

and so that relief may be given where it is most urgently required. Honourable members will find in connection with the proposed revision of the Customs tariff that the duties are being increased on certain articles, most of which come under the heading of luxuries. This is not being done for protective purposes but to assist the revenue, which has been somewhat seriously affected by the financial stringency from which New Zealand, along with other countries, but certainly less than other countries, is suffering at present. As a matter of fact, the whole system of taxation in operation in New Zealand requires to be revised as well as the Customs tariff, and I hope with the assistance of members to make some very important changes and improvements in this respect before the session comes to an end. Legislation for this purpose will be introduced very shortly. Economy must be practised at every possible opportunity, and production must be encouraged. By these means only can depression be met and prosperity restored. In addition to the measures which are being taken at this side of the world, to restore the pre-war conditions an increase in the purchasing-capacity of our customers in England would probably do a great deal to assist us to reach the goal which we have in view.

PAYMENT OF LAND-TAX.

With the object of assisting and encouraging the prompt payment of the land-tax for the current year a Bill has already been laid before the House providing for a rebate of 10 per cent. in the event of the tax being paid before or within twenty-one days after due date.

AUDIT OFFICE.

The increasing activities of the Audit Office are clearly set forth in the report of the Controller and Auditor-General on the Public Accounts for the financial year 1920–21, which has already been presented to Parliament in conformity with the requirements of the Public Revenues Act, 1910. This report contains many valuable suggestions which are receiving careful attention.

Honourable members will, I feel sure, have noted with regret the fact that Colonel Collins, C.M.G., I.S.O., after fifty-six years of untiring public service, during which he occupied many important administrative positions, has intimated his intention of resigning his present appointment as Controller and Auditor-General before the end of the year. It is fitting, therefore, that I should place upon record my appreciation of the highly efficient, long, and faithful service rendered to the State by Colonel Collins, as well as of the strict impartiality with which his responsible statutory duties have been carried out.

RESULTS.

Total revenue, £34,260,962 ; total expenditure, £28,128,730 ; surplus, £6,132,232.

Cash balance carried forward, £4,920,294.

Transferred from accumulated surplus—

Reserve Fund, London, £1,200,000 ; Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, £13,330,000 ; Public Works Fund, £500,000 ; Discharged Soldiers Settlement (Depreciation Fund), £50,000.

Public-works expenditure, £3,141,197.

Redemption and renewals effected, £10,094,917.

Customs revenue and excise, £8,769,251.

Land and income tax receipts, £9,937,923.

Total expenditure on mental hospitals, £377,643.

Post and telegraph revenue, £2,640,158.

Savings-bank deposits, £35,031,244. Excess of deposits over withdrawals, £2,227,356.

Interest-bearing limit of savings-bank deposits increased.

Total war-loan certificates sold, £4,613,203.

Stamp revenue, £3,745,902.

Purchased during the year for settlement of discharged soldiers 79,950 acres, costing £1,277,971.

Advances authorized to 17,853 discharged soldiers, £17,941,980.