

TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

The expenditure during the year under this head was £26,771, which includes £11,842 for additions to existing exchanges and new exchanges.

The new exchanges opened were: Eltham, Inglewood, Manaia, Marton, Waitara, Feilding, Hawera, Stratford, and Palmerston (South).

Trunk wires connecting the following exchanges have been erected, viz.: Hawera and Manaia; Eltham and Stratford; Stratford and New Plymouth; Waitara and New Plymouth; Palmerston (South) and Dunedin.

The total number of subscribers to all exchanges at the end of the year—31st March—was 7,150.

The most important extensions to new districts were: Whitianga to Guntown; Mongonui to Peria; Tokatea to Cabbage Bay; Whakatane to Taneatua; Te Horo to Pipiriki; Mangaweka to Moawhango; Nuhaka to Morere; Waere-ngakuri to Hangaroa; Awatere to Seddon; Denniston to Burnett's Face; Timaru to Gleniti; Merrivale to Clifden; Drummond to Heddon Bush; Colac Bay to Round Hill; Orepuki to Te Tua.

Additional wire accommodation to existing lines has been provided by the erection of wires—Featherston to Masterton; Feilding to Kimbolton; Dunedin to Lawrence; Dunedin to Oamaru; Clyde to Alexandra.

The vote asked for this year is £38,709, and provides for additions to existing exchanges, new exchanges, additional wire accommodation, and extensions to new districts.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The expenditure upon our public buildings last year showed an increase upon the previous year. The increase is partly due to the spread of settlement in the country districts, rendering an increase in the number of post-offices, courthouses, police-stations, &c., absolutely necessary, and partly to an improved type of buildings having been adopted in recent years—all our more important structures now being erected in brick instead of wood.

The appropriations proposed for the current year amount to £219,930—namely, £47,035 under the Consolidated Fund, and £172,895 under the Public Works Fund. The principal works carried out last year or provided for this year are as follow:—

GENERAL.

The new library wing of the Parliament Buildings absorbed the bulk of the expenditure under this head, the only other items worthy of mention being the somewhat extensive repairs and improvements to and the refurnishing of the Government House at Auckland, and the restoration of fire-damage, &c., at the Government House, Wellington. The vote for the current year provides for the erection of the necessary shelving in the new library and the completion of the furnishing of the building, also for the renovation of the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council Chambers and other old portions of the buildings, and altering the present library-rooms to Committee-rooms, &c. Sanitary and other improvements at the Departmental Buildings, Wellington, additions to Provincial Buildings, Christchurch, and other minor works are also provided for.

JUDICIAL.

Courthouses.—New Courthouses have been erected or are in course of erection at Eketahuna, Dunedin, and the Bluff, new custodian's quarters at Christchurch, and extensive renovations and improvements have been effected at Auckland, Wanganui, and Greymouth. The principal works provided for this year are the continuation of operations on the new law-courts at Dunedin, new Magistrate's Court at Wellington, new Courthouses at Waihi, Te Awamutu, Opunake, Mangaweka, Collingwood, Temuka, Hampden, and Gore; also additions or extensive renovations at Whakatane, Wairoa, Napier, Waipawa, Wanganui, Carterton, Ahaura, Hokitika, Geraldine, Lawrence, and Invercargill.