

In view of the increased settlement going on in our midst, the commercial activity and general prosperity of the community, I am confident that the traffic during the financial year now entered upon will be equally as satisfactory as in previous years, and therefore estimate the revenue for the year ending the 31st March, 1907, at £2,450,000 and the expenditure at £1,750,000.

Owing to the lamentable death of the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Premier of the colony, and the assumption by me of the office held by him, necessitating my relinquishing the portfolio of Minister for Railways, this will be the last Railway Statement I shall have the honour of placing before the House. I look back with much pleasure to the seven years I have held the responsible position of Ministerial head of this great Department of State. Few people, if indeed any, will take exception to my saying that within that period great development and improvements in the service, both to the public and the staff, have been effected.

I take this opportunity of putting on record my appreciation of the loyal and capable assistance I have at all times received at the hands of the General Manager, Mr. T. Ronayne, and his responsible officers. I desire also to thank the members of all grades of the railway service for the assiduity displayed in the discharge of their onerous duties and for their uniformly good conduct.