

with the consideration of the interest payable on the Immigration and Public Works Loan. There is, again, an increase in the amount both of Colonial and of Provincial Permanent Charges, owing to the amounts for which the Colony is liable under the Public Debts Act being taken into account, as beyond doubt they ought to be, although by an oversight they had been previously omitted. There is, also, the interest under the "Wellington Debts Act;" but I should mention that of the total amount charged to the Province of Wellington, £1,860 is really chargeable to the Corporation of the City of Wellington, under the "Wellington Reclaimed Land Act." I have referred to the additions under the head of "Permanent Charges;" I should, on the other hand, mention that the items previously appearing in Permanent Charges, under the head "Waste Lands Act, 1858," "Coroners' Act, 1867," and other Acts, amounting in all to £6,737 7s. 6d., are now transferred to the ordinary Estimates. On the one side, we have an increase of £18,651 13s. 1d. for interest and other charges, besides £7,868 for interest on Provincial Loans, paid by the Colonial Government under the Public Debts Act; on the other we have £6,737 7s. 6d. removed from the Permanent Charges to the ordinary Estimates.

Class I. — "Public Domains and Buildings" — shows an increase of £6,040. This increase is accounted for by the fact already alluded to — that under this class the various departmental buildings are now charged. There is, in fact, some little decrease in the ordinary items, since the cost and repair of public buildings, which appear in this class, amount to £6,740. It is right to explain that the estimate for new public buildings amounts to much more than the sums which were distributed up and down the Estimates last year, when the state of the finances made it desirable to avoid entering into any expense which could possibly be avoided. None but the buildings most imperatively required were provided for. In the present Estimates, we propose to submit to the consideration of the House the expediency of providing for some additional buildings.

Class II. shows an amount of £68,691 15s. 9d. proposed for the present year, against £64,643 2s. 8d. appropriated last year, or an increase of £4,048 13s. 1d. Of this amount, £1,987 7s. 6d. is represented by the transfer of several items hitherto charged to Civil List and Permanent Charges.

We believe, in adopting this course, we consult the wish of the House. Many Members last Session complained that the power of voting was unnecessarily withdrawn from the Assembly; and we have, in accordance with the opinions then expressed, reserved for the vote of the House all items not required by law to be permanently appropriated. It should not, however, be forgotten, that, in respect to the transfers from the Civil List, there is an equivalent amount set free for expenditure.

There will thus, in this class, be £1,987 7s. 6d. transferred from Permanent Charges to Estimates, Class II. If we deduct this amount from the present year's increase, we shall have a balance of increase left to be explained of £2,061 5s. 7d. The increase is much more than explained by an increase of £3,500, under the head of "Expenses of Members," in consequence of the determination of the House expressed by Resolution last Session, and of £300 for Reporters. So that, in fact, leaving out of account the increased legislative expenditure, there appears a considerable reduction. This is principally accounted for by its not being necessary to place on the Estimates this year the amount of £2,500 appropriated last year for Education. There is, besides, such departmental reduction as it has been possible to make. In the case of the Land Transfer Department, the expansive usefulness and largely-increased work of this branch of the Public Service have made it necessary to provide several augmentations.

In the Stamp Department, I propose to recommend to the Committee to make provision for the more exclusive services of a Secretary, instead of this officer, as hitherto, having other important and probably more onerous duties to perform. The duties of this Department are so increasing that more undivided attention to them is required. In the Treasury Department, there is a saving—indeed, there is a larger one than appears; for by changes which it is proposed to make, and which I will take a future opportunity of explaining, £600 of the salary of the Receiver-General and Assistant Treasurer, which has hitherto been paid out of the Civil List, will be saved.