

1887.  
NEW ZEALAND.

WORKING RAILWAYS STATEMENT,

BY THE HON. THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, 8TH JUNE, 1887.

*Laid on the Table by Hon. Mr. Richardson, with Leave of the House.*

[EXTRACT FROM GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT ON WORKING RAILWAYS.]

Total length of line open at end of year .... 1,727 miles.  
There have been opened during year .... 114 „  
The net revenue on opened lines for year .... £2 6s. per cent. on their total cost.

I am not going to follow the report all through, but owing to statements which have been made both in and out of the House that little, if any, savings have been effected on the management of the railways, it is only fair to the Government and the department to point out that the report shows that during the past three years a saving has been effected—taking as a basis a mileage-rate on length of railways open—at the rate of fully £100,000 per annum, without reducing *wages* or *salaries*.

I quote a portion of the tables :—

Year.	Miles,	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Tonnage.	Parcels, &c.	Cattle, Sheep, &c.	Passengers.	Season Tickets.
83-84	1,396	961,304	655,990	1,700,040	359,896	686,287	3,272,644	9,036
84-85	1,477	1,045,712	690,026	1,749,856	347,425	729,528	3,232,886	8,999
85-86	1,613	1,047,419	690,340	1,823,767	349,428	858,662	3,362,266	10,717
86-87	1,727	998,768	699,072	1,747,754	372,397	942,017	3,426,403	11,821

This shows that the adverse criticisms which have been made in this House to the effect that the statements made that the savings referred to by the Hon. Colonial Treasurer in his Financial Statement are owing to lessening of traffic, are incorrect, for it will be seen that—

Total receipts for 1884-85 amount to	....	£1,045,712
Total expenditure	....	£690,026
Total tonnage carried	....	1,749,856 tons ;
While total receipts for year 1886-87 amount to		£998,768
Total expenditure	....	£699,072
Total tonnage carried	....	1,747,754 tons.

The tonnage carried and the expenditure for the two periods being practically the same, and the difference in receipts, say £50,000, being mainly owing to reductions made in rates for local production.

The report further shows that during this same period, while the expenditure has only increased by £9,046 on the past year over that for 1884-85, we have opened, maintained, and worked the traffic on an additional 250 miles of railway, with fifty-three new stations.

As regards the estimates for the current year, it has been stated that the expectation of the Government cannot be realized.