

high attainments and eminence in his profession, and as he was only in middle life at the time of his appointment it was anticipated that he would have held his positions for many years with great advantage to the public service, and his comparatively early demise was a considerable shock to the Government and an undoubted loss to the Department. His place as Engineer-in-Chief and Marine Engineer has been taken by Mr. Robert West Holmes, M.Inst.C.E., who has been in the service of the Government for over thirty-five years, and who for several years past has very worthily filled the positions, first of Inspecting Engineer, and latterly of Superintending Engineer of the Department. Mr. C. R. Vickerman, for many years District Engineer at Auckland, has been appointed Superintending Engineer in succession to Mr. Holmes.

I have also to record the death of Mr. W. A. Shain, one of the oldest officers of the Department, who, at the time of his decease, held the position of Resident Engineer at Nelson.

PUBLIC WORKS ACT.

Experience has disclosed quite a number of points on which the Public Works Act requires amendment, and the necessary Bill has accordingly been prepared, but its consideration will be held over till next session.

CONCLUSION.

The present rate of our public-works expenditure is undoubtedly high, but the continued and well-established prosperity of the Dominion fully justifies it. There are indeed many persons, and some members of Parliament amongst them, who would approve even a higher rate, but if our borrowing for public-works purposes is to be limited to one million per annum it is impossible to do more than we are doing.

I claim that the proposals submitted to the House are of a thoroughly progressive nature, and at the same time are fair and equitable as regards their distribution. The needs of each and every part of the country have been carefully considered; and it will, I think, be conceded that an honest effort has been made to apportion the funds available with even-handed justice and in the best interest of the people as a whole.
