

1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT

BY THE HON W. HALL-JONES, MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS,
16TH NOVEMBER, 1903.

MR. SPEAKER,—

It is with pleasure that I place before honourable members my eighth consecutive Public Works Statement.

The intimation of the Right Hon. the Colonial Treasurer in the Budget that the expenditure upon public works must be curtailed will have led honourable members to anticipate the necessary reduction in the amounts to be voted for works carried on out of the Public Works Fund. At the same time, however, the construction of the North Island Main Trunk and other important railway-lines must proceed expeditiously, and the urgent necessity of providing settlers in the back blocks with road communication must be met. In this respect good work has been done during recent years, and the sum proposed to be voted for the current year will enable a reasonable rate of progress to be maintained.

At the time the appropriations were passed by Parliament last year the public works expenditure was upon a very moderate scale. Advantage was taken of the larger amounts then provided to increase the number of men employed upon the various works, and, although the whole amount available was not expended by the 31st of March, the expenditure during the latter part, and since the close of the year, has proceeded at a fairly high rate.

The expenditure upon the road vote was below the estimate. This was owing to the local bodies not undertaking the work intrusted to them in time to allow the expenditure to come to charge within the financial year.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure during the last financial year was less than during the previous year. The following table shows, as regards each several class of work, (a) the total expenditure from the inauguration of the public works policy to the 31st December, 1890; (b) the similar expenditure between the 1st January, 1891, and the 31st March, 1903; (c) the gross total expenditure.—D. 1.