery resulting in greater efficiency and progress in providing that essential factor in successful settlement of the land—good roads and bridges.

ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS (MINES DEPARTMENT).

The total authorizations under this head last year amounted to £66,743, on account of which a vote of £51,000 was taken. The expenditure during the year was £24,143.

The sum proposed to be authorized for the current year is £69,109, on account of which a vote of £50,000 is asked for.

TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR ROADWORKS.

Last year's appropriations were as under :—					£
Roads, &c.....	....	....	....	....	360,925
Backblock roads	....	....	....	....	201,225
Roads on goldfields	....	....	....	....	51,000
Opening up Crown Lands for Settlement Account					100,100
National Endowment Account			....	....	22,750
New Hutt Road	....	....	....	....	4,000
Maintenance of roads (Consolidated Fund)			....	....	45,000
Total	....	....	....	....	£785,000

The provision for the current year is as under :—					£
Roads, &c.....	....	....	....	....	500,000
Backblock roads	....	....	....	....	200,000
Roads on goldfields	....	....	....	....	50,000
Land for Settlements Account			....	....	170,000
National Endowment Account			....	....	40,000
Maintenance of roads (Consolidated Fund)			....	....	45,000
Total	....	....	....	....	£1,005,000

DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDFIELDS.

The value of the mineral output for the year amounted to £3,187,798, being a slight increase as compared with the output of the previous year.

It is to be regretted that mining is not in so flourishing a condition as some of our other great primary industries. This is due partly to the diminishing