

## PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

By the Honorable J. D. ORMOND, 20th August, 1872.

SIR,—

The Government have been anxious that a statement of what has been done to give effect to the Public Works Policy should be laid before the House at the earliest possible date; and this would have been done sooner if the returns on which it is based could have been obtained.

It must be remembered that the last Session did not close until the 16th of November, 1871, so that but eight months elapsed between the closing of last and the opening of the present Session; and further, that in accounting for the conduct of the Public Works I can only do so to the end of the last financial year, which includes a period of little more than seven months from the date when Parliament rose.

I think, therefore, that I am justified in asking the House to consider how short a time there has been to give effect to the large measures which were then determined on; and I hope to show that as much has been accomplished as could reasonably be expected, and as was compatible with a due regard to economical and efficient administration.

It has been currently reported throughout the Colony that a very large expenditure has been incurred on Public Works with no sufficient results; and as I believe great anxiety exists, not only in the House but in the country, on this subject, I will, before describing the character and extent of the different works executed, give an account of the expenditure on Public Works and Immigration; and it will be convenient that in doing so I should not only account for the expenditure of the past financial year, but also refer to the expenditure of the previous year, so as to include the whole expenditure under the Public Works policy from its commencement. I only propose, however, to do this generally, and shall quote from the Public Accounts for the year 1870–71, and from the balance sheet of the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer for the financial year 1871–72.

A reference to the Public Accounts for the year 1870–71 will show that in that year a total sum of £111,068 13s. 9d. was placed to the credit of the Public Works Account. Of this amount £110,500 was derived from Temporary Loan, and the remainder made up from recoveries of small items. The expenditure for the same period amounted in all to £100,522 13s., leaving a balance to the credit of the Public Works Account, on 30th June, 1871, of £10,546 0s. 9d. For the year commencing July 1, 1871, and ended 30th June, 1872, the Public Works Account stands as follows:—