

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

# PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT,

BY THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. EDWARD RICHARDSON,

3RD AUGUST, 1875.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I propose this evening somewhat to change the course I have adopted on the two previous occasions on which I have had the honour to make annual Statements of the proceedings of the Public Works Department.

I do not propose to go so much into detail on the several portions of work throughout the country; as I find that to carry out my original intention in that direction would not only extend this Statement beyond the limits of endurance of honorable members, but involve much repetition from the Reports of the Engineer-in-Chief and the other officers of the department attached as appendices to this Statement.

I have likewise attached a series of tables very similar to those of previous years. These—with the annual reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, the Assistant Engineer-in-Chief, the Superintending Engineer for Constructed Railways, and the Colonial Architect; also, from the Geological Department, relating principally to coal, and from the Chief Inspector under the Inspection of Machinery Act, together with maps showing the progress of the various works,—will fully inform honorable members on every detail, and to the whole I request their earnest attention.

It is only now for the first time that I am able to speak with any degree of certainty as to the cost of the various railways. It will be remembered that in 1872, on the occasion of the large appropriation for the construction of the railways throughout the country being proposed by my predecessor, Mr. Ormond, he laid great stress on the fact that all the estimates then made were only approximate; and also, that when making my annual Statements in 1873 and last year I expressed the hope that the appropriations would, with few exceptions, be found sufficient. During the past two years the detailed surveys of nearly all the railways have gradually been completed, and I now find myself in a position to state to the House how far the approximate estimates—which in 1872 were only made from preliminary surveys—have proved reliable.

I propose briefly to remind the House of the action taken by the Public Works Department in previous years; and my object in doing so is to show how satisfactory are the results of the large railway works undertaken by the colony.

By the Railways Act of 1872, appropriations to the extent of £3,886,900 were taken, which it was supposed would suffice for the construction of 764 miles of railway;—278 miles being in the North Island, and 486 in the Middle Island. Further appropriations were taken in 1873, amounting to £1,680,000, and additional small appropriations in 1874—the total being £5,777,900 for the construction of 1,010 miles of railway;—370 miles in the North Island, and 640 miles in the Middle Island.