

1929.

NEW ZEALAND.

# PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT

(BY THE HON. E. A. RANSOM, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS).

---

MR. SPEAKER,—

On assuming the portfolio of Public Works I realized from the outset that it was necessary for me to become fully and personally acquainted with the special conditions concerning the various works already in hand, and to become familiar with the officers of the Department, in order that I could more readily grasp the multifarious operations in which they were involved. I therefore devoted practically all the period of the recess to travelling and to visits of inspection to the larger works which the Department had in hand. I feel that the personal touch which I have been able to establish with both the officers and the men has been for the good of all parties and for the increasing of that harmony which is so essential if the best progress is to be made. The personal knowledge gained has been of benefit to myself, and I trust will be of benefit to the country as a whole, for I have not confined my inspections to the Department's operations only, but I have endeavoured to ascertain through my own observations and through conferences with those most directly concerned just what were the most pressing requirements of the different districts. The backblock districts in particular received my earnest attention, and it is my confirmed opinion that considerably more must be done than has been done in the past in regard to the provision of improved access to those areas. I have accordingly arranged that the vote on the public-works estimates for this year for access to outlying districts is to be materially increased, in order that not only access to those districts already settled may be improved and extended, but that those areas suitable for settlement may be roaded as an inducement to further settlement. In this direction I may say the Public Works Department and the Lands Department will operate conjointly, and increased settlement of many of those areas of land at present unoccupied and reverting to second growth may confidently be expected.