

WAR EXPENDITURE.

The gross expenditure from vote "War expenses" during the year ended 31st March, 1924, was £370,496, the principal items being £124,217 for the medical treatment of discharged soldiers for war disabilities, £110,808 on account of our liability for transport of troops, £12,182 towards erection of battlefield memorials in war areas, £31,952 towards cost of construction of cemeteries and war graves, £23,070 in connection with repatriation advances and expenses, and £68,267 for other miscellaneous war expenditure. Receipts from sales of surplus stores, medical stores, and other miscellaneous credits totalled £77,531, which with £133,834 received in repayment of repatriation loans left a net expenditure of £159,131 for the year.

The balance of claims from the Imperial Shipping Liquidation for troop-transport charges against New Zealand, amounting to £800,000 net, was recently received. As the result of close examination, these were reduced to approximately £200,000, and a progress-payment of £100,000 was made in March last. The balance is provided for in this year's estimates.

The War Expenses Account will be closed at the end of the present financial year.

REPATRIATION.

Since the 31st December, 1922, the benefits under the Repatriation Act have been restricted to tubercular or other seriously disabled soldiers. Financial assistance paid out to such men during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1924, amounted to £17,379, making the total moneys advanced to soldiers by the Repatriation Department £2,371,831, of which sum £1,956,674 was by way of loan.

The major portion of the work—namely, the collection of loans outstanding—was transferred to the State Advances Office as from the 1st April, 1923, and the total repayments now amount to £1,412,973, being over 72 per cent. of the total loan advances. The complete transfer of this branch to the State Advances Office will be effected this year.

NATIVE TRUST OFFICE.

As the purposes for which the Native Trust Office was established are becoming more widely known among the Maoris they are taking increasing advantage of the facilities afforded to borrow moneys for the improvement of their lands. Last year 438 applications were dealt with, and £85,516 was advanced, making a total of £157,900 to date.

It was found possible during the year just ended to increase by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. the rate of interest on moneys held on behalf of beneficiaries, and this has given general satisfaction.

WESTERN SAMOA.

The trade of the Territory again suffered severely owing to the continuance of low prices and little demand for tropical products in the world's markets. One satisfactory feature, however, has been that, notwithstanding this depression, the export of copra during the period was the highest for many years past. It was almost double that of 1920, the total trade figures for which year constituted a record for Western Samoa. Since the beginning of the year prices have steadily risen, and are now satisfactory.

In the circumstances the revenue of the Territory, though well maintained, fell short of the expenditure, which has been much increased on account of extended and improved medical and educational services.

An additional grant of £6,000 is being provided to meet the deficit of 1923–24.

The Administration has decided to offer the Crown Estates in sections by public tender, and it is anticipated that offers will be received for the greater part of the cultivated lands.

COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE.

The expenditure for 1923–24 was £17,446, being less than the amount voted (£18,713) by £1,267. The estimated amount to be voted for the year 1924–25 is