

TREASURY AND POST OFFICE STAFFS.

I desire to acknowledge the able services rendered by the Treasury staff. A vast amount of additional work and responsibility has been thrown upon the Treasury in connection with the raising and the management of the war loans, and the enormously increased volume of revenue and expenditure since the war commenced has also greatly added to the work of the staff. This increased work has been efficiently carried out in the face of great shortage of staff, owing to the war, and at a very small additional cost to the country.

The financial operations of this country during the recent critical times through which we have been passing have required very careful handling. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the work which attaches to the regulating of the financial obligations of the Dominion, and which has involved not only the making of suitable provision for financing the war, but for financing all other services of the Government as well. I wish also to acknowledge the work and assistance rendered generally by the Postal service at head office and throughout the Dominion.

THE YEAR'S OPERATIONS.

For the convenience of honourable members I summarize the most important items relating to the financial operations of the Treasury :—

War-loan moneys raised in the Dominion, as at 30th September, had reached a total of approximately £39,250,000; approximate cost of raising, one-half of 1 per cent.

Investments in London increased to £17,869,912, as at 30th September, 1918.

Ordinary revenue reserve increased to £9,570,380, as at 31st March, 1918.

Redemptions and renewals effected amounting to £3,361,756.

£1,930,950 converted into long-dated securities.

Net surplus of year's revenue, £5,085,934.

Total accumulated surplus on 31st March, 1918, £11,560,788.

Total lodgments to Public Account, year 1917-18, £66,800,000, as compared with £17,000,000 for the year 1913-14.

Total disbursements from Public Account, £65,000,000 for 1917-18, as compared with £17,100,000 for the year 1913-14.

Customs revenue, £434,308 above estimate.

Public-works expenditure reduced to £1,141,172.

Income-tax receipts increased by £1,357,435.

Land-tax receipts increased by £672,590.

Stamp revenue increased by £192,979.

Excess of Post Office Savings-bank deposits over withdrawals, £2,645,360.

Eighteen settlements purchased for discharged soldiers, making a total area of 394,219 acres thrown open and available for settlement.

£190,911 authorized for soldier settlers by way of financial assistance.

17,117 war pensions granted to 31st March, 1918, representing an annual value of £1,122,052.

Total payments to producers for supplies purchased on behalf of the Imperial Government, £59,211,190.

War expenditure to 30th September, 1918, £51,400,000.

PROPOSALS.

I also place in concise form the new proposals submitted to honourable members :—

Establishment of Post Office Savings-bank Reserve Fund.

Authority to borrow additional £200,000 for afforestation purposes.

£150,000 to be provided for Government hydro-electric schemes.

Local bodies to be empowered to develop water-power.

Increased war bonus and payments to Government employees.

£300,000 to be provided for school buildings, &c.

£1,500,000 for war pensions.

Authority to raise additional £10,000,000 for war purposes.

Public-works loan, £2,500,000.

Loan for soldiers land settlement, £1,000,000.

Assistance to soldiers, £500,000.

Educational, curative, and vocational training to be provided for.

Provision to be made to meet expenditure necessitated by influenza epidemic.