

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

BY THE HON. WILLIAM HALL-JONES, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

22ND SEPTEMBER, 1908.

MR. SPEAKER,—

The outstanding feature of the Statement which I have the honour to present to the House this evening is the practical completion of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, thus more than fulfilling my promise that the rails between Auckland and Wellington would be connected by the end of 1908. The first through train between Wellington and Auckland left the Wellington Station at 10 p.m. on the 7th ultimo, and arrived at Auckland at 6.30 p.m. the following day, thus completing the through journey of 426 miles in twenty hours and a half. The return train left Auckland at 10.20 p.m. on 17th August, and reached Wellington at 6.10 p.m. on the 18th, thus accomplishing the through journey in nineteen hours and fifty minutes. Considering that many miles of the line had only very recently been laid, that some of it was entirely unballasted, and that much of the formation was quite new and unconsolidated, both runs may be regarded as fairly satisfactory, and indicate that there should be no difficulty in making the through journey in nineteen hours as proposed in the suggested time-table.

The rail-heads having now been connected, every effort is being made to complete the ballasting and other works yet remaining to be done, and I hope to be able to arrange for the running of passengers over the whole line very shortly.

The North Island Main Trunk Railway—that is, the line between Marton and Te Awamutu—was authorised by Parliament in November, 1884, and the first sod was turned near Te Awamutu on 15th April, 1885. The line has, therefore, been rather more than twenty-three years in course of construction. The Governments in office during this period and the expenditure incurred under each have been as under:—

Years.	Governments.	Total Expenditure under each Government.	Average Expenditure per Annum.
		£	£
November, 1884, to October, 1887	Stout-Vogel	216,648	74,279
October, 1887, to January, 1891	Atkinson	124,251	38,231
January, 1891, to May, 1893	Ballance	92,393	41,063
May, 1893, to June, 1906	Seddon	1,326,174	100,722
June, 1906, to August, 1906	Hall-Jones	769,874	355,327
August, 1906, to date	Ward		