

1896.
NEW ZEALAND.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(In Committee of Supply, Tuesday, 14th July, 1896).

BY THE COLONIAL TREASURER, THE HONOURABLE MR. SEDDON.

MR. GUINNESS,—

I hope it will not be considered out of place for me to express my personal regret at what has led to the delay in the delivery of the Financial Statement this year, and I feel assured that the regret is shared by members generally. The bitterest political opponent of the late Colonial Treasurer will do him the justice of admitting that he unsparingly placed his great ability at the service of the colony, and was ever zealous in promoting its welfare, and this devotion to public duty has in a great measure conduced to his personal loss, and resulted in his retirement from office. He has thus been prevented from placing before you a Financial Statement which, I venture to assert, whilst satisfactory to the colony, would have been most pleasing to him to have delivered.

Knowing that our system of keeping the public accounts is somewhat difficult to master, and that financial skill and experience are requisite to success, it was with considerable diffidence that I took office, and following such an able predecessor does not minimise the difficulties. However, my misgivings are to some extent allayed, for I feel assured honourable members will be considerate, and accord me reasonable and generous assistance.

Owing to the short time that has elapsed since I became Colonial Treasurer, the Committee will not expect me to do more than to place before it the year's transactions, and to briefly outline our present and future intentions. I earnestly desire to place before you the figures and results in a clear and practical manner, so that members and the people generally may easily understand the financial position of the colony.

REVENUE ACCOUNT, 1895-96.

I now ask your kind attention while reviewing the operations of the past financial year, and reporting the successful result.

In forecasting the results of the year my predecessor in his last Budget did not express himself as hopeful of so large a balance as he had been able to predict on former occasions, still he was able to show that the estimated revenue would more than meet the expenditure of the year. It is the more gratifying to me, therefore, to be able to tell you that the actual results have considerably exceeded his expectations. The figures are,—