

1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT,

BY THE ACTING MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. JOHN HALL,
TUESDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 1881.

MR. SPEAKER,—

The loss, which I sincerely regret, of my late colleague the Minister for Public Works, Mr. Oliver, has imposed on me a heavy duty in the Statement I am now undertaking. Intimately acquainted as he is with every detail of the works to be spoken of, the task would, for him, have been a comparatively easy one: but, taking up the matter as I have done at an advanced date in the period under consideration, I am obliged to ask for special indulgence for the deficiencies which Mr. Oliver's absence is sure to cause.

PUBLIC WORKS.

There will be attached to this Statement, in addition to the usual Tables and Statements of Expenditure and Liabilities, Reports from the Engineers-in-Charge of the North and Middle Islands, on Railways, Roads, Water-races, and Public Buildings; from the Marine Engineer on Lighthouses; and from the General Manager of Railways.

I shall deal with the subjects in the following order:—

I.—The progress of construction during 1880–81, of the several classes of Public Works.

(a.) Railways:—

(1.) Their construction;

(2.) Their maintenance and working, and the results of traffic.

(b.) Roads.

(c.) Harbour works and Lighthouses.

(d.) Coal fields.

(e.) Waterworks on Gold Fields.

(f.) Telegraphs. Public Buildings.

II.—Proposals for the current year 1881–82, in the same order.

RAILWAYS.

The considerable expenditure of the year, amounting to £969,165, has been almost wholly upon works already begun before the period 1880–81. Including the expenditure during the first quarter of the current year, and the liabilities outstanding on the 30th June last, it has not exhausted the votes of last year. No single group of lines can be said to be absolutely finished and provided with suitable appliances; but I am glad to inform the House that the calls for additional accommodation and increased plant are diminishing in importance, the lines being for the most part equal to an extended traffic. Beginning in the North, I come first to the—

Kawakawa and Whangarei Lines.—The small coal line at Kawakawa (Bay of Islands) and that at Whangarei are making good progress. The former is now all under contract; the latter is finished to a point below the town wharf, but not to the deep-water wharf at one mile fifteen chains lower down the harbour. A contract for the extension to this point has been entered into.