

These proposals are submitted to the House after most careful consideration, as embracing the works which, keeping in view the amount of labour which may be expected to be available for their economical and profitable construction, and the desirability of their completion at an early date, ought to be undertaken during the current year. Impressed with the responsibility which rests upon us to proceed without undue precipitancy on the one hand, and with careful prudence on the other, we invite the House to sanction our proposals, bearing in mind that it is by the action which may now be taken that the future success or failure of the Railway Works scheme will to a large extent depend.

I have nothing further to add. I may be permitted to express a hope, however, that the statement I have made as to the works which we propose to undertake during the year has been clear and explicit, and I trust, upon due consideration, will be sufficient to disabuse the minds of honorable Members of any impressions which may have been made by rumours, which I am told have been circulated, to the effect that this Government is opposed to the prosecution of the colonizing functions which the country has undertaken. It may be that some districts have expected that the works in their own localities would be amongst those to be commenced during this year; but it is evident that they could not all be commenced at once with anything like a reasonable prospect of their early or economical completion—even if the necessary funds with which to do so were immediately available, which they are not.

Under these circumstances it is manifestly our duty to proceed first with those lines which may be considered likely at the earliest date to yield the largest results to the Colony as compared with the sums to be expended on their construction.

We are fully aware that to carry the scheme to a successful completion it must be administered with energy, prudence, and foresight, and with a painstaking attention to matters of detail which will undoubtedly render the task one which will be both onerous and responsible, and we are also aware that the evil results of any indecision or vacillation in our action, could only be exceeded by those which would follow from a careless or improvident administration, of the large resources placed under our control.

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