

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT,

BY THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. RICHARD OLIVER,
TUESDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 1879.

SIR,—

On the 7th of August my predecessor, Mr. Macandrew, made a Public Works Statement to this House, in which he shortly summarized the work of the Department for the last financial year, but avowedly confined himself to such facts as were, in his opinion, needed to accompany the application for the loan then authorized.

I shall now, by the permission of the House, give a brief account of the progress of our Public Works up to a more recent date, and then indicate the opinion of the Government on the course which it is our duty to pursue.

RAILWAYS. NORTH ISLAND.

Taking the railways in their geographical order, we begin with the Kawakawa, that being the most northern. The first section of this line has been completed, and is being used in conveying coals from the mine to the wharf, where the coal is put into barges and conveyed to ships lying at the deep-water anchorage eight miles below.

The first contract on the Whangarei-Kamo line is within a few weeks of completion, and the work of platelaying will be begun as soon as possible.

The survey of the proposed Helensville-Whangarei Railway has now been begun, and during the summer the whole of this country will be thoroughly examined. It is expected that the wharf at Helensville will be completed in about a month, which will provide a very necessary accommodation. Between Riverhead and Newmarket, work is in progress along the whole twenty-two miles, and should be finished in about ten months. If in the same time the Newmarket Junction Station could be finished, railway communication between Auckland and the Kaipara waters would be completed.

A large reclamation contract is being carried out to obtain increased station accommodation in Auckland; and a site for railway workshops has been bought at Newmarket.

The branch line to Hamilton has been opened for traffic, and in a very short time the southern end of the Kaipara-Puniu line will be finished to within two or three miles of the confiscated boundary.

Some works are being carried on at Grahamstown and Shortland, and Natives are employed at piece-work on another section, about two miles long, farther up the Thames Valley.

The works on the Napier-Manawatu Railway are being pushed on south of Kopua, and sixty-four miles are now open for traffic. Railway workshops are being built at Napier.