

1899.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT

BY THE HON. W. HALL-JONES, MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS,
12TH SEPTEMBER, 1899.

MR. SPEAKER,—

In laying before honourable members the Public Works Statement for the year it is my pleasing duty to again report that satisfactory progress has been made with the various works in hand. The Thames-Paeroa, Seaward Bush, and Forest Hill Railways have been opened for traffic, and should materially increase the earning-power of the lines with which they are connected. The progress of settlement and the profitable utilization of valuable timber that have followed the construction of our present railways have manifested the necessity for making further extensions of certain lines. Some of the proposed lines that are urgently required in the interests of settlement also give promise of earning the interest upon the cost of construction from the moment of opening. A large borrowing policy for the completion of our railway system, irrespective of the results likely to be derived therefrom, is to be deprecated. At the same time it should not be forgotten that as a question of colonial policy the completion of the main trunk lines from Auckland to the Bluff, within a reasonable time, is much to be desired. In regard to other lines it will also be necessary, in order to meet the requirements of our industries, and to develop the resources of the colony, to keep pace with settlement and so assist our settlers in getting their products expeditiously and cheaply to markets and ports of shipment.

In my Statement of December, 1897, I included a table showing the mileages of the different sections of railway completed and opened for traffic since the 24th January, 1891—the total length opened within the period referred to being no less than 224 miles 51 chains. Since that Statement was delivered the following additional lines have been opened :—

| Railway. | Section. | Length. | |
|---|----------------------|---------|---------|
| | | Miles. | Chains. |
| Whangarei-Kamo Extension | Whakapara-Waiotu | 3 | 29 |
| Waikato-Thames | Paeroa-Thames | 19 | 20 |
| Midland | Belgrove-Motupiko | 9 | 23 |
| Otago Central | Kokonga-Ranfurly | 11 | 25 |
| Seaward Bush | Gorge Road-Waimahaka | 6 | 52 |
| Forest Hill | Winton-Hedgehope | 12 | 40 |
| Total | | 62 | 29 |
| Add mileage reported in Statement of 1897 | | 224 | 51 |
| Total mileage opened since 24th January, 1891 | | 287 | 00 |

There is also at the present time a length of 93 miles in progress. The expenditure on railway-construction works during the same period has amounted to £1,431,140.