

To settlers for improvements on rural lands the sum of £1,000 can still be borrowed, whilst for the repayment of mortgages on real estate £450 is available. To the workers £450, the maximum sum allowed by law, is obtainable, provided the security is sufficient and satisfactory.

During the period of the war the rate of interest chargeable to borrowers on loans remained unchanged: $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is payable by local authorities, and 5 per cent. by settlers and workers. The latter rate is, however, reducible to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. when payment is made promptly.

STATEMENT SHOWING TOTAL AMOUNTS OF ADVANCES PAID OVER FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SCHEME TO THE 31ST MARCH, 1919.

	£
Advances to settlers	17,957,600
Advances to workers	3,560,840
Advances to local authorities	3,099,865
Total	<u>£24,618,305</u>

STATEMENT SHOWING AMOUNTS CURRENT AS AT THE 31ST MARCH, 1919.

	£
Advances to settlers	7,985,276
Advances to workers	2,576,579
Advances to local authorities	2,846,836
Total	<u>£13,408,691</u>

STATEMENT SHOWING LOANS AUTHORIZED BUT NOT PAID OVER AS AT THE 31ST MARCH, 1919.

	£
Advances to settlers	125,340
Advances to workers	29,275
Advances to local authorities	313,150
Total	<u>£467,765</u>

DEFENCE DEPARTMENT.

The expenditure out of the Consolidated Fund for Defence administration, including Ordnance and Supplies services and the maintenance and training of the Territorial Force, during the financial year ended 31st March, 1919, amounted to £416,427, or £11,685 less than the amount expended during the year 1917-18.

The requirements of this Department for the current year will be fully explained in the annual Defence Report.

WAR EXPENDITURE.

At the end of the financial year 1918-19 the war expenditure of this Dominion, including imprest advances outstanding, had reached the sum of £62,636,720; whilst towards meeting commitments connected with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, including charges for the maintenance of our troops in the field, equipment, supplies, pay, allowances, and other incidental charges, there was a cash balance and temporary investments amounting to £6,084,469. These sums do not include provision for interest and sinking-fund charges on war loans raised, nor for war pensions, which are a charge upon the ordinary revenue of the Dominion.

Full particulars of the war expenditure will be placed before you later, but I must remind honourable members that, notwithstanding the fact that the war has concluded, our financial responsibility remains very great, as large sums will have to be provided for gratuities, cost of repatriation, &c.

It will be necessary to continue to make generous provision for the expert medical treatment and skilled nursing of our sick and wounded, for whom special hospitals and sanatoria have been provided.

The payment of retrospective married allowances to soldiers' wives, for which approximately £500,000 was authorized, has absorbed £230,000 to date, but large numbers of applications are still coming in.