

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

BY THE HON. RODERICK McKENZIE, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

20TH DECEMBER, 1909.

MR. SPEAKER,—

The period which has elapsed since the last Public Works Statement was delivered has been quite an important one in the history of the Public Works Department. After filling the position of Minister of Public Works with conspicuous ability for over twelve years—nearly twice as long as any other Minister has filled it—the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones finally relinquished the office and was appointed to the High Commissionership on the 30th November, 1908. He sailed for London on the 3rd December, and I had the honour of succeeding him.

During the year, the operations of which I have now to review, the Department of Roads has been amalgamated with the parent Department, so that the Public Works Department now controls practically the whole of the public-works expenditure of the Dominion.

The length of new railways opened for traffic was greater than during any similar period for thirty years past; and the gross total expenditure on public works was also greater than in any year for more than a quarter of a century; while the amount spent on road-construction constituted a record.

It will therefore be evident to honourable members that the Department has experienced a particularly busy year, and my task this evening is to give as concise an account as possible of the work that has been accomplished, and also of the proposals of the Government for the current year.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE.

The total expenditure on all works and services borne upon the public-works estimates amounted to no less than £2,445,324, or, if we exclude special accounts having their own ways and means and take into consideration only actual charges against the Public Works Fund, the total amounted to £2,169,278, which is the largest expenditure on such works for many years past.

The following table shows, as regards each 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