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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Tuesday, 6th August, 1901. Third Reading-Cemeteries Bill-Ashburton County Council Empowering Bill -Woodville County Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. THIRD READING. Police Offences Bill. CEMETERIES BILL. A message was received from the House of Representatives transmitting for the consideration a message from His Excellency the Governor in the Cemetery Trustees Validation and Appointment Bill. On the question, That the amendments be agreed to, The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he did not think there need be any difficulty in regard to this amendment. When the Bill went through the Council they amplified it in the direction of making it possible for members of Road Boards to be trustees of cemeteries. County Councils stood on a footing of their own, and it was held that Road Boards were not on the same footing as County Councils and Town Boards of the ordinary class. The clause proposed by His Excellency the Governor was to meet clause 3 as originally printed, which dealt with the Rotorua Cemetery. The clause would now read : "It shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint the Rotorua Town Board as trustees of the Rotorua Cemetery." The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he did not think it was usual for these amendments to be treated in this way, and he thought they should be put on the Order Paper. Members did not know what the amendments were. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he had no objection to the amendments going on the Order Paper, and being made an order of the day for Wednesday. Motion withdrawn, and amendments made an order of the day for Wednesday. # ASHBURTON COUNTY COUNCIL EMPOWERING BILL .. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY. - I move the second reading of this Bill. It is a technical Bill extending the power of the County Council to make by-laws with respect to waterworks. It has passed the other House, and, as it will go to the Committee, I do not think it is necessary for me to say any more. Bill read the second time. WOODVILLE COUNTY BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH. - In moving the second reading of this Bill, I would point out to the Council that it is simply an attempt of the people in this part of the district to abolish the Road Boards and make one rating body instead of two. Meetings have been held in different parts of the district, and they have come to the conclusion that it is unnecessary now that there should be two local bodies rating over the district, with two lots of expenses - Clerks, advertising, and Inspectors: This Bill has passed the other Chamber, and has also passed the Local Bills Committee of the Council. The amendment put in contains amendments agreed to by the people themselves. It was omitted in the other Chamber, but has been put in by the Local Bills Committee with the consent of all the parties. I move the second reading of the Bill. Bill read the second time. The Council adjourned at ten minutes to three o'clock p.m.

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Tuesday, 6th August, 1901. The Royal Visit - Rhodes Trust Bill-Cemetery Trustees Validation and Appointment Bill- Coal mines : Report of Royal Commission- John Falconer and Others-Wellington City Recreation-ground Bill-Financial Statement -Delayed Questions-Maori History and Art -- The Licensing Laws - Asiatic Restriction -Municipal Corporations Act-Gasworks Compulsory Purchasing- Stoke Orphanage-Volunteers' Lost Rifles-State Coal-mines-Old Soldiers' and Sailors' Claims- Rifle Clubs-Matakauui Land for Settlement- Cambridge Domain - Government and Ocean Accident Insurance Premiums-Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate-Cook Islands Native Land Court -Hotel Licenses-Police Offences Bill --- Rating on Unimproved Values Bill-Death of Sir John McKenzie. Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past ten o'clock. PRAYERS. THE ROYAL VISIT. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said there was a matter he wanted to bring under the notice of the House in order to get it rectified. He found that, on the motion of Mr. Monk, it had been ordered, "That there be laid before this House a return showing, in detail, the

expendi- ture by the Government in connection with the visit to New Zealand of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York." Now, these words, "in detail," should be struck out, for the Government had agreed to the motion on that understanding. It appeared. also, that on the 4th July a similar return was ordered, on the motion of Mr. Barclay, in these terms :- "That there be laid before this House a return showing the cost in every department of,-(1) The visit of the Imperial troops : (2) the visit of the Indian troops ; (3) the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, so as to show in one return the total cost to the colony in every way of these three events." Mr. MONK (Waitemata) had not thought that his motion had been duplicated. Mr. SEDDON said the motions could go all right, but these two words, "in detail," would be treated as if struck out. And it was better done now in the House, lest he might be accused later on of not carrying out the orders of the House. In the House he understood it was agreed that these words should be eliminated from the motion. Mr. MASSEY did not think so. Mr. SEDDON said, Of course, he was not in the House at the time, but he understood from his colleague, Sir Joseph Ward, who was in the House, that that was the fact. He certainly knew that in Cabinet it was agreed that the return should be given with those two words "in detail " struck out of the motion. The motion would then be practically the same as Mr. Barclay's. Mr. MONK said there was no mention made of striking out those words. He could only say the House had passed it in that form. Mr. SPEAKER said if the honourable gentle- man was not satisfied with the return when it for the information he desired. # RHODES TRUST BILL. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere), in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he did not think it necessary to enter into any lengthy ex- planation. The object of the Bill was to relieve certain lands in the vicinity-almost, one might say, within the boundaries of the City of Wel- lington-that had been tied up by the pro- visions of a will, so that it could be cut up. If honourable members would read the preamble they would see, on page 2, that the land could not in any case be disposed of by way of sale, and could only be leased for a term not exceed- ing two years. This Bill, if passed. would remove those restrictions. He might say that all the members of the family who were in New Zealand, and were interested, had given their consent to the Bill. The Supreme Court had also given its approval ; but the Bill was necessary because a few minors could not give consent. The interests of the beneficiaries were safeguarded by section 5, which provided " That all moneys to be received on any sale or sales shall be paid to the trustees, to be invested by them in accordance with the trusts of the said will." So that, whoever inherits under the Bill would not be any worse off : in fact. pro- bably would be in a better position than if the land was still tied up when they became pos- sessed of it. In fact, this Bill would merely give effect to the policy they all thought so de- sirable, the cutting up and settlement of land. He did not know if his remarks had been suft- ciently clear, but in reply would be glad to answer any questions. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) might say that he should support the passing of this measure. It in no way varied the trust, but it did give power to cut up the land and to let it, and to deal with it to greater advantage, and that in the interest of the beneficiaries and to the benefit of the locality in which the land was situated. He also knew, from what had been stated in the House the other day, that. owing to an alteration in the law by the adoption of rating on unimproved value, this very land would have to pay considerably more. It had gone up from about \$30 to about \$280 ; and if it was not cut up, that, of course, meant that the rates would be very heavy upon land that was not producing. If the land was ent up. that would be to the advantage of the district. and to the advantage of those who were to benefit under the trust. He, therefore, thought the House ought to be unanimous in giving the opportunity to the trustees of doing what was asked. There were no objections, and. owing to the altered conditions, the proposal was reason- able, and he would strongly support the Bill. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) said he sympa- thized with the principle of this Bill, seeing that its object was the cutting up of a large landed property contiguous to a populous city ; but he had hoped the honourable member, in introducing the Bill, would have given some reasons why specific legislation was required.

cation might be made to the Supreme Court under section 3, which, so far as he knew, would effect all the purposes contemplated by this measure, provided the parties interested consented, with the safeguard that the sale would have to be approved by a Judge of the Supreme Court. Now, he maintained that the honourable member ought to have stated to them whether any application had been made to the Court under section 3 of "The Settled Land Act, 1886." Section 3 of that Act was as follows :- " A tenant for life, with the consent of the Court, may sell the settled land or any part thereof, or any easement, right, or privilege of any kind over or in relation to the same." An application could be made to the Supreme Court, and the evidence would have to be submitted to a Judge, and, if a Judge were satisfied that it was in the best interests of the parties, and the public, the sale of the land could be ordered. But there was no recital in this Bill that such an application had been made, and to show why the statute law of the land should not be availed of. He could not understand the position, and the honourable member should explain why it was necessary to require a special statute in the face of the existence of the Settled Land Act. With the very brief opening of the honourable member, no one in the House, with, perhaps, the exception of the Premier, who had probably gone into the matter, understood the necessity for the Bill. Mr. SEDDON .- The matter has been before the Court. Mr. NAPIER said, That fact was not stated in the Bill. Then, if the Court had declined the application they should know why it had declined it. There was an important principle involved in this Bill-namely, that of utterly depriving a testator of the right to say how his land should be regulated after his death. He was not in favour of the dead hand as applied to landed estates; but still there was this principle in the Bill, which the Legislature might or might not adopt-namely, the taking away the right of testamentary disposition in this particular case. Was that what the honourable member wished to do? They ought to be informed, further, whether all interested parties were consenting to the general law of the country being interfered with in this patch-work manner. Were all the beneficiaries under the will agreeable to the proposals in this Bill? If it was desired that no person should have the right by his will to say how his estate should be dealt with after his death, let it so be declared. But there should be a general law. Why should a poor person be deprived of the right to have a similar privilege to that which this Bill conferred on wealthy people - the right to deprive the testator of any control of the property after he has passed away, and the right to override the wishes of beneficiaries? The testator in this particular instance clearly defined what his wishes were in regard to this property, and the Legislature, considering that stringent powers possessed by testators, passed the Act to enable a Judge of the Supreme Court to allow settled land to be sold. And honourable members could see that that Act safeguarded the interests of all persons benefited under the provisions of a will, because the Judge to whom an application was made would investigate the matter in a calm and impartial way, and would have the benefit of sworn evidence before him. But they had no evidence before them in this particular case. The honourable gentleman merely said that there was a large property contiguous to the City of Wellington that they would all admit it was desirable that it should be cut up, and that they should therefore let it be cut up. The extracts from the will referred to in the Bill clearly showed the intention of the testator ; but he did not see any recital to the effect that the present legal powers had been exhausted. In principle he was not opposed to the Bill, and he did not wish at this stage to take the responsibility of moving that it be referred back to the Committee ; but it had provisions of an extraordinary character, and they had had no explanation why special legislation was required. He would like to see the estate cut up, and hundreds of smiling homesteads on it in place of one ; but he looked with jealousy on all private Bills which had for their object to override the will of testators without the consent of all the beneficiaries. The general law appeared to work satisfactorily ; he knew hundreds of instances where applications had been made to the Supreme Court, and had never known one to be refused where evidence had been

supplied that it was to the interest of the parties that a sale should take place. He trusted the honourable gentleman would give the House some further explanation on the matter in the course of his reply, and particularly if the guardians of the minors interested in the property objected to the proposed sale. Mr. PALMER (Ohinemuri) thought the honourable member for Auckland City had raised a storm in a teapot. There was nothing in the Bill to raise a storm about, the Bill was simple, and one the House ought to pass. Who had any interest in the matter? Only the beneficiaries themselves, and if they were all agreeable why should not the Bill pass? An Hon. MEMBER .- It does not say they are all agreeable. Mr. PALMER said, Of course there were minors, but evidently they were agreeable ; and those who had charge of the minors surely ought to have some say in the matter. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Napier) had complained that this was altering the wishes and directions of a testator ; but how often was this thing done in the Supreme Court ? The Bill showed that it was only in consequence of a technicality that it could not be done in this He understood, also, that the Supreme case. Court recommended that this course should be taken, which, if it had been an improper course, the Court would not have made such a recommendation. The honourable gentleman, Mr. Napier, said there was no evidence that the

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able gentleman who introduced this Bill to that effect, which was quite enough for him, and should be for the House. When they had the assurance of that honourable gentleman (Mr. Rhodes) that this course had been recommended by the Supreme Court, they should not hesitate to at once give effect to the Judge's suggestion. As to the honourable member's (Mr. Napier's) suggestion that they were treating this Bill too lightly, why if Mr. Napier knew the Standing Orders of this House he would know that a Select Committee for private Bills was set up every session, and when a Bill was before that Select Committee it was submitted to the most searching inquiry. The Bill had been before a Committee set up by another House for inquiry into these class Bills, and it would be before another such Committee set up by this House, and he thought nothing more need be said about it. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said the honourable member for Auckland City seemed to have been arguing that they should not pass the Bill because the same powers as the Bill provided for had already been given to the Supreme Court. Mr. NAPIER .- Except in the case of the minors. Mr. HERRIES said that was the reason why legislation was necessary. If the honourable gentleman would look at the end of the pre-amble he would see, "Whereas the objects of this Act are not attainable otherwise than by legislation." That being the case, this Bill proposes to do by legislation exactly the same thing as the section of the statute quoted by the honourable member (Mr. Napier). If, therefore, he approved of the statute, why not approve of the Bill? This is also the same principle as the law in force in the Old Country, known as Lord Cairns's Act, by which settled lands could be diverted from the intention of the man who settled them. An Hon. MEMBER .- The guardians of the minors must consent. Mr. HERRIES said that was the reason this legislation was brought in. At any rate, the measure had to go before the Committee, and, as that Committee would investigate the whole position, he submitted that if honourable members wished to take any objection to the Bill they should do so when the Bill came back from that Committee. There was one point to which he would like to draw the attention of the Committee which would be set up to consider the Bill. It seemed to him there was no provision in section 5 for any expense of The whole of the cutting up the estate. proceeds had to go to the trustees, to be kept in the terms of the trust ; but he thought only the net proceeds should go to the trustees, and a certain amount should be allowed in the Bill for the expenses of advertising and other matters which would arise during the sale of the estate. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) said, If the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Napier) had Mr. Palmer private Bills, and he would not then have committed the error of stating that he would move an amendment when the Bill was in Committee. He would have known that private Bills were referred to a Select Committee, and that they

were not dealt with in Committee of the House. He would have known, too, that a private Bill did not pass through the House without investigation. The investigation before the Select Committee was a very thorough investigation indeed. With regard to the objection of the honourable member, that the Bill ought to have cited in the preamble the necessity for the introduction of the Bill, he thought he stated in his opening remarks that the reason the Bill had been brought forward was that certain minors in the case could not give their consent. Mr. NAPIER asked why the guardians of the minors did not consent ? Mr. RHODES said, As far as that went, he might say the Bill was introduced on the suggestion of a Judge of the Supreme Court, and the Court had given its approval. The consent of the guardians of the minors would not have been sufficient. Had that consent been sufficient there would have been no necessity for putting this Bill through Parliament, and the Judge would not have suggested such a course. As for the objection raised by the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty, he had put the point to the solicitors who had the Bill in hand -Messrs. Moorhouse and Hadfield-and was informed by them that such provision was made under section 3, which said that the powers of sale and leasing should be under "The Leases and Sales of Settled Estates Act, 1865." If the matter were not clear, objection could be taken when the Bill was being investigated by the Select Committee. Bill read a second time. # CEMETERY TRUSTEES VALIDATION AND APPOINTMENT BILL. A message was received from His Excellency the Governor transmitting the following new clause in substitution for clause 3 of the Bill : "It shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint the Rotorua Town Council as the trustees of the Rotorua Cemetery." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I move, That the amendment be agreed to. We find that the land was vested in the Council, but we did not give it power to administer. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) .- I would like to ask whether the Premier intends to appoint them trustees. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes. Motion agreed to. COAL-MINES: REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) brought up the report of the Royal Commission on Coal-mines, and moved, That it do lie on the table, and be printed. He was unable to lay the evidence taken before the Commission on the table, as it was not yet printed.

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important evidence that was proposed to be sent to the Royal Commission in regard to this matter. Mr. SEDDON asked, Why not do it when the Minister brought down the evidence, which had to be brought down in another paper? These statements could then be placed with the evidence. Mr. GUINNESS said it would perhaps save him taking up the time of the House if, by permission of the House, he was allowed to lay these statements on the table with the report, so that they might be printed as a supplementary paper to the evidence. This document contained the evidence of a large number of miners who worked in the Wallsend Mine. They had read in the Press that Mr. Martin Kennedy and another gentleman gave evidence that no coal was to be found in the Wallsend Mine. These workmen wished to have placed on record side by side with that evidence their testimony as to the extent and quality of the coal left in the mine when it was shut down by the company which held the mine. Mr. SEDDON .- Is that taken upon oath ? Mr. GUINNESS said, No, but it was signed. He was sure it made no difference whether a person gave evidence upon oath or not. However, he took it that a very great injustice had been done to the Wallsend Coal-mine in that district by the evidence which was recorded by the Commission at Wellington. The people in the district where the coal-mines exist had no opportunity of cross-examining these witnesses or of knowing exactly what they said; but immediately they saw it reported in the papers that evidence had been given by these persons, who were interested in the Westport and Grey Valley Coal Companies, to the effect that no coal existed in that mine, they immediately wrote their testimony, as contained in this document, and sent it to the Commission. He was informed by the Chairman of the Commission that this document was received a few days after the report was sent to the Government, so he could only take this opportunity of reading it, and placing it on record in this way. Mr. HERRIES (Bay

of Plenty) asked if the evidence taken by the Coal-mines Commission was going to be laid on the table. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) said, Yes; the only reason it had not been laid on the table with the report was that there had been delay in printing it. Motion, to lay the report on the table and to print it, agreed to. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) said he would move, That this statement, which was addressed to the Royal Commission in connection with their report, should now be laid on the table, and be printed. He only wished to draw attention to the following paragraphs in the document :- " We, the undersigned coal-miners, having been employed in the Wallsend Colliery, beg most respectfully to state that we have seen certain statements re the Wallsend Mine, made by Mr. Martin Kennedy and others, to the | ber for the Grey spoke, it seemed to him that that ' the seam thins out on the east side,' and that ' the mine is fault-bound to the west.' To most of these statements we give an emphatic denial. We have looked up the plans published by the Mines Department, as per report on the coalfields of the Grey Valley, by Messrs. H. A. Gordon, F.G.S., Inspecting Engineer, A. McKay, F.G.S., Mining Geologist, and N. D. Cochrane, Inspector of Mines, to the Hon. A. J. Cadman, Minister of Mines, in 1893, and, as we are quite familiar with the workings of the above colliery, these plans are practically correct. We have laid these plans before a qualified surveyor, who has supplied us with an estimate of coal in sight, amounting to 1,250,000 tons. This, we think, is under rather than over the amount. As for quality, the average is equal to any ever produced in the district, and some patches equal to any ever produced in the colony. No attempt has been made to prospect beyond the western fault. The eastern level has been driven a dis- tance of some 16 chains, and the coal at the face was 14 ft. high when the mine ceased work. During the period of over three years, when the mine was in active operation, we were all the time in solid workings. No pillar coal has been taken out. The dip when the mine ceased operations was driven for some 20 chains; good coal for the whole of that distance, and no bords worked ; in position to start at least thirty bords, giving room for 120 miners double-shifted (usual method). Re the stony or dirty quality : During the period this colliery was in active operation the total out- put was 205,539 tons. The quantity of stone or dirt picked out is still lying at the site where the coal was screened, and it could be put into two ordinary railway-trucks. At the Brunner Colliery there is as much as 30 cwt. of stone picked out of an ordinary railway-truck of coal, which will carry some 5 tons. Hence, give Wallsend coal the same method of screening as adopted at Brunner, and they will leave the colliery equal as to stone or dirt. We are of opinion this mine is a most valuable property, as it is close to the Grey-Brunner Railway, and only seven miles from the Port of Greymouth, and in the centre of a large coal-bearing dis- trict." That was the principal part he wished to call attention to. The rest of the document would speak for itself when it was laid on the table and was printed. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) hoped the House would not allow this paper, which was a purely ex parte statement, to be laid on the table. If every person who had a grievance as to the nature of the evidence given before a Roval Commission was to be allowed at a sub- sequent date to write a report, which might or might not be absolutely inaccurate, and if such a statement was to be printed by order of the House as part of the proceedings of the Com- mission, then there was no use in setting up Commissions at all. As the honourable mem-

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which was made as far back as 1893. It was a report made to the Minister of Mines of that date, and referred to what the position of some mine was eight years ago ; and, in the case of country which was as faulty as the West Coast country was reported to be, it might be quite possible that the conditions were now absolutely and entirely changed. Mr. GUINNESS said he might be allowed to explain that the honourable member evidently misunderstood the facts in this matter. This particular mine was shut down before 1893, and nothing had been done to it since. Captain RUSSELL said, Of course, it was possible that he did not grasp all the facts of the position. But at the same time he did say that the principle of

allowing statements to come in after reports had been presented, and such statements to be taken as authoritative, when the persons making them had not been subjected to cross-examination, was most improper. They had reports and opinions forwarded to the Federation Commission to show that certain persons disagreed with the evidence given by other people, but on every such occasion the Commission had decided that, if these persons were not prepared themselves to come before the Commission and have their statements subjected to cross-examination and inquired into by other persons who knew the facts, these statements of theirs could not be received. They were free to come before the Commission and make their statements there. He thought it would be extremely wrong if, by a decision of the House, they were tacitly to assent to an *ex parte* statement having the same authority as statements made in open inquiry before the Commission. He hoped the House would not agree to that. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) altogether dissented from the opinions expressed by the ex-leader of the Opposition. In limine the very argument of the honourable gentleman, that the persons who signed this document had not submitted themselves for cross-examination, was met by the statement of the honourable member for the Grey, who complained that the persons who gave evidence before the Commission were not subjected to cross-examination. The cases were exactly on all-fours. His opinion was that the statements contained in this paper should be treated as the honourable gentleman said they ought to be treated, as purely *ex parte*. To that extent they were of so much value and no more. The honourable gentleman went further than that, and he said, "What right had persons to express opinions now who were afraid to appear before the Commission?" He (Mr. Fisher) had in his mind the course of procedure adopted by the Federation Commission: were the persons who did not appear before that Commission afraid to appear? They were not afraid to appear, but, as they were not invited, they did not care to impertinently obtrude themselves upon the meetings of the Commission. They had no opportunity of appearing. Persons holding certain opinions were invited to appear; but Captain Russell present time-more might be said about it on a future occasion. They had noticed from the proceedings of that Commission how the evidence was well, they must not say carefully selected, because that would perhaps be going too far. But it was not exceeding the bounds of prudence to inform the honourable gentleman that there were strong feelings abroad in regard to the proceedings of that Commission, and he would venture to say that those feelings had been much more strongly expressed than was anything the honourable gentleman had said in reference to the proposal to admit this statement in opposition to the findings of the Coal Commission. The honourable gentleman's objections were altogether untenable. If this statement was *ex parte*, what fear need there be in giving publicity to an *ex parte* statement? It was valuable to that extent and no more. He certainly thought that persons so intimately acquainted with the whole question as these gentlemen who had signed this statement should have some opportunity to express the opinions they held in regard to what undoubtedly was a very large question as affecting the citizens of the colony. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) said he might perhaps throw a little light on the subject. The position was, he thought, as follows: A Commission had been appointed to take evidence regarding the working of the coal-mines in the colony. It visited all the important coal centres North and South, and took evidence in each place. The position of the present applicants was that they had evidently seen some of the evidence as published in reports of the proceedings of the Commission and had sent a statement, and he had been asked if he would include it in the Commission. He had no power to do any such thing. The position the honourable gentleman took up with regard to the paper, was that it should be included with the evidence taken before the Commission. He thought that would be irregular; but he had no objection to the public knowing all about the matter. But all parties had had an opportunity of giving evidence, and this was a statement made by certain people after seeing some of the evidence, in a manner rebutting that evidence, he presumed. The Commission having closed their sittings, there was no power to include this or have it printed with the report. He had no objection to the whole statement being

printed and issued if the House wished ; but he submitted it could not form part of the report or evidence before the Commission. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) was glad to hear the Minister had no objection to this paper being laid on the table and printed. He thought it should be. He understood there was no evidence taken in the Brunner district as to the quantity or quality of coal in the Wallsend Mine. An Hon. MEMBER .- Yes, there was. Mr. FLATMAN .- Well, if the honourable member for Caversham would tell him when that evidence was taken he would be much

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case. He had it on very good authority from people in the district, that no evidence had been taken; and it was said none of the pillars had been removed in the mine, and that there were millions of tons of coal yet remaining in the mine. It was only right this document, containing the evidence of the miners interested, should be attached to the report ; and if the honourable member for the Grey could see his way to have it attested by the petitioners it might give the statement more weight. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he did not think any member of the House knew more about the Wallsend Mine than he did. The closing of that mine had always been a mystery to the people on the West Coast, and there could be no doubt the sale to another company which had another mine to work had something to do with it. It had always been known amongst the miners that, although one part of the mine was somewhat faulty, there was any amount of coal. This was what the men in their petition said :- " The dip when the mine ceased operations was driven some 20 chains ; good coal for the whole of that distance, and no bords worked ; in position to start at least thirty bords, giving room for 120 miners double-shifted (usual method)." The report of the evidence taken in 11.30. Wellington was so diametrically opposed to what these miners alleged to be correct that they endeavoured, in the only way they could, to be heard, and that was by sending a letter to the Commission and asking the Commission that it be put in as evidence. All Commissions did that, and they found in the Federation Commission's report opinions of various gentlemen which had been sent in by letter. Mr. MASSEY .- They went before the Commission. Mr. SEDDON said, Yes; but what was the difference? If the Commission had had the opportunity of considering this letter, probably it would have treated it in the same way, and it would have been embodied in the evidence they had taken. Captain RUSSELL .- The Federation Commission embodied no letters in their evidence. Mr. SEDDON said, No; but they formed part of the proceedings, and were embodied in the records. This letter could not be received in time, but he could assure honourable members that the names he found appended to the letter -the first name was that of Robert Russell, who was Mayor of Brunner, and he knew nearly every name that was on the letter, and he believed that those men would be as careful in the matter of putting their names to a document as any member of that House. He spoke from personal knowledge of the men. It was unusual for separate communications to be laid on the table of the House, but this was not an ordinary communication. An Hon. MEMBER .- Do you speak for the lot ? Mr. SEDDON said he knew nearly the whole of them ; and he might say, from his own personal knowledge he knew to be correct. At any rate, it was an unusual circumstance, and the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was quite right to call attention to it, because members would demur to ordinary communications received by members being laid on the table of the House. The circumstances in this case were special. This letter could not reach the Commission, for, he presumed, the Commission had ceased sitting, and they only asked that some opportunity should be given them. After this had been laid on the table, he would ask that it be referred to the Mines Committee, who would get hold of these men and sift the question as to the closing of these mines, so that they might know once and for all if the public estate was sacrificed, as he believed it undoubtedly was. He would move, after this had been laid on the table, that it and the report of the Royal Commission, if deemed necessary, be also referred to the Mines Committee. ' Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) would like to say a few words in reply to what had been stated by the honourable member for Hawke's

Bay, who seemed to say that it was a worthless paper, because the evidence had not been given on oath and the witnesses had not been subjected to cross-examination. The honourable gentleman had said it appeared to him the Commission had sat in the district, and that the people were afraid to submit themselves to cross-examination. Well, if the honourable gentleman would look at the names on the petition he would see that the first one was " Russell," and must admit that no one of the name of Russell was likely to be afraid of cross-examination : and the other names would also suggest the same conclusion. When the Commission sat in the district no questions were asked as to why this mine had been shut down, but when the Commission returned to Wellington it examined Mr. Martin Kennedy, a part shareholder, and also Mr. Joachim, the general manager of the Westport Coal Company, which also had a share in this mine, and which company, as honourable members knew, owned the whole of the mines in the Westport district. Now, at this time they were working the mines of the adjoining districts of Grey-mouth and Westport, and for some unknown reason, as the Premier had told them, -- the people of the district never knew why that mine was shut down. Then, when the Commission got to Wellington the gentlemen named came before them and said that the mine was faulty, that the coal was filled with stones, and that the result was such as not to warrant them going on with the work of the mine. When this evidence was telegraphed to the papers on the West Coast, Mr. Russell, the present Mayor of Brunnerton, who had been one of the overseers in the mine, and others, saw that the statements were incorrect and had been made under some misapprehension, and they consequently resolved to send this document to the Commissioners. The Royal Commissioners unfortunately had by this time closed their sittings and sent in

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tioners to wait upon the Royal Commissioners and to get the document from the Chairman. This he had done, and that was how the document had come into his possession. He simply asked the House to lay the document on the table side by side with the evidence and report of the Commission, as the persons who had said the mine was faulty and the coal stony had never been down the mine, which was 600 ft. or 700 ft. deep when it closed down. The document presented gave the evidence of men who had worked in the mine, and who could speak of what they had seen regarding its condition. When this evidence was considered, honourable members would be able to tell whether it was in accordance with what the gentlemen mentioned had told the Commission was the cause of the closing-down of the mine, or whether it had been closed down for some ulterior object. He hoped this document would be received by the House and printed. Motion agreed to, and document referred to the Goldfields and Mines Committee for consideration. JOHN FALCONER AND OTHERS. Mr. PALMER (Ohinemuri) brought up the report of the Goldfields and Mines Committee on the petition of John Falconer and others, to the effect that the said petition be referred to the Government, with an expression of opinion that, in view of the decision of his Honour Mr. Justice Williams that there is no appeal from the judgment of the Commissioner of Crown Lands with respect to mining privileges, the law should be altered to permit of such appeals being made, and moved, That the report lie on the table, and be referred to the Government for consideration. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) hoped that the result of this petition would be that the Government would take this matter into their serious consideration. He did not think it was the intention of the House, when it gave power to the Commissioner of Crown Lands to grant certain mining privileges, that the position of the Commissioner should be more powerful than the position of the Warden. It had, unfortunately for some people, been ascertained by the decision of Mr. Justice Williams that when these mining privileges were granted by Commissioners of Crown Lands there was no appeal from them, as there was in the case of Wardens' grants. This had put these mining privileges in a very peculiar position indeed, and the petition which was presented to the House asked for, and the report recommended, that legislation be passed to

give a right of appeal from the decision of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. He hoped the Minister of Mines, who was fully conversant with this case, would, when he was introducing a Bill dealing with the amendments to the mining law, put the Commissioners of Crown Lands in the same position as the Warden in granting mining privileges -- or, better still, that jurisdiction should be taken out of the hands of the Com- Mr. Guinness Wardens. Motion agreed to. WELLINGTON CITY RECREATION- GROUND BILL. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City). - I have here the memorandum of agreement between the Mayor and City Council of Wellington on the one part, and Messrs. Crawford Brothers on the other, containing the conditions of sale for the Miramar Estate. This is the paper asked for by the Minister for Public Works when I had the Wellington City Recreation - ground Bill before the House. I have much pleasure in moving, That this document do lie on the table, and be printed. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- Of course, there can be no objection to the paper being laid on the table for the information of members of the House ; but this may fairly be said, that this contract, or compact, or whatever it may be called, ought to have been placed before the citizens as a whole before the Bill relating to the purchase of Miramar was introduced to this House. Here, at nearly the last stage of the Bill, the contract is laid on the table of the House. Well, so far as the citizens of Wellington are concerned, it might as well not be laid on the table at all, for there is now no time for them to interpose, even should they have any very strong objection to the terms of the contract itself. I observe from the newspapers that a public meeting of the burgesses of the city is to be held to consider the whole question of the proposed purchase of Miramar by the Corporation of Wellington, but it is impossible for them, with the short time now at their disposal, to thoroughly consider the contents of this contract. Of course, even at this late hour, it is better that the terms of the contract should be laid bare, so that its purpose and effect may be fully considered before the Bill passes through Committee. So far as the general body of the burgesses is concerned, it is too late, for any useful or effective purpose, to place the contract on the table of the House now. This is the step that ought to have been taken at the initial stage of the proposed purchase on behalf of the city. The contents of the contract should have been disclosed at some meeting of the City Council or at some public meeting of the burgesses. I will now endeavour to get a copy of the contract, and will produce it at the public meeting which, I understand, is to be held on Wednesday, so that it may be seen if there is anything in it injurious to the interests of the citizens of Wellington. The people themselves ought to be fully seized of all the facts-in fact, the production of the contract at this late hour is itself a justification for the request which perhaps may be made for the further postponing of the Bill, in order that the citizens may have time to analyse not only the contents of this contract, but the whole purpose and aim of the Bill. As I said on the motion for the second reading of the Bill, the people of this city have not had time to consider this proposal in all its

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sails of the opponents of this scheme to produce the contract at the eleventh hour, when there is, in reality, no time for dissecting its terms. Although I am a burgess of this city I have never seen the contract, and I undertake to say that no burgess outside of that select circle of persons who are interested in pushing this purchase to a conclusion has seen that contract. It ought to have been open to public inspection by the citizens of Wellington, who are the persons most interested in the proposal ; but no such opportunity has been given them. The fact of laying the contract upon the table at this stage places the opponents of the scheme in no stronger position. As a matter of fact, it rather weakens their position. It certainly can be said that the contract is now on the table ; but who of the burgesses has seen it, or who understands its contents? As I have already said, no burgess, except the select few, has the faintest conception of what is embodied in the contract. I myself, as representing this city, and as a burgess of thirty-one years' standing, ought to have known the contents of that secret contract between the vendors

of the estate and the Corporation. I say that no such opportunity has been afforded the people, and on that ground, if on that ground alone, they have a legitimate ground for delaying the passage of this Bill.

Mr. FIELD (Otaki) .- I would like to ask the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) whether this is the original contract that he has put on the table, or whether it is a true copy of the contract.

Mr. HUTCHESON .- It is a checked copy of the whole contract.

Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I think the House will be pleased to have had the opportunity of inspecting this contract-agreement, and I think it should be printed and circulated. Certainly the people of the City of Wellington have a perfect right to have this contract placed in their hands, so that they shall know every detail of it. It would appear to me to be unreasonable to ask the people either to vote on the proposal or to ask Parliament to pass a Bill practically validating the transaction in anticipation of the approval of both Parliament and the ratepayers of the city. I question whether a parallel case could be found in the colony, where a local body takes the option of a purchase, and, having secured the option proceeds to take parliamentary authority to carry out the purchase and after that proposes to take a poH of the ratepayers. It seems to me to be commencing at the wrong end. Why the option should be taken, and why they should wish to force the situation into concrete form by having such a contract as this, I cannot understand. Plainly put, the contract is for \$75,000. There is at once to be paid \$10,000, which is secured on mortgage at present ; and the balance is to be paid about the year 1905. At that time the sellers have the right to remove everything on the land, which, of course, does not amount to much-about £1,500, according to the schedule. But, as the contract is to be laid on the table, in respect to this property, when it was offered previously at a much lower price, and I would also like to have evidence to show how this property has jumped up from the price at which it was offered a short time ago to the \$75,000. It would be interesting to the House, in view of the fact that you are practically legislating for the purchase at \$75,000, if this matter was referred to a Committee, which could obtain the land-tax value and the valuation of the property. I would rather see in your legislation a provision that there shall be no such contract and no such purchase ; but that if the local body wants to take the property they can take it as other properties are taken, under provisions such as are found in the Land for Settlements Act, so that some Court may decide the price. I say that is fair to all concerned, and would remove all suspicion. I have nothing to say on the merits of the case at all. In a large city like Wellington, growing as it is, and looking to the future, there ought to be some provision made for lands for recreation purposes. The city is being gradually hemmed and wedged in, and there is a necessity for doing something, and the longer you leave it the worse it becomes ; but the fact of having such a contract as this, tying the city to buy at a price, is wrong, and I say the Mayor had no right to sign such a document, and the Council had no right to commit the city to such a contract, until some authority had been given to them by the ratepayers. There was not sufficient warrant, in my opinion, for entering into a contract of this kind; but, having been entered into, we have it now before us, and my own way of dealing with this business is to leave it to the people of Wellington and to the discretion of their representatives; but we have no right to bind them to give a price such as this for a given property. If the estate is to be taken for the public, then I say you ought to give open powers to take it, and to see that this is so safeguarded that only the real value is paid for it. That is all I ask for, and it is what I think the House ought to insist upon. I am very pleased that the contract has been laid on the table.

Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City). - This contract is only the right of refusal within a certain specified time-namely, two months after the close of this session. And the Bill provides for the alternative scheme of taking the land under the Public Works Act ; but the Premier was quite in error when he stated the amount offered for the land was \$25,000. It was nothing like it.

Mr. SEDDON .- I never mentioned any such sum.

Mr. HUTCHESON .- The original proposer of the scheme, Mr. H. D. Bell, says, " I intended to offer \$50,000, and if that was refused I meant to go under the Public Works Act." But that was years ago, prior to the expenditure of very large sums of money on heavy cuttings, roadings, wharves, and all sorts

of ad- junets to the property, thereby enhancing its value. Now, the fact of this contract being in
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Parliament led the Premier to suggest that it is committing the citizens to something -- Mr. SEDDON .- It helps to fix the price at \$75,000. Mr. HUTCHESON .- That is the point I wish to meet the Premier on. If the intending purchasers did not fix the maximum price that they were prepared to pay before asking the public sanction to the purchase, what chance would they have of treating with the owners of the property after a poll had been taken and the public had sanctioned the taking of the land ? I say that it would prejudice the best interests of the citizens entirely to disclose the provisions of this contract before having sub- mitted the Bill to Parliament. The citizens' interests are absolutely safeguarded in the Bill, and the Bill is simply the machinery to settle the present manner in which the land is to be dealt with ; and this contract indicates one of the conditions upon which the City Fathers propose to treat with the owners of the land ; and they ask for the alternative power of taking the property, as the Premier suggests, under the Public Works Act. Surely there is every conservation of the public interest in the Bill, and the reason why I did not lay this agreement on the table when I intro- duced the Bill was that I had not the permis- sion of the promoters of the Bill to do so, and they, on the other hand, had not had the oppor- tunity of doing the owners the courtesy of asking if they had any objection to the agree- ment being produced. That has since been done, and the usual course which has been taken right along in connection with this Bill is still being pursued. I submit that the whole of the proposals are perfectly clear. If the City Council decide to acquire the land under the contract, then this proposal will be submitted to the citizens at a public meeting, as required by the schedule to " The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900." Whichever means the Corporation decide to employ to acquire the land, the pro- posal under that particular head will be sub- mitted for the consideration of the citizens at a public meeting, and the subsequent machinery required by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1900 will be employed. Mr. SEDDON .-- Would you have any objec- tion to referring this Bill to the Waste Lands Committee ? Mr. HUTCHESON .- I would certainly be willing to bear that suggestion in mind, and to refer it to my principals ; but I might tell the Premier that I would have absolutely declined to touch the paper upon which the Wellington City Recreation Bill was printed if I had not felt perfectly sure in my inmost mind that everything in connection with it was absolutely clean, and in the interests of the City of Wel- lington, and that it was only promoted and safeguarded by men who were absolutely honest in every walk of life, and the very opposite of those who are seeking to obstruct this proposal. Mr. SEDDON said the question was one as to fair value. Mr. Hutcheson Premier that the citizens ought not "to pay too much for their whistle," and if the thing was done in absolute good faith, and there was no sinister motive impelling those who were opposing the Bill. there was not much fear of that. Let them deal with the matter on its merits in an open, fair, and honest way. He would certainly bear the recommendation and suggestion of the Premier to the Mayor of Wel- lington, and, as this was an absolutely fair and square proposal, with only the interests of the city as its main-spring and motive, he would do all things in reason in that direction. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) only wished that everything should be clear and unmistakable in connection with such a matter as this. Unless it were so it would only be entailing very much expense, and, he feared, a protracted debate ; and the time of the House and the con- venience of all concerned would be conserved if the matter were referred to a Committee. He suggested this as a means of removing the dif- ficulties he saw in the way. He only throw it out as a suggestion, and then there would be opportunities for evidence, and plenty of time to make estimates as to values, and as to the necessity, and so forth. At any rate, he threw the suggestion out in order that the honourable gentleman might consider it. Motion agreed to. FINANCIAL STATEMENT. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer when he was likely to bring down his Financial Statement. The last time he had the pleasure of asking this question, about a

fortnight ago, the right honourable gentleman said it would be brought down in a week or ten days. He hoped on this occasion to receive the answer that it would be brought down this week. Mr. SEDDON (Colonial Treasurer) said this was certainly the week for which he had promised the Financial Statement. He had intended and hoped to bring it down as he had promised, but he had been face to face with difficulties that had caused the delay. Captain RUSSELL. -- Not financial, I hope. Mr. SEDDON said, Well, of course, finance was one of the main questions in a Financial Statement, and that was one of the main difficulties. He had once or twice indicated that they were not so bright as in former years. However, he hoped, if he was not able to bring it down this week, the House would have it probably early next week. # DELAYED QUESTIONS. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) complained that, as the result of the new method of answering questions by grouping in sequence all those addressed to the respective Ministers, the questions addressed to the particular Minister who was put at the end of the list were not answered on the day set down for answering questions. He had himself a question on the Order Paper which had been there for about three weeks and was still unanswered.

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to ? Mr. J. ALLEN said, to the Minister of Lands. It was not answered on the right day, and was passed over then and was not answered at all. Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable member was absent when it was called on. Mr. J. ALLEN said he was not absent. These questions were never reached, and there were other members in a similar position. Consequently, as they were there, and did not get their questions answered for two or three weeks, he submitted it was a breach of the privileges of the House. MAORI HISTORY AND ART. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) asked the Premier, If he will appoint a Select Committee, to sit with any similar Committee which may be appointed by the Legislative Council, to inquire into the advisableness and probable cost of forming a national collection illustrating the history of the Maori race? He would be very glad to alter the question in any way to suit the Premier. But the question of providing such a collection had been thought of throughout the colony from one end to the other. He presumed honourable members had seen the charming publication called "Maori Art," which was brought out by Mr. Hamilton, of the Dunedin Museum, which was perpetuating by photogravure illustrations of specimens of Maori art. But he thought it was desirable, before it was too late, that the colony should agree to the establishment of a special central museum wherein specimens of Maori art could be preserved. He had suggested the scheme of a joint Committee, but if the Premier could suggest any better means of dealing with the question he would be happy to fall in with it. Seeing, however, that it would involve a certain amount -probably a considerable amount-of expenditure to get a really good selection, it would be a desirable thing that the two branches of the Legislature should meet and discuss the matter, and make some recommendation regarding a scheme, and they might be able to form some sort of idea what the cost of a good collection would be. He hoped the Premier would agree to the principle of his proposal, even if he did not fall in with the idea of a Committee. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he was pleased that the honourable gentleman had brought this matter directly under the notice of the House. It had not escaped the attention of the Government. For some considerable time past the Government had recognised that a large number of Maori art carvings and other works of Maori art, which could not possibly be replaced, were gradually being bought up and taken away from the colony ; and when residents of New Zealand wanted in the future to know anything about the colony, and Maori art and science, they would have to go to Germany. That was the position into which we were drifting at present. They thought, first of all, a law should be passed absolutely prohibiting should be the first thing. Secondly, they thought, in regard to Maori lore and art, material should be collated before it was lost. They had already engaged on that work the best man, he thought, in the colony - Mr. Stawell, of Hawera -- who had made it a life study, and who would be able to place the matter before the colony in a way

which would reflect credit on himself and carry out fully what was intended. In addition to that, there was another very important matter. In Auckland there had been started a Maori girls' school. Now, he thought, as they would have the later generation of Maoris there, some of the old Maoris should be engaged to teach the younger generation. Going into the back country - the Crewera country, for instance- where civilisation has scarcely touched the Maori, it was found that these works were still being carried on. If, as suggested by the honourable gentleman, a Committee would help the Government, the best course would be to bring in a Bill dealing with the subject, and then that Bill might be referred to a joint Committee of both Houses, and by that means they might help the Government in dealing with the question. He thought it was a duty owing by the colony to future generations that that should be done. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) suggested that the Premier should enlarge the scope of the question, and then submit it to the Committee. That would be a better way than by bringing in a Bill. He knew the work that Mr. Hamilton was doing, and he knew that a great many of the original records he was putting in his book -canoes, and such like-would very soon be lost altogether, and it would be a great pity if that was so. His work was a great work, and one that they ought to encourage, and he thought the House was in favour of something of the kind being done. He hoped the Premier would set up the Committee, and ask Mr. Hamilton to assist in the work. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) suggested that in setting up the Committee the scope should be so enlarged as to include the isles of Greater New Zealand -- the South Sea Islands lately annexed. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the Government had taken action in the matter, and they intended to proceed. It was not simply on Mr. Hamilton's action that this was being done, but long before Mr. Hamilton went into the matter at all the Government had been working at it. Of course, in the first place, they had to thank the foresight of Sir George Grey. At the same time, he was quite willing to have any assistance they could get ; but Mr. Stawell was on work similar to that which Mr. Hamilton was doing, and Mr. Percy Smith was also doing it : and, in respect to the Greater New Zealand Islands, Mr. Percy Smith was going now to the island of Niue, without salary, for three months, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the natives and all concerning them, and whilst there he would act as Resident Agent for the New Zealand Government. In

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with it in a thorough and complete way, and the first thing they really wanted was legislative power. Parliament, he was sure, would give them the necessary authority and any means they wanted. He would be very happy to have the assistance of Mr. Hamilton, but they already had the assistance of Mr. Percy Smith, Major Gudgeon, and Mr. Stawell. Mr. J. ALLEN said that Mr. Hamilton had been all his life in the work. Mr. SEDDON said, For his own part, he looked upon Mr. Percy Smith as the best living authority at the present time. # THE LICENSING LAWS. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Government, If they intend to introduce a Bill this session to amend the licensing laws, by repealing or modifying the present confiscatory penalties for minor offences, and removing other anomalies ? He would point out that there was a general consensus of opinion in New Zealand that the present licensing laws were unsatisfactory, more especially in the matter of the undue hardships that they imposed very frequently on innocent persons, such as mortgagees of property and others who, under the existing laws, were liable to have the value of their property very largely diminished without redress through the forfeiture of licenses. There were also several other anomalies, which had been from time to time pointed out, and he thought, without introducing any large measure of licensing reform which would cause protracted debate, these minor and necessary amendments might easily be embodied in a short Bill if the Government did not contemplate introducing a large measure. Though a friend of temperance, he could not regard the existing penalties on innocent persons as being in accordance with the principles of justice. He had no sympathy with those who broke the law, but they should take care in their legislation that the innocent

should not suffer with the guilty. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) replied that he had said the other day there were difficulties met with in the administration of the present licensing law that made it necessary some amending legislation should be introduced. He would have great pleasure in bringing in a measure dealing with minor questions : but if the opportunity were then taken of introducing larger questions, that would militate to a great extent against getting remedial legislation through that was required. He had no hesitation in saying there was much in favour of the English Act with respect to finding people upon licensed premises; and that the removal of licenses, by allowing leases to drop out and putting a licensed house among a people who had not been consulted-shifting the licensed premises perhaps twenty or thirty miles- was an entire evasion of the law. Then, again, in respect to confiscation under the existing law, where there had been practically no fault on the part of the landlord himself, or of the owner of the property - here there ought to be a discretionary power given to the Magistrates. Mr. Seddon and time would determine whether the House would deal with them or not. # ASIATIC RESTRICTION. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) asked the Premier,-(1.) Whether the Government have noticed the reply of the Imperial Government to a question asked in the House of Commons, and reported in the Times of 8th June, regarding the vetoing of a Bill passed by the Queensland Legislature prohibiting the employment of Asiatics and other coloured labourers in sugar-mills receiving financial help from the Government ? (2.) Do the Government accept the dictum apparently laid down that these colonies have no right to legislate against the unlimited influx of Asiatics, and particularly of Japanese? This was an important question, because it had an Imperial bearing. He might point out that in the last session of the Queensland Legislature there were passed four Bills dealing with the construction of railways, each of which contained a clause that no aboriginal inhabitant of Asia, Africa, or the Pacific Islands was to be employed upon the railway-works. Strange to say, these four Bills containing that clause were not vetoed by His Excellency Lord Lamington, but there was another Bill, also passed by the Queensland Legislature, providing for the granting of State subsidies with regard to the sugar industry, and this Bill contained a similar clause, that no aboriginal inhabitant of Asia, Africa, or the Pacific Islands should be employed on the sugar mills so subsidised by the Queensland Government. This was reserved for the assent of the Imperial Government and vetoed. In the Times of the 8th June there was the following report of a question in the House of Commons :- "Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies why the Royal sanction had been refused to an Act passed by the Queensland Legislature prohibiting the employment of Asiatics and other coloured labourers in sugar-mills receiving financial help from the Government ? " Mr. CHAMBERLAIN .- His Majesty's Government have represented to the Queensland Government that the Bill in question is open to objection on grounds of both principle and policy : first, because it embodies a disqualification based solely on place of origin, and would therefore exclude British subjects in India and elsewhere, not on account of any moral, educational, or physical deficiency, but solely on difference of race and colour : secondly, that it is offensive to Japan, a friendly Power, inasmuch as it not only excludes natives of that country from employment, but also places them in the same category as Asiatics generally, without any consideration being paid to their state of civilisation." It was in regard to the matter in so far as Japan was concerned that his question was chiefly asked. Japan was a country containing a population of between forty-four and forty-five

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land, and within a comparatively short distance of this country. The inhabitants of Japan were progressive, and possessed in a remarkable degree the quality of adaptativeness, so that if the Imperial Government laid it down as a principle that the colonies were not to be allowed to restrict the immigration of Japanese into these countries, what was to become of the population of New Zealand, which at the present time was much less than one million, if enormous numbers of Japanese came to

make their homes in this colony ? He ventured to say, without introducing arguable matter, that one of the greatest responsibilities that was laid on the colony was to preserve the purity of our race, and if we were to allow a wholesale influx of Japanese into the colony it would alter the whole face of our civilisation, and certainly affect the purity of the race that had been passed down to us by the early settlers of New Zealand. He certainly thought that, in view of the decision of the Imperial Government, vetoing the Act passed, by the Queensland Legislature, this was a most important matter, because, if we were to accept the principle laid down by Mr. Chamberlain we must recognise that the Imperial Government, for Imperial considerations, were going to insist on the right of the Japanese to enter upon these countries in the same way as European races. If so, good-bye to the purity of our race. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he did not hold the pessimistic view held by the honourable member for Riccarton. He was satisfied that if the emergency arose New Zealand would be able to deal with it. If the honourable member would carry his mind back three or four years he would recollect that the New Zealand Parliament passed the Chinese Restriction Act. That was not consented to, and was therefore practically a dead-letter. Then the question arose, How shall we deal with the matter of this Asiatic influx ? The Secretary of State indicated that there would be no objection to passing a law similar to the law of Natal, and on that the Government introduced " The Immigration Restriction Act, 1899," which was now law. That Act provided that no person could enter New Zealand unless, when asked to do so by an officer appointed under the Act by the Governor, he was able to write out and sign in the presence of the officer, in any European language, an application in the form of the Second Schedule of the Act, or in some other form that the Colonial Secretary might from time to time direct. Of course, the Asiatics could not read the European language, and therefore that Act was as effectual a bar as the law that was passed by the Queensland Legislature. It was a different thing, however, to pass an Act and apply it to the law of nations then particular nations. applied, and the British Government said that when a friendly nation. was concerned they could not consent to legislation that was specially aimed at that particular nation. VOL. CXVII .- 17. words were, "any aboriginal inhabitants of Asia, Africa, or the Pacific Islands." Mr. SEDDON said, In the first place, that aimed at the Japanese, and it was on account of the Japanese that the Secretary of State advised Her Majesty not to consent to the New Zealand Act of a few years ago. Another ground that was given was that a number of these Asiatics were British subjects. If he remembered aright, from his reading of the report, that fact was also mentioned. At any rate, we were already safeguarded in New Zealand under the Act of 1899, which had been approved. Of course, it might be said to him, " But the Japanese will soon learn to write the European language, when they will be able to comply with the test." Then, if they found that to be the case, they had an inherent right to alter the matter. It had been contested- and it had been admitted-within the last three years that, as a matter of State, they could refuse or admit any one to our colony. It had to be done by Executive order, and the Government had to take the responsibility ; but if it was found that any race was coming in such numbers as to militate against the well-being of the colony they had an inherent right to close their doors. That was the position, and, as he had said, it had been admitted. At the same time, in his opinion, it was not wise for colonial Legislatures to pass legislation which might cause difficulties with the Mother-country ; and when they could obtain the same object without doing it -as they in New Zealand had done-he thought the proper course was to be friendly with all, and at the same time maintain the advantage of race that they already possessed in the colony. If the Imperial authorities attempted to force this colony to say that a race should be admitted here to the disadvantage of our people, and who would be a burden to our people, then they had the inherent right to step in and meet it ; and, that being the case, he thought there had been a misconception in respect to the answer given by the Secretary of State. In conclusion, he might say, as far as New Zealand was concerned, that they had never had any difficulty whatever with the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office had on every occasion met them

reasonably : and, on this very question, with the correspondence that the Government had in its possession, they were very well satisfied with the Colonial Office. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked if there were any cases of persons being refused admission to the colony under the provisions of the Act in connection with the educational test. Mr. SEDDON said, Yes; in fact, he might say the Asiatics were treated as Chinese. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) asked the Premier, Whether he will introduce an amendment to "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900," to enable 5 per cent. of the ratepayers in adjoining boroughs to demand a poll in their

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mation ? He might point out that the Act of last session provided respecting boroughs that amalgamation could only be done by special order. In the neighbourhood of Christchurch there were three boroughs, and the burgesses in each district protested against this power being given to the Council. They said they should be consulted in the matter. Provision was made in the Act as to joining a portion of a district to a borough : 25 per cent. of the people by petition might accomplish that ; but, with regard to the amalgamation of two boroughs, that could only be done by special order. The opinion had been freely expressed that they should have the power in the respective districts to determine at a poll whether amalgamation should take place or not. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he believed that every latitude and freedom should be given in respect to obtaining the voice of the ratepayers upon a question of the importance mentioned by the honourable member. But the difficulty would be in bringing in an amending Act this session. He was not sure whether there would be an opportunity to do that. He thought every facility should be given, and he thought these smaller boroughs hovering round the larger bodies meant increased administrative cost, and it might be better if they were amalgamated. # GASWORKS

COMPULSORY PURCHASING. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) asked the Premier, If he will this session introduce a Bill giving local authorities compulsory purchasing-power of gasworks, at a price to be fixed by arbitration ? He brought this matter before the special Committee on the Municipal Corporations Bill last session, but, in deference to a number of members who thought it was undesirable to introduce the question, as it would meet with a lot of opposition, he did not propose it when the Bill came before the House. There were a number of boroughs in which the gasworks were owned by companies. No provision was made to purchase those works, and legislation was necessary in each case. That being so, it seemed to him that it would be far better to give the local authorities general compulsory purchasing-powers, and to let the price be fixed by arbitration. In some cases these properties were paying their owners handsomely, and there was a natural reluctance on the part of the companies to part with them. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said that, summed up, the question was *multum in parco* : it really asked the Government if they were prepared to pass a measure which would take from the Christchurch Gas Company the possession. Mr. ELL. - No, no : general powers. Mr. SEDDON. - They had already had a fight on the floor of the House about the powers given to gas companies under the old Municipal Corporations Act. Those powers could not be altered unless by special legislation. For some years the legislation had been general, and the Mr. ELL taken ; but it was a question as to whether they were prepared to take away by legislation the rights of the old gas companies. There was a good deal to be said on both sides, and at present he was in the middle. # STOKE ORPHANAGE. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) asked the Premier, Whether any report will be presented to Parliament relative to the management of the Stoke Orphanage under the new régime ; and, if so, when? He wished to add three words to the question - "special or separate." The honourable gentleman was, of course, aware that there was a general desire on the part of the great bulk of the people of the colony to learn what the result of the new management of the Stoke Orphanage had been, and he wished to know whether there would be any special or separate report upon the management of the institution. There would probably be, in the

annual report of the Minister of Education, some general cursory reference to all the industrial schools of the colony ; but, under the very special circumstances, he thought it desirable that a special or separate report upon the Stoke Industrial School should be submitted to Parliament. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) thought the House last session had given quite enough consideration to the Stoke Orphanage, and he was very happy to be able to say that there was now no necessity to give special consideration to it. Reforms had been worked there, and, so far as he knew, everything was working very satisfactorily. He did not know what the object of the honourable gentleman was in calling attention to the institution by means of the question. As the Orphanage was working like all similar institutions, it was the intention of the Government to deal with it in the ordinary report ; but, as honourable members had their attention drawn to it so much last session, he could not foretell what the report would be. He had no doubt, however, that it would be satisfactory. # VOLUNTEERS' LOST RIFLES. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) asked the Minister of Defence, Whether, in charging corps with the cost of missing rifles, the present market value is charged, or the cost of the weapons at a time prior to their becoming out of date ? Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said the department simply charged the cost price. Mr. McNAB. - Even if the rifles are out of date ? Mr. SEDDON said No ; he was selling some rifles which originally cost \$3 10s. for 10s. # STATE COAL-MINES. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) asked the Premier, Whether the Government intend to nationalise one or more coal-mines to put the country in a condition of preparedness to meet every possible emergency of State, and also to enable the Government to supply coal at a reasonable cost to the poor? He was aware

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ing of Parliament there was contained this paragraph : - " My Ministers desire to bring under your notice the increased prices payable for coal for State requirements. As a way of meeting this difficulty, and to insure a supply of coal for Government purposes at reasonable rates, it is essential that a State coal-mine be established. The great and growing demand for coal, and the inadequacy of the supply from the coal-mines on the west coast of the Middle Island, also render a State coal-mine advisable." The language was a little flowery, but, nevertheless, it created a belief in the minds of the people of the colony that a State coal-mine would be established. Indeed, it went further : it buoyed people up with the confident feeling that the Government really did intend to establish a State coal-mine ; and yet no such intention was expressed in the paragraph. Suppose the Government did say in the paragraph that it was their intention, their definite intention, to establish a State coal-mine, even then there would be no guarantee that the Government would establish a State coal-mine ; because it would be most unusual, it would be extraordinary, if the Government gave effect to every promise contained in the Governor's Speech. No Government ever gave effect to every promise contained in the Governor's Speech. The honourable gentleman would remember that in March last, just prior to the Wellington municipal elections, which took place on the 1st April, the newspapers were deluged with correspondence, with reports of interviews with Ministers, interviews with coal dealers, and interviews with the poor of the city, who were deeply concerned in the question of a cheap coal - supply. It was a burning question, and the people became much impressed with the views of the Premier upon the subject. Several people who took an interest in the great coal agitation of March last, and in the interviews which appeared daily in the newspapers, had brought pressure to bear on him to force the hands of the Government, in order to ascertain whether they really did intend to carry out their intention to establish a State coal-mine or not. He would not say that there was any want of belief in the minds of the people in regard to what really were the intentions of the Government, but, certainly, he had been asked to put the question in this pointed way, and he now asked the Government whether, in accordance with this paragraph of the Governor's Speech, it was the intention of the Government to establish a State coal-mine ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the fair lady-

he might term the honourable gentleman who represented Wellington so -- put to him the question of whether or not a promise that had been made was to be performed, or whether he was to leave the Governor liable to be brought before the House and the country for a breach of promise. He said there was quite sufficient in what was stated in the Governor's Speech to constitute a breach of promise in that ment to open a State coal-mine. Mr. FISHER .- When ? Mr. SEDDON said, As soon as Parliament gave its authority. The Government intended asking Parliament to give them that authority. Mr. FISHER .- This session. Mr. SEDDON said, Yes, this session. They had already appointed Mr. Gordon, Mr. McKay, the Government Geologist, and the Inspecting Engineer, Mr. Hayes, to proceed and select a site for a mine for the country. The next course would be to ask Parliament to give them authority, and then for the House to give them an appropriation, and so on. It was their intention to have a State coal-mine, and they hoped to have it in work before next session. The price they were paying now for coal for Government use was such as to warrant the Parliament dealing with the question at once. He thought they were paying 7s. 6d. or 8s. a ton that could be saved, and, that being the case, they had a right to save it. And in dealing with the Government supply the other question of the price paid for coal for private consumption would come in. His own opinion was that the people were almost blackmailed in connection with the price they had to pay now for coal in this colony. There was a combination, and only the other day he had seen a notice sent by a secretary of a company to a coal dealer in Auckland, saying that because the dealer had sold a lesser quantity of coal than had been agreed on amongst themselves he would get no more coal. Well, if they had got to that state of things in this colony, it was time they liberated themselves, and Parliament would be asked before very long to give legislative authority for the opening-up of a State coal-mine for State purposes. OLD SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' CLAIMS. Mr. McGUIRE (Hawera) asked the Government, When they will finally settle the naval and military land claims, so that equity may be done to those old and deserving soldiers and sailors of the Imperial and colonial forces who rendered valuable services in the early days of this country ? This question had been asked and commented upon so often that he would simply ask the question without comment on this occasion in order to save time. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said Parliament had the matter in its own hands. Time after time they had passed legislation stating that it was final ; and, it having been so dealt with, until Parliament changed its mind the Government could not move in the matter. # RIFLE CLUBS. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) asked the Minister of Defence, When those rifle clubs which have requested to be made Government rifle clubs may expect their request to be complied with? He asked this question because one or two rifle clubs in his district had applied to be formally admitted as Government rifle clubs, but they had not received any reply to their applications. He hoped the Minister

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would be dealt with at once. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said a very large number of clubs had applied to be approved by the Government, but they had not stated whether they were within the five-mile limit mentioned in the regulations, and the applications had been returned for further particulars. He might state, however, that the other day he accepted a large number of these clubs. He would like them to be ready for the summer shooting season, and he had given orders that all the orders should be brought up, and he would agree to them, contingent on the regulations being complied with. If they did not comply with the regulations, of course they would not be in time for the season ; but a large number had already been approved. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) asked if the Premier would give the House a list of those clubs that had been accepted. Mr. SEDDON said, If the honourable gentleman would mention any one in his own district he would tell him at once what the position in respect to it was. MATAKANUI LANDS FOR SETTLEMENT. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka) asked the Government, If they will resume a block of Crown lands in the Matakanui district, with the view of having the same thrown open for close

settlement ? He asked this question last session, and the Minister of Lands premised during the recess to see the land for himself; but doubtless he had not found it convenient to get away on account of the work he required to do in the North Island. The people of this district had been applying for land for the past twenty-five or thirty years, and as the land in this district was considered fit and suitable for the purpose, and it could be obtained, it was promised that the Minister of Lands should visit the district and inspect the land ; but he believed that had not been done. During the election-time. when he visited the place, the electors asked him if he would endeavour to get land for them. He told them he would see the land, and he did so. He felt thoroughly satisfied that it was perfectly suitable for the purpose of cutting up for close settlement, and, although it was generally contended that if they took the frontages it would destroy the run, he felt convinced that that would not be the case, as the people asking for the land were prepared to take up the rough portions along with the good, from the frontage to the boundary of the run. Had the Minister of Lands found it convenient to have gone to see the land he would have found a number of the settlers waiting on him to explain their wants. There was also a considerable number of old miners down there, who had been in the district for about thirty years, and they were anxious to get a bit of land to settle on, but at present they were not able to get it. He hoped the Minister would give him a favourable answer to the question. He had brought this matter before the Hon. John McKenzie when he was there, and had told him what had taken place, and Mr. Lethbridge saw the land was suitable for settlement, and they wanted it, they would get it. He (Mr. Bennet) repeated this last session to the Minister of Lands : but, of course, he had not seen the land. He hoped he would take the earliest opportunity of seeing it. It was Crown land, and there was nothing to pay for it. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the attention of the Land Purchase Inspector would be directed to the matter mentioned in the question. #

CAMBRIDGE DOMAIN. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked the Premier, Whether he intends to act on the report of Mr. Northcroft with regard to the Cambridge Domain ; and, if not, whether he will take steps to have a further inquiry made ? This question referred to a matter that had been in abeyance for some time. The Cambridge Domain Board consisted of five members, and in February last a vacancy was caused by the death of one of the members. The Borough Council recommended one gentleman for appointment and the Domain Board recommended another. Under the circumstances, the Minister of Lands suggested that a public meeting should be held at which a gentleman to fill the vacancy should be selected. The public meeting was held, and the gentleman who had been recommended by the Borough Council was selected by a majority of four votes only. The Domain Board considered that to be a vote of want of confidence and resigned in a body. The Minister of Lands was informed that they had resigned, and suggested that a public meeting should be held to consider the whole matter, and also wrote and thanked them for their services. A public meeting was held on the 11th April, and it was called together by a requisition signed by 258 people ; and that meeting was thoroughly representative, as far as he understood, and, judging from the names of those who signed the requisition, he was quite certain it was. This meeting recommended that the Board should consist of seven members, and suggested the names of members who would form a Board that would give more representation to Cambridge West. which had previously been a bone of contention. These resolutions were passed unanimously and forwarded to the Government. The reply of the Minister of Lands was contained in the Gazette of 9th May. in which the Minister cut the Board in half and appointed two weak Domain Boards, instead of two strong ones. No one that he knew of asked for this solution of the difficulty. if difficulty there was. Exception was taken to this division into two Boards, and a telegram was sent by the secretary of the Liberal organization to the Premier, and the Premier promised that Mr. Northcote, the Resident Magistrate there, would go down and report. Mr. Northcote did go down and inspected the books and minutes which he got from the Chairman of the Domain Board, and, he believed, reported. He now asked the Premier whether he would act on that report, or

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matter. The matter should not be left in the state it was at present. The Premier knew perfectly well that the work done by the old Board was for the benefit of the town, and high praise had been given them for it by the Premier himself, and by every Governor and Minister who had visited Cambridge. It was impossible for those improvements, that had made Cambridge one of the prettiest towns in the colony, to go on if the two Boards were divided as they were at present. He thought the people should be informed whether Mr. Northcroft's report would be acted on, whether further inquiries would be made, or whether matters were to be left in the present unsatisfactory state. It was important to the Domain Board to know, as the spring was the proper time for planting, and the majority of their operations were carried on at that time of the year. He trusted the Premier would put an end to this uncertainty by a definite announcement. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said there had been repeated and continual squabbling over this matter, and the Government had cut the gordian knot and changed the administration. The Board resigned, and they did the next best thing, they thought, for the administration of the domain. There had been jealousy between the Cambridge East and West Boards, and there appeared to be no doubt, from what he could gather, that the Cambridge West people had good cause of complaint. In asking the Stipendiary Magistrate to report, it was his intention that he should take evidence on both sides ; but that gentleman only went and saw the Chairman and one or two members of one body. According to his source of information and the short time he had for investigation his report was quite justified, but he did not think his report had given satisfaction. The Government had decided to do nothing to let things simmer and cool down, hoping that time and reflection would bring about a better state of things. When the proper time came the Government would deal with the matter, and in the meantime further inquiries would be made. Mr. HERRIES asked if he understood the Premier to say that inquiry would be made. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes. GOVERNMENT AND OCEAN ACCIDENT INSURANCE PREMIUMS. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) asked the Government, If they will make inquiries into the difference of premium charges between the Government Accident Insurance Company and the Ocean Accident Insurance Company ? Mr. SEDDON said inquiries would be made. CROWN TENANTS' RENT REBATE. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) asked the Premier, When the return asked for on Order Paper No. 1, Notice of Motion No. 5, will be laid on the table ? The return was as follows :- "That there be laid before this House a return showing,--(1) The amount of rebate granted to Crown tenants under 'The Crown Tenants' tenants in each land district to which rebate has been granted, giving the annual rent, and the amount of rebate allowed to each ; and (3) the total amount of rebate in each land district." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said instructions had been issued for the preparation of the return. The department had to communicate with all the Land Boards, and as soon as the information was to hand the return would be laid on the table. COOK ISLANDS NATIVE LAND COURT. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked the Premier, When he intends to set up a Native Land Court in the Cook Islands Group, as mentioned in his memorandum inclosed in despatch No. 87 from His Excellency the Governor to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies ? He would read an extract from the memorandum in question : - "It is well known to His Excellency the Governor and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that it has ever been the desire of the Government of New Zealand to improve the condition of the Polynesian and Papuan races inhabiting the islands in the Pacific ; and by a reference to the Premier's memorandum No. 91, setting forth the conditions on which the boundaries of our colony were to be extended so as to include the Cook and other islands, it will be found, -- (1) That the ownership of the lands in Cook Islands Group be admitted ; (2) that a Court on the same lines as the Native Land Court established in New Zealand, or a Commission, should define the ownership of the particular areas, and to decide as to its subdivision and partition." He wished to know if it was the intention of the Government to set up a Native Land Court as promised. Mr. SEDDON

(Premier) said the Government would, when the proper time came and the question was raised as between the parties more directly affected, and when they were asked to deal with this matter, comply with this request. As the honourable member knew, they only obtained possession on the 11th June, and there must be some little interregnum before they could possibly deal wholly and fully with the new possessions. In the meantime it was wise not to make too many changes, but to go along slowly and steadily. # HOTEL LICENSES. Mr. LAWRY (Parnell) asked the Premier, If he will, in any Bill introduced this session to amend the Licensing Acts, introduce a provision to the effect that eleven p.m. shall be the hour of closing for licensed houses in all cities and boroughs ? At the present time the affairs in Auckland were extremely disgraceful. In their stupidity, the Committee elected by the people declared for ten o'clock closing, whereas in the district represented by the honourable member for Eden, including the Borough of Devonport, they have eleven o'clock closing,

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closed at ten o'clock, could, by crossing in the ferry to Devonport, get as much drink as they liked up to eleven o'clock. He hoped the honourable gentleman would give him a favourable reply. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he was in favour of the closing hours of hotels being universal. POLICE OFFENCES BILL. This Bill, as amended by the Legislative Council, came down by message at half-past seven p.m. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) said, Though this Bill has been altered somewhat, I believe the amendments are an improvement. Subsection (2) has been struck out, but the proviso has been re-enacted in a new clause in the present Bill. There are some words that have been struck out. For instance, in subsection (2) of clause 3 "view or" is struck out, and also "passing therein or residing." I think the Bill will be an improvement on the Police Offences Act, and I am prepared to move that the amendments be agreed to. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) .- I do not get up with the object of opposing the amendments, but to object to the way in which this sort of thing is done, and the business conducted. Over and over again last session, important amendments were made in the Upper House, and when the Bills came down, exactly as has been the case in this instance, honourable members were asked to approve of the amendments without knowing what they were. The consequence has been that some of the measures are now law in a different form from what was intended by this House. I say that in every case the amendments ought to be printed and circulated, so that we may know what we are doing. I would suggest to the Minister of Justice that in this case the amendments should be printed and circulated before the question is put. If not, I shall feel it my duty to divide the House on the question. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- We do not want to lay down any precedent that is at all against the proper conduct of business ; and there is no wish or desire to force members to consider at once amendments where they are material ; but sometimes where they are not material there is no object in delay. Where there is any material matter for objection, I am sure my colleague will not press the matter. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) .- Sir, I was only going to say that this is an important Bill, and it is quite impossible for any honourable member to follow the amendments that have been made by the Upper House, from the statement of the honourable gentleman in charge. I have not the slightest idea what the explanation given was ; I understand it was of a purely technical character as to the alterations. I certainly hope that before he presses the matter of the acceptance of these amendments he will give the House an opportunity of seeing the amendments by seeing them in print. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) .- I happen to have seen the amendments made in the i Mr. Lawry materially alter the provisions of the Bill. I certainly think they should be reprinted so that honourable members can see them. Nearly every clause is altered, and, as it is only a small Bill of three clauses, one can understand that the changes make considerable alterations. The original clause 2 has been struck out, and the proviso I put in in Committee has been made the new clause. The Bill introduced by the Minister has disappeared almost entirely. I think it is a great

improvement, but I think it ought to be reprinted for honourable members to see. I shall vote against the proposal, as a protest against considering amendments that have not been printed for the House to see. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) .- Personally, I have no objection to its being re-printed, but I think there is no necessity. If honourable members had paid attention to the Bill when I explained it they would have understood what the amendments were. I pointed out that clause 2 was struck out, and that the proviso had been re-enacted in its place as a new clause. That is the only important alteration made, with the exception that in subsection (2) of clause 3, "view or" has been struck out, and the words "passing therein or residing" have also been struck out. An Hon. MEMBER .-- What is the effect of that. Mr. McGOWAN. - If the honourable gentleman had read the Bill, and paid attention to these things he would have known the effect. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey). - In clause 2 the Minister proposed an amendment of subsection (29) of section 3 of the Police Offences Act by inserting the word "or"-that is, putting " or " between " using insulting language in a public place " and " within hearing of persons passing by." The Legislative Council have struck that clause out. Before the Bill left this Chamber a proviso was added to that clause, on the motion of the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty, to the effect that the interpretation of the words "public place," as used in Part II. of the Act, should be the interpretation given to the words " public place " in the 3rd section of the Act dealing with this question. That proviso has been re-enacted in place of the clause struck out in another place. That is the real meaning of the amendment. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Mr. Herries's clause is now the Bill instead of the Minister's clause. Mr. GUINNESS .- That is so. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .-- I wish to explain the reason why the words "view of" were struck out, as I was on the Statutes Revision Committee when the Bill was considered. The words were struck out because it was pointed out that it was an absurdity to talk about using obscene language " within the view " of any person. Mr. HERRIES .- I would like to ask when the word "reputed " was struck out. Mr. McGOWAN .- It was struck out in the Statutes Revision Committee, and re-inserted by the other Chamber.

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the amendments be agreed to." AYES Parata Hall Arnold Seddon Hall-Jones Bennet Stevens Hanan Buddo Heke Steward Carncross Hogg Symes Carroll Laurenson Tanner Duncan Willis. Lawry Flatman Fraser, A. L. D. McGowan Tellers. Mills Barclay Gilfedder Morrison Colvin. Guinness NOES, 19. McKenzie, R. Smith, G. J. Atkinson Thompson, R. McNab Bollard Thomson, J. W. Meredith Ell Fraser, W. Monk Tellers. Rhodes Lang Russell, G. W. Herries Lethbridge Mackenzie, T. Russell, W. R. Massey. Majority for, 10. Amendments agreed to. RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUES BILL. INTERRUPTED DEBATE. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) .- Sir, I have 2.30. a few words more to say before closing my remarks. I had been referring to the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell), and pointing out that the statistics he introduced to the House were not as reliable as one might have expected them to be. from the fact that they were estimates of his own, and not instances from actual experience. The Act has been in force in some districts in New Zealand for some time, and I expected the honourable gentleman was quoting from actual facts and experiences after the Act had come into operation. We were led to believe, however, from his subsequent remarks that that was not so, and we were also led to that conclusion from the fact that he referred to some printed matter which he circulated on the eve of the poll being taken. His facts, therefore, whatever value they may have, have only the value that may be given to estimates. Now, Sir, this Act intends to make rating on unimproved values compulsory, and that is my objection. There is a great deal to be said, as I stated in my opening remarks the other evening, for rating on unimproved values in certain districts, and there is a great deal to be said against it ; but there is nothing to be said in favour of making it compulsory, and that is why I object to it. Mr. SEDDON .- Why should it not be ? Mr. J. ALLEN .- Why not? I will ask the honourable gentleman why he has

introduced the Act at all? If it is to be compulsory on the one leg, why should it not be on the other? Now, the Act has been brought into operation in thirty-three districts. A poll has been taken in forty. It has been rejected in seven districts, so that only forty of the local bodies in New Zealand have spoken their voices on the matter. I was pointing out that five counties and a hundred boroughs, and I do not know how many Road Boards, and out of that number of 185 only forty have expressed their voices on the matter, and only thirty-three have decided in favour of it. Mr. BOLLARD .- There are nearly five hundred local bodies. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Well, at all events, it is sufficient for my purpose to point out that, as far as the boroughs and the counties are concerned, there are 185, and that only thirty-three have decided in favour of rating on unimproved values. Now, why is it to be made compulsory? If out of 185 bodies 120, or some such number, had decided in favour of rating on unimproved values, then the Premier might have had some reason for saying, "I am going to make this rating on unimproved values compulsory all over," because, as he said, he wanted a uniform rate in New Zealand. But, if he wants a uniform rate, this Bill does not give it. The clauses in the Bill omit certain works- waterworks and gasworks --- from the rating on unimproved values, and, instead of the rate being uniform, it will be less uniform. In one district you will have rating on the capital or annual value, and in others on the unimproved value for some purposes and on the capital value for others. There is no uniformity in the Bill, and it is not a measure that will make rating in New Zealand uniform; and if it were, then I say that all the arguments are in favour of retaining that which is at present adopted by the majority of the local bodies, and, if there were a necessity for being compulsory at all, it ought to be in the direction of rating on the capital or the annual value. Now, with regard to the statistics quoted by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. ELL), I pointed out, with regard to those statistics, that in thirty-three districts the vote had been carried, and that in seven the vote had been lost. But it is interesting to examine the polls. I find that little interest has been taken, even in the very district in which the honourable member has been agitating. Take, for instance, the question as it was decided in the district of the member for Ashley -- the Cheviot County. There are 345 persons on the roll in the Cheviot County, and out of that number only 119 went to the poll. Now, where were the remainder? Mr. SEDDON .- They are satisfied. The man who stops at home is satisfied to let it go. Mr. J. ALLEN .- I say the man who stops at home is satisfied with what he has got, and therefore stays at home. Then, in Eketahuna there are 600 on the roll, and only 102 went to the poll, and these 102 carried rating on unimproved values. That is no voice of the rate-payers. If I were to go over the other figures it would show the same result. An Hon. MEMBER. - Look at Sydenham. Mr. J. ALLEN .-- It was carried in Sydenham; but, unfortunately, the number of persons on the roll is not given in the return. However, I am sure that what applies to other places applies also to Sydenham. In Sydenham

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the proposal. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- There is a population of twelve thousand. Mr. J. ALLEN. - "There is a population of twelve thousand," and only 546 votes were recorded. Now, that brings me to the matter of plural voting, and in that respect it is curious to examine this return, because, if I read the return correctly, the voting on unimproved value proposal has been carried in some instances by plural voting. Mr. ELL .- There are no plural votes in Sydenham. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Well, that I cannot tell, because, as I say, the number of persons on the roll is not given. But in other districts one can see what has been the result of plural voting. Take, for instance, the Cheviot County: I do not think the honourable gentleman will say there has not been plural voting there. Although only 119 persons voted, there were 206 votes recorded. Is there plural voting there? I should say there was. And you can go through this return, and I can safely say I believe that in many instances rating on the unimproved value has been carried by the plural vote. Why? Because the man who has got the plural vote -- the big man-knows he is to get off easily. Now, I ask those who wish really to consider this question from the point of view of equity, to

decide, in the face of this return, whether it is right to make this thing compulsory. That is the question. There are districts where, I believe, rating on the unimproved value is preferable to the present system. With respect to the City of Wellington, what would be the result ? I am afraid the honourable member for Christchurch City, in saying what he has, has forgotten one thing. I think he has forgotten in some of the cases he mentioned that the rating was on the annual value, and not on the capital value. Mr. ELL.- No. Mr. J. ALLEN.- The honourable member says "No." I may say that I very nearly fell into the same mistake, because I tried to compare rating under the unimproved value in Wellington with what it would have been on the capital value, and I found it would not work out. Why? Because in Wellington- and, I suppose, in other places -- there is no definite proportion between the capital and the annual value. The annual value is supposed to be 5 per cent. on the capital value. But that is not so. It is a curious fact that, with respect to the City of Wellington-that is, a few years ago, at any rate-the annual value in certain instances, instead of being 5 per cent. on the capital value, was only 3 per cent., and in another instance it was 10 per cent. I want to know whether that is a fair system of rating : that one man should be assessed for the annual value at 3 per cent. on the capital value, and that another man should be assessed at 10 per cent. ? It destroys, therefore, all comparison, at any rate, with respect to Wellington, because there is no settled proportion between the annual and the capital value. Now I come Mr. J. Allen wish to say a few words only. I admit that there is a great deal to be said on both sides. I can understand that where a man has very large improvements upon his ground he would wish to be rated on the unimproved value. That is only natural, because he would have to pay less. Wealthy people in many cases will get off by paying less. But I will say this too : that in a suburban district, where a working-man has got a cottage on a piece of land, the land being of small value, and where the proportion of improvements-that is to say, the house-is large compared with the land, in that case the working-man will get off with -- paying less. There is no doubt that the man who will get off with paying less is the man who has improvements which are not up to the general ratio of improvements in the locality. Take, for instance, the City of Wellington. The ratio of the improved to the unimproved in the City of Wellington in 1898 was as 1 to 1:56. Therefore all those properties with a ratio of improved to unimproved as 1 to 1.56 will, under the rating on unimproved value, pay exactly the same as at present-that is, if the property originally was rated on the capital value ; but if the proportion of the unimproved land to the improvements increases beyond 1:56, then the owner will have to pay more, and if the proportion falls below 1.56, then he will have to pay less, and as the proportion falls lower he will have to pay less and less. 1 But it is difficult to form any very definite opinion with respect to any particular building in Wellington. I know some banks that will have to pay less, and I know others that will have to pay more. It depends entirely on the ratio of the unimproved value to the improved value. But one can take two specific instances of land of similar value next door to one another -one with improvements to the extent of, say, three to one, and the other with improvements of, say, one to one. In the first instance given the man will have to pay less taxation under the rating on the unimproved value than he did before, and the man next door to him would have to pay more. An Hon. MEMBER.-- Make him put up a better building. Mr. J. ALLEN.- Why should he? If he has a building sufficient for all his purposes and good enough for the community, why should he have to spend an extra \$1,000 to put up an extravagant building? You cannot wish a man to put up a better building than is suitable to his surroundings. Now I will take you to the country. Go to a farming district. A man puts up buildings to suit his requirements as a farmer, but his neighbour puts up an elaborate residence and elaborate stables and other buildings. The latter owner has a fine carriage and horses, and he uses the roads ten times more than his neighbour ; yet he would only pay the same on the unimproved value. Is that fair ? In that instance it is not fair. I say there is no argument, therefore, to make this Bill compulsory. Leave it in the hands of the people to say whether they will have it or not.

"Trust

the people in this instance then? I do not think it should be made compulsory. I assert again that there are arguments both for and against the principle of the Bill. Some instances it is obviously fair that land which is lying unoccupied and unimproved, and which is held for speculative purposes, should bear a higher proportion of taxation than it does now ; but in other instances rating on the unimproved value would not be fair. For instance, there is the case of the property in the country with fine buildings -- residence, stables, et cetera. The owner of that building uses the roads more, he receives more in the way of protection from the police, and in every way, I say, he ought to bear a larger proportion of the burdens of the State than his poorer neighbour. The more costly the works are that are being protected the more they should bear their fair share of the cost of protection ; but in such instances the rating on unimproved value would not provide for this. I do not wish to say more about this matter. I have here a report by the Town Clerk of the City of Wellington, which was made some years ago, and his conclusions are very much the same as mine. He says that house property generally would in all probability have to pay a little less, and that, while several of the larger institutions would pay more, some would pay less. I have come to the conclusion that, as a general principle, no conclusion can be drawn from his report or from any other report. The best people to decide these matters are those living in the particular localities, and who know all the conditions. They are the people to say at the ballot which system of rating would be the most desirable. With regard to uniformity, I hope we shall not adopt a scheme under which we shall have a Road Board having a system of rating on unimproved value and a County Council having another. True, the compulsory scheme would do away with that ; but, after all, it is best to leave the matter to the voice of the people, for they are certainly the best able to decide what system would suit particular localities.

Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) .-- Sir, I rise to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman said, with regard to the number of proposals that had been rejected, that I had misled the House with respect to the number of polls carried in favour of rating on land-values. I said all the polls had been carried on the voting with the exception of three. Mr. J. ALLEN .- You said three boroughs. Mr. ELL .- I said that in only three districts had the proposal been rejected on the votes, and they were Picton, Timaru, and Woolston. It was carried in all the others on the vote. Mr. J. ALLEN .-- The honourable gentleman, in his supplementary remarks, adds words which make a considerable alteration. He now says, " Rejected on the votes," but in his first remarks he only said " Rejected." I quote the return to prove that I was right : The proposal was first carried ; rejected in Petone Borough, and still rejected ; rejected in the Picton Borough, and still rejected ; rejected in the Raglan County, and still rejected ; rejected in Stratford, and afterwards carried ; rejected in Sumner Borough, and still rejected ; rejected in Tauranga, and afterwards carried ; rejected in Timaru, and still rejected ; rejected in Waimate Borough, and afterwards carried : rejected in Wairarapa North County, and still rejected ; rejected in Woolston Borough, and still rejected.

Mr. TANNER (Avon) .--- I would like to say a few words on this subject, because it is one of considerable interest, and, whether for good or for evil, it will be altogether a new departure in fixing the basis upon which local taxation is to be levied. The principle of rating on unimproved value, as a basic principle, had my support five years ago, and will continue to have my support. I am not, however, in the least degree satisfied with the Bill now before the House, because it proposes to make rating on unimproved value compulsory throughout the colony, without any exemption, without any differentiation, and without any consideration for the different classes of people it will touch. I think it is rather an exaggeration to say that the polls on the subject of adopting the provisions of the Act on the statute-book, the results of which have been laid before this House in a recent return, prove that the community at large approves of the principle of the measure generally. If one analyses the polls which have been taken he will see that the adoption of the principle has been carried in many places at lamentably

small polls, which we so much deplore when any question is remitted to the public vote. It is, however, the business of the ratepayers in the various localities ; and we may regret, but have no right to blame them if they allow such questions to be settled by small minorities. I have nothing to say with regard to the principle itself; that was adopted by this House five years ago, and it is not for us now to advance arguments either supporting it or detracting from the principle. The only matter which is dealt with in the Bill is, in effect, the question, Shall or shall not rating on the unimproved value be made compulsory throughout the colony? A great many illustrations have been given, and a good deal has been said about the small cottager, the proprietor of a large mansion worth \$10,000, or the owner of a large mercantile establishment, all of whom occupy land of equal value in immediate contiguity to each other, being rated alike under this Bill, no matter what the value of their total possessions might be. As I listened to speaker after speaker the other night on this Bill, each speaking from his own point of view, I thought that a political kaleidoscope was passing before me. For instance, it seemed to me that the speech of the honourable member for Manawatu was far more against the present system of valuation in the colony than in support of rating on the unimproved value.

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are utterly fallacious, for they are based on the assumption that the owner of land pays the That is utterly contradictory of our rates. " Rating Act, 1884," which provides, in clause 15, that the occupier shall be primarily responsible for all rates. This throws a great deal of light on the subject, and the matter should be reconsidered from this point of view, because I hold that the position of the tenant has not been considered in any way. Throughout the debate the other night there rang a tone of exultation from various speakers on the position into which the House has now got the "fat man " ; but the House has not got the " fat man " into a corner in the least. What will be done by passing this Bill in its present bald form is to put the tenant between the upper and the nether millstone, to draw the last drop of blood out of him. I would ask, Why do we have a cry year after year for a Fair Rent Bill from the tenants of rented properties ? And the Government has promised one so often that we do not know whether it intends to deal with the question or not. If rents are too high -- and I hold that they are in the main, and criminally so -and if legislation is necessary, what is the House thinking of in passing a Bill which makes rating on unimproved values compulsory, and vastly increases the rates which tenants are made legally liable to pay, without any attention being given to the change thus effected? I am not at all against rating on the unimproved value -my support is with the principle. I am speaking against this Bill in its present shape, and its provisions being so imperious and indiscriminating. Everybody seems to claim the right to quote all manner of instances. Let me give a few. What shall we say as to the position of a small suburban farmer who rents valuable land in that zone which rings-in every town of the colony, and whose land is generally held in small areas for dairy farms and vegetable and market gardens, and nearly always on short-dated leases ? The owner will not give a long lease, owing to the fact that the land is daily increasing in value and will soon be required to meet the growing necessities of the town, the very contingency which the owner desires. On most of these lands there are 3.0. practically no improvements worthy of notice. It may be an old cottage thirty or forty years old, or it may be a milking-shed or stable - a few trifling improvements which count for nothing when it comes to the question of valuation. The bulk of the value is in the unimproved value of the land. By passing this Bill without making any reservation on behalf of these unfortunate tenants, whom the Government are so anxious, or professedly anxious, to help in regard to their exorbitant rents. I must say they are putting a very valuable class of the community in a position which is invidious in the extreme. There are hundreds of small farms of the kind I have mentioned in the colony-dairy farms, market gardens, vegetable gardens-individually of no great extent of land, but always held at the maximum rent which can be extorted. There Mr. Tanner rentals running from

£6 upwards per acre, but I can give rentals of suburban holdings within my own knowledge at £7 per acre per annum, and in nearly all the short-dated leases, running for five to six and seven years, there is a stipulation to the effect that the tenants shall be responsible for all local rates. Well, pass this Bill and the result will be that these unfortunate tenants, having made themselves responsible, will for the remainder of their terms be in the position of having to pay rates which will at least be doubled, and in some cases may be even trebled or quadrupled. There is no provision in the Bill by which they can deduct that unexpectedly increased rate from the exorbitant rental which they give to the landlord. Sir, we want a Bill compiled with a better knowledge of the subject than this one shows, or we need the insertion of some clause or other which will relieve the tenant, who at this moment is responsible for everything, from bearing a heavier burden than he is doing at the present time. As to talking about reaching the "fat man" in this way, that is the most ridiculous rubbish I have heard in the House. The "fat man" simply strokes his distended stomach with satisfaction, while the unfortunate tenant has to pay an additional sum of money extorted from him by the operation of the Bill ; and the " fat man " knows that every day the land is increasing in value without any effort of his, and without the payment of a single penny towards this increased charge. The " fat man " is waiting for the time when he will subdivide the whole farm into small building sections, and pocket the whole of the unearned increment. That is the way this House is getting at the " fat man," by carrying a Bill so seant and bare of detail as this. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- Sir, it is my desire also to say a few words before the second reading is put. The Bill which is now before the House practically consists of two pro- One is that the rating on unim- positions. proved values system shall be compulsorily adopted all over the colony, and the other is that it shall be optional to the local governing bodies, when it is so adopted, to make it apply to certain classes of rates which were exempted by section 20 of the original Act. Now, Sir, I doubt very much the wisdom of attempting to force the system of rating on the unimproved value upon every part of the colony alike. As often as we have had attempts to bring within the compass of a clause or two provisions which apply to all parts of the colony alike, so often have we failed ; because, as those of us who are old members of the House know well. the circumstances differ so very widely in different parts of New Zealand that it is almost im- possible to pass an Act having general ap- plication without making it elastic enough to enable it to be stretched to meet the case of particular localities. Now, Sir, if this Act passes-I speak as regards the first proposition-we shall go counter to all our experience in the past, and, notwithstanding the difficulties we have always experienced in

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Zealand alike, we shall insist upon that very thing being done. Now, I ask why that should be so in relation to this particular matter. Surely the provisions of the original Act, read together with the amending Act, are sufficiently easy to enable every part of the colony to adopt the system of rating on the unimproved value if it so thinks fit. As a matter of fact, the honourable member for Bruce has shown what is the fact : that in a very large majority of the instances where polls have been taken this system has been adopted. Well, then, it is therefore evidently probable that, in the course of a very short time a large majority of the local governing districts of New Zealand will have adopted the Act. Then, Sir, I could understand, if, say, three-quarters of New Zea- land were under the operation of the system of rating on the unimproved values, the Go- vernment bringing down a provision to make it compulsory, in order that there should be uniformity, and that the minority should be brought into line with the majority. But, Sir, as matters now stand it is only in a minority of instances that the unimproved value system has been adopted, and there is ample power for every part of the colony to adopt that system if it so desires. Indeed, I believe it will not be very long before a large majority of the local government districts in the colony do so adopt it. Therefore I cannot see that there is any justification for the first proposal of the Bill-that is to say, to

override the discretion of the people, and to insist upon them, whether they like it or not, adopting this system. With regard to the second proposal—namely, that when the rating on the unimproved value system has been by this Act brought into operation all over the colony there shall remain an option to the local governing bodies to bring all classes of rates under it or not—I mean the classes of rates referred to in section 20 of the original Act—I think, Sir, that in this respect the honourable gentleman is inconsistent with himself, that the second is inconsistent with his first proposition. If he desires that the system of rating on the unimproved values should be compulsorily applied, then, Sir, I think he should have gone the length of making it compulsory as regards every class of rates—that he ought not first of all to make the system compulsory throughout the colony, and then retain the optional clauses in regard to the class of rates mentioned in section 20—namely, gas rates, hospital rates, waterworks rates, electric light rates, sewage rates, charitable aid rates, and so on. What I think should be done is this: that subsection (1) of clause 1, which proposes to make the system compulsory throughout New Zealand, should be struck out, and that subsection (2) should be altered, simply to the effect of the repeal of section 20 of the original Act. It would then follow that whenever the system of rating on the unimproved value was adopted in any district that system would apply to all classes of rates in that district; and when the ratepayers go to the poll on the question of the adoption of this knowing that they were voting for or against a system which would be applied to all classes of rates in their district. Now, Sir, I wish to allude to one other point, and that is this: that whereas the intention of the rating on the unimproved value system is to discourage the holding of land for speculative purposes, its operation necessarily is to increase relatively the rating upon unimproved land and unoccupied land. Now, that may be all very well, and, I believe, right within certain boundaries, to the extent that it discourages holding land for speculative purposes; but, while that is so, yet, Sir, this system operates prejudicially in respect to certain other lands which cannot by any possibility be used for building purposes. I allude to such lands as agricultural and pastoral associations' reserves for showgrounds, racecourses, et cetera. It is impossible to suppose that the intention of the Legislature is to compel lands of that sort to be built upon. These lands would, indeed, be of no use whatever for the special purposes for which they are intended if they were built upon. The same thing applies to cricket-grounds and all grounds used for public recreation purposes; and how largely the rating on the unimproved value system has increased the rates upon such properties may be instanced by one or two cases in my own district. In fact, my attention has been drawn to this state of things: In the neighbourhood of Waimate there is a reserve held as a showground by the Agricultural and Pastoral Association. On this showground the Association paid, under the old rating system, 18s. per annum, and they are now paying, under the rating on unimproved value system, which has been adopted in the district, the sum of \$4 8s. 7d. per annum. Then, as regards the racecourse, the trustees paid, under the old system, \$2 10s. per annum, and they are now called upon to pay no less than \$20 10s. 10d. per annum, or nearly ten times as much. An Hon. MEMBER.—Why should they not? Major STEWARD.—I think it is not at all desirable that they should be called upon to pay so much; and, moreover, the local governing body does not think so either—in fact, it is, I understand, quite willing to forego the additional rate. I hope that such cases will be adjusted by some such clause as I have given notice of—namely, that where the rating on the unimproved value system is in operation public reserves and lands which are used solely for purposes of public convenience and advantage should be exempt from rating. This would not make much difference to the total rates of the local governing bodies; and when the Bill is going through Committee I shall endeavour to add a clause to give effect to what I desire. But I think the Government would do well to withdraw that portion of the Bill which proposes to make the system compulsory throughout New Zealand, and to restrict its scope to the making the system operative where the unimproved value system is adopted in respect to rates of every kind.

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give a silent vote on this important matter, and I may say at once that I object to the compulsory clauses of this Bill. I have been identified for more than thirty years with local government in New Zealand, and I have been for twenty-eight years consecutively the chairman of a local body. I have studied this question in all its phases, and ever since land-taxation has been in vogue, and I must say that I am a believer in the old Act ; and I think we cannot do better than let that Act stand, leaving it permissive and optional with local bodies whether they wish to apply the unimproved rating system or not. There can be no doubt that in the case of those speculators in land who buy large tracts of unimproved land in different parts of the colony, and hold them until they can get a higher value for them by the process of settlement and the making of roads adjoining such blocks, thereby bringing about higher values and enabling them to sell such lands at much advanced prices, it would be a good thing if they could be made to pay heavier local rates on their lands, and I would like to see a law passed to compel such men to pay heavier taxation ; but I consider that it is the duty of this House to legislate in such a way as to do the greatest good to the greatest number, and therefore I am satisfied that in actual working the rating on unimproved value system will be found not to be of the greatest good to the greatest number, and in many cases the Act will be practically inoperative. The honourable member for Bruce gave instances of a poor man holding an allotment, and who, it is stated, would pay more in rates as compared with what he pays now because his improvements are of more value than the allotment ; and I know plenty of instances where such a man has bought an allotment and he has gone on saving from the results of his labour, so that in a few years hence he will be able to put up a little house, and then that man will pay more than he does now under the old system. In fact, looking at the question from all sides, there is not the slightest doubt but that those who are best able to pay the local taxation will get off, taking them collectively, with less rating. Take, for instance, a local body where the rates amount to \$1,000 a year -that is, so-much in the pound on the selling value of the property. Well, if you rate upon the unimproved value you will have to make up that \$1,000 somehow. in order to be able to carry on the work of the district, and therefore in some instances the rating on the unimproved value will have to be double and treble what it is now, in order to make up the amount so required. Take the case of a back district where there are a number of struggling settlers, who have only been able to make a limited amount of improvements. In the case of a settler just starting on his land his first consideration is to get that land improved and under cultivation, and a good dwellinghouse and outbuildings are the last things he thinks about. But many of his neighbours who have now reached a good position, and are well-to-do, will, under the refund of rates, or a reduction of rates, while the struggling settler I have referred to will have to pay double the rates he is paying now ; in fact, any one who has studied the whole question from beginning to end must come to this conclusion-that the poor will have to pay the same taxation as the well-to-do, and therefore I say that, while in some instances it would be beneficial to rate on the unimproved value system, it should be left to the people to say what class of rating would suit them best and what they would prefer. The Premier is continually telling us to "trust the people," and I think that, in regard to the method of taxation the people desire, the right honourable gentleman and those who support him and speak as he does would be quite right in doing so. Why, Sir, it is only a short time ago that we heard anything at all about the rating on unimproved value system, and therefore until we have had more experience in the working of the system we had better not make the Act compulsory. Let us show, before we ask the colony to adopt this Act in toto and make it compulsory, that there are a large number of local bodies who have adopted the system with beneficial results. Surely we can afford to wait a few years until the people on their own motion have pronounced whether it is a good or a bad principle to apply to local taxation. I intend to vote against the Bill because of the compulsory principle it contains, as I am quite satisfied with the matter as it stands at present, the people being allowed to judge for themselves as to the wisdom or otherwise of putting on this

form of taxation. and having the power to introduce it if they so desire. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- I listened with great attention to the admirable speech of the honourable member for Bruce, which had the effect of convincing me that I ought to vote in favour of the Bill. I say "admirable speech " because it was an admirable speech from the honourable gentleman's point of view. He holds a fixed position in regard to land owner- ship and land taxation, from which neither dynamite nor wild horses will ever shift him. The honourable gentleman holds most pro- nounced views on the land question, and refuses absolutely to see that there are two sides to the question. Now. any man who travels through this country -- and I suppose the honourable member for Bruce travels as much as any of us- must see the injury and injustice caused by the existing form of taxation. I do not suppose the large towns will suffer much in consequence of the change proposed in the Bill, nor do I suppose the country districts will materially suffer, for, as the honourable mem- ber for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) has shown, there are inequalities in the existing valuation system which the Bill will equalise and render more just all round. In the case of some per- sons their rates will be increased, and in the case of other persons their rates will be corre- spondingly reduced. Now, if one wants to see the evils and the injustice of the present system

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for the purpose of argument, that the southern members know more about their own districts than we do. But I would like to take some of these hide-bound Tories, some of these hard- and-fast gentlemen who hold unmovable ideas on the subject of land-taxation, to some districts in this Island, and I would not take them further than the boundaries of the district represented by the honourable member for Masterton. In the case of one township in that district-and I can mention the cases of two or three townships, including the Township of Waipawa --- can be seen the injurious results of the monopoly of land by the gentlemen whom the honourable member for Avon de- signates " fat men." Mr. TANNER .- I did not give them that name. Mr. FISHER .- At any rate, there you will see one specimen of that kind of monopoly-one person owning one-third of the township, and keeping it back from all possibility of prosperity, or progress, or advancement. Mr. HORNSBY .-- Eketahuna. Mr. FISHER .- It is the very spot I have in my mind's eye. Since the honourable member for Wairarapa has mentioned it, Eketahuna is the very township I mean. As I say, one man owns about one-third of the township. If the people want to lease any of his land he asks an exorbitant rental. His land occupies nearly the whole of one side of Eketahuna, and that is the busiest side of the township. If a person wants to buy, he will not sell on any terms. And so the township is kept back. Now, there is one illustration. I know of other towns similarly situated - Waipawa being a notable instance-where the operations of this Bill would be beneficial in the interest of those persons who are most concerned in the welfare and progress of the district, as that welfare and progress naturally beneficially affect the larger number of the population who live there. Mr. MASSEY. - Who is the landowner to whom you have referred ? Mr. FISHER. -- There is no need for conceal- ment : the landowner is Mr. T. C. Williams. Well, that is as to the townships. Now, it is only by means of the passing of such a measure as this that you can get at the speculator in a township, and also at the larger speculators who hold large areas of land in the country districts. We have men in this city-large capitalists who invest in country lands waiting for a rise in price --- waiting for the increased increment which is brought about by the labour, the industry, and the enterprise of other men. Mr. MORRISON .- And they have burnt their fingers. Mr. FISHER .- Not very often in the North Island, whatever the experience of the South may be. I said just now that I would not speak of things I did not understand, and so I will not speak of the state of affairs in the South Island. There is no man in the North Island-at least, if the honourable mem- ber for Caversham knows any man, capitalist would like him to mention his name. Mr. MASSEY .- I can mention some. Mr. FISHER .- Oh, I suppose we will get the Piako Swamp and Patetere directly. We know all about that too. Let us, then, take the case of the Piako Swamp and Patetere : did those

gentlemen -- An Hon. MEMBER .- And Matamata. Mr. FISHER .- Very well, Matamata too. Put the three of them together. Pardon me one moment. The honourable gentleman has started this argument : let me finish it. We will take Piako, Patetere, and Matamata, and we will take the member for Franklin's representation-I suppose this will be his representation since he supplied the instances - that these gentlemen took up Patetere, Piako, and Matamata, and deliberately went in for those investments for the purpose of losing money in it. An Hon. MEMBER .- They did not think they would lose it. Mr. FISHER .- I understood the member for Franklin to suggest that their deliberate design in taking up this land was to sink a lot of money in these estates to lose it. They lost their money in the way that others who took up land in the South Island lost theirs. I will mention one or two cases in the South Island. There were two well-known old Canterbury residents who had one station each, but one station each was not enough for them, The earth-hunger was too strong on them, so they must have two stations each. As a result they both went through the Bankruptcy Court. Was that result not brought about through their grasping greed ? They had not enough land when they were doing well and prospering and enjoying the fat of the land. An Hon. MEMBER .- Who were they ? Mr. FISHER .- They were among the landed aristocracy of Canterbury. I do not want to mention their names. I will mention the son of one, who in this House railed at and denounced every man who owned an acre of land. He politely called them "social pests." That was the Hon. W. P. Reeves, the rampant Radical ; but now the Hon. W. P. Reeves owns five thousand acres of his own. Mr. SYMES .- Where does he own it ? Mr. FISHER .- Somewhere about the Mokau country. An Hon. MEMBER .- It is only leased. Mr. FISHER .- Well, that, I believe, is so, but it only shows that these unsuccessful land-grabbers who "bust up " and become howling democrats only become democrats to elevate themselves on a political pedestal by means of the labour-men's votes, when they revert to their original standing as a land-grabbing aristocracy. That is the case of the Hon. W. P. Reeves. Now, I think the rating on the unimproved value would touch up these gentlemen. They are just the men who ought to be touched up. I am content to cast my vote for the second reading of this Bill, and I sincerely hope it will become the law of the land, so as to put

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in the case of Eketahuna. Mr. G. J. SMITH (Christchurch 3.30. City) .- Sir, I think the speech we have just listened to affords a very excellent argument in favour of retaining our present legislation. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) has pointed out in the case of Eketahuna, and two or three other places in the North Island, the desirability of having rating there on the unimproved value. Well, Sir, the process is very simple. All they have to do is to comply with the requirements of the Act of 1896, take a poll of the ratepayers in the district, and have their rating done on the unimproved value, and if they can convince the required number of ratepayers in the locality that it will be to their interests no doubt they I listened with great will carry the poll. attention to the speech of the honourable member for Bruce, who put the case very clearly indeed. Any member of the House who takes an interest in the rating question, and goes through the cities, will find that in many streets on one side there will be large and imposing business premises, while on the other side of the street will be found premises that are not worth, possibly, one-tenth of the value ; and yet under the provisions of this Bill the rating on each side of the street will be practically the same. Now, with such inequalities it will be manifestly unfair for this House to pass a Bill which will declare that rating on the unimproved value shall be the law of the land and applicable to every borough, every county, and every road district. Why, take Christchurch : my colleague Mr. Eil has instanced that. I know street after street in Christchurch where, on one side of the street, there are buildings worth thousands of pounds, while on the other side of the street you could buy up the premises wholesale for about a tenth of what the premises opposite would fetch. An Hon. MEMBER. - This Bill would cure that. Mr. G. J. SMITH .- You mean that there would be more buildings put up on the

other side of the street, I suppose. But the buildings are not wanted. I am speaking now of what I know. and I say in Christchurch at the present time the premises there are quite large enough for the business that is being done. If you attempt by passing legislation of this sort to force a man to spend money in putting up buildings that are really not wanted, you will depreciate the value of those buildings already erected, and bring about a state of depression that, in Christchurch at any rate, we do not want. Listening to the speech of the honourable member for Avon just now, I thought he also put the case very clearly. All round about the City of Christ- church we have sections of an area of about five acres that have practically no improvements upon them at all worth considering, and yet the owners of these sections under this Bill will have to bear the taxation that is put on the land generally in that locality. Take Woolston, Mr. Fisher member for Lyttelton: I say in that district there are several factories which under this Bill will largely escape taxation, and extra taxation will be thrown upon the small settlers in the locality to make up the deficiency caused by the exemption of improvements. I am as- tonished that the Government should have introduced such a Bill. We have passed a Referendum Bill, and have been talking " refer- endum " in this House for some years past. and yet this Bill is practically to prevent the referring of this question to the ratepayers of the districts interested. My friend the honour- able member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) supports the referendum, and yet he votes for a Bill like this, which takes away from the ratepayers the right to say how they shall tax themselves. It is absolutely illogical. and I am astonished that he should take up the attitude he does. Then, we have heard a good deal about the speculators from the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher), who asserts that the land speculators are the men who have made all the money. Well, there have been some men who have made money out of land speculation, but I say that for every one or two who have made money there have been ten who have lost it. Mr. LAURENSEN .- Nonsense. Mr. G. J. SMITH. - I am astonished at the honourable member for Lyttelton-that he should say " Nonsense." I always looked upon the honourable member as a cool, hard- headed Scotchman, who knew what he was talking about. Let the honourable member go to Canterbury, and if he cares to make inquiry he will find that what I am stating is correct. I am not confining my remarks to the specu- lator who goes in for big blocks of land ; be- cause I venture to say that we in New Zealand have all been touched with the land-speculation fever, and I suppose we have all had a little experience, and the majority of us have lost by the speculation we have indulged in. I say to try and get at one or two speculators, and thereby injure the great bulk of the popu- lation, would be as manifestly unfair as it is possible for legislation to be. I hope. when this Bill comes to be voted upon. this House will decide that the present permissive system is the best, is fair and just, and will insist on its being retained on the statute book. With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Waitaki, he said he would vote for the second reading although he did not approve of it, and that when the Bill got into Com- mittee he would endeavour to make it more stringent than it is at present. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman requires some ingenuity to make his two positions agree. When I read this Bill, Sir, I came to the con- clusion it had been introduced at the request of some society-that a little pressure had been brought to bear upon the Government, and that the Premier had agreed to introduce the Bill. But, having introduced it, he considers he has fulfilled his promise, and he now hopes the House will kill it. I intend to do in this

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and I shall accordingly vote in the direction of killing the Bill and keeping our present per- missive legislation in force. Mr. W. FRASER (Wakatipu) .- Sir, I shall not detain the House more than a few moments. I feel very pleased at the tone of the debate during this afternoon. The speech of the honourable member for Avon was really concise, to the point, and logical-there is no doubt about it. Very striking examples have been cited as to how this Bill will operate in regard to towns and boroughs.

Member after member has risen and pointed out how the Bill will strike at the owners of unoccupied lands in towns and boroughs, but how many have drawn the attention of the House to the injustice which this Bill is going to inflict upon a certain class of residents in the country districts? Sir, the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) ought to know something about the province from which he comes, and I am sure he will bear me out in this : that there are tens of thousands of acres in the Province of Canterbury, as well as in other parts of New Zealand, upon which no improvements have been made in the sense usually applied to that term- that is to say, they have not been ploughed. I refer to the shingly plains and terraces. Thousands of acres of land of such kind have been ploughed, and it has since been discovered that no greater error was ever made than to so treat such country. It would have been far wiser to have left them as they were. The only way that class of land can be improved at all is by fencing it, subdividing it, and surface-sowing grass upon it. I fear the amount of reduction that would be allowed for improvements of that kind would be very small indeed. Now, in regard to the man owning that class of land, it must be evident that, by so much as his improvements fall below the average of the improvements of the district in which it is situated, by so much more will his rates be increased. Why should that be so? I am sure that those honourable gentlemen who advocate this system, while desiring to initiate a system that will be equitable, and remove all inequalities, do not desire to do an injustice in this way. And yet if we pass this Bill and it goes on the statute-book, and thus becomes law, we shall commit an injustice, and a very grievous one, on the holders of land such as I have referred to. Then, again, let me give another instance. To show how extremes meet : The honourable member for Avon referred to the market-gardener of Christchurch. Well, there is at the other end of the pole what is known as the squatter-the pastoral tenant of the Crown. He holds land from the Crown which he cannot improve-nay, more, by law he is not allowed to improve it ; one of the conditions of his lease says he shall not improve it. Instances have occurred over and over again where Land Boards have summoned men for daring to plough their land ; and because these men do not improve their land they are to be penalised . -- that must be the inevitable result. Take the mountainous part of Canterbury and Otago, in- is unimprovable, and the law has said it shall not be improved. Institute the compulsory system of rating on unimproved values in those districts and what must happen? In the counties comprising country of this character the area of the land held under this tenure constitutes sometimes a third, sometimes a half, and sometimes two-thirds of the whole area of such county. It must follow that, by the amount you deduct from the improved rateable value of that county-namely, the value of improvements-by so much you lay a burden on these people, who can neither improve their land nor are allowed by law to do so. Is it desired by the House to penalise these people ? I do not believe it is. Yet we are asked to pass a Bill to commit this grave injustice. The honourable member for Avon really touched the crux of the whole matter-that this Bill provides for no differentiation at all. What ground have we to think that, if the Bill goes into Committee, any such differentiation will be allowed? None whatever. If the Bill goes through its second reading, depend on it it will go through in very much the form it is in now. I have very little hope of the House rejecting this measure ; but, knowing as I do the injustice that would be done under it, I feel bound to vote against it. because it contains the principle of compulsion. We are not asked now to go into the question of rating on unimproved values or on improved values --- that is not before the House. In voting against the Bill members will not be voting against the general principle of rating on unimproved values. It is not so. What we are voting against is the compulsory clause, which says that a district, whether it wants it or not, is to be compelled to rate on unimproved values. That is why I cannot support the Bill, and shall record my vote against it. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) .-- I am very pleased to find we have had a good-natured discussion over this measure. It has to me this afternoon been somewhat amusing to listen to the speeches delivered from the side to which I belong, because I have heard from the lips of professed Liberals as Conservative arguments as I ever heard from the Opposition benches. This is not a

question of the " fat man "and the " lean man," nor yet of landlord and tenant. It is simply a question that the whole country can easily understand -- whether we are to retain the existing tax on labour and improvements, on enterprise and machinery ; whether labour is to continue to wear chains and manacles at the instance of local bodies, or whether it is to be emancipated. The speech delivered by the honourable member for Avon has been delivered too late; that speech should have been delivered ten or twelve years ago. when the property-tax versus the land - tax was under discussion. It would have been a splendid deliverance from the leader of the Opposition. The honourable member's reasoning was very cogent and extremely ingenious, and I listened to it with mingled feelings. An extraordinary influence apparently comes over

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power in an Assembly like this. Some honour- ! who hold large areas that they are not able able members are unable to withstand the ! or do not care to cultivate, who are waiting chameleon-like influence of a little power and responsibility. Mr. HORNSBY .- I' is the line of demarca- tion. Mr. HOGG .- There is no doubt about it : it is a very strong line of demarcation. The honourable member talked about the small tenants with short leases and very few improve- ments. Has he ever asked himself the reason why there are so few improvements under those circumstances ? Is it not because the landlord . land, and building houses for their families ? refuses to compensate the tenant for his im- ; provements in the first place, and because the local body subjects him to a penalty the moment ! sheds for their cattle and stock, who put up good he effects them? We have this experience ! fences and employ labour, who suffer? These pretty well all over the country. So long as you have the present system of local taxa- tion prevailing over New Zealand expenditure will be discouraged, and we shall continue to have the small tenants with short leases and very few improvements. An honourable member remarked that in large centres one side of a street is found to be worth double or three times the other. This applies to prin- ciples just as it does to property. There are : provisions of the original Act, in several places, always several sides to a question, and we have heard one side very well argued this afternoon. But I would ask members who have made use ! of certain arguments against the principle in- volved in this Bill to seriously reflect. They will find if they do so that beyond their specious pleas there is another very big side to the ques- i now. tion. We fine a man for breaking the law ; we ! fine a man for drunkenness, if he thrashes his ! wife, if he commits an assault, if he perpetrates robbery, or otherwise breaks the laws of the t will be carried, as it would have been before country : but do we not also fine a man im- i had the law been as it is at the present time. mediately he erects a dwelling, a warehouse, a factory, and introduces machinery ? I ask whether it is just or right to continue to act in this extraordinary manner ? Is there any rea- son, I ask, why we should discourage in centres of population the employment of architects, of bricklayers, of builders, of carpenters, of plumbers, of painters, of glaziers, of workmen : of nearly every description ? And that is what i has received a fair trial, and if it was not a suc- the men who are building in Wellington and the other chief centres are doing at present. i Directly they commence to spend money in this way, what happens ? Does not the local body or the Government send a valuer along. ! and up goes the value of their property, and they are penalised and have to pay a heavy perpetual tine annually for daring to erect a building ? Is that fair? Is it just ? Is it reasonable? I contend that it is not. Why not take the rates off labour and put them : ment has proved the success which, I think, on the land - value ? It is one method of getting a little of the unearned increment | ment endeavour to make it universal ? What for the benefit of the working community. By the existing process of discouraging enter- prise you force down wages and reduce the pro- fits of labour and capital. You force up rents in the same proportion. Then, Sir, with regard to the farmers : If we take the country and leave the towns altogether, who are the men Mr. Hogg for roads to be made, bridges to be built, and all kinds of improvements to go on all round them -- waiting till

the population cries aloud for elbow-room owing to the congestion in the cities, and until the value of the land is enormously forced up? Are these men penalised, or do they escape taxation? Will it be denied that they escape their fair share of local taxation, or that the men who are penalised are the small farmers who are making improvements, residing on the land? Is it not men of a kind, generous, and enterprising disposition, who build good outhouses and men are penalised in proportion to the amount of money and labour they spend upon their holdings. These are the people who are chiefly taxed by the local bodies. There is no novelty about this proposal; the Bill merely proposes to make the system universal. We have had a trial of it now in New Zealand for several years. It has been optional for the ratepayers to bring it into force; but, unfortunately, owing to the case such as Masterton, a borough in part of my electorate, although nearly every one who voted at all voted in favour of it, the number of votes was not sufficient to carry the system into operation. An Hon. MEMBER.- That is not the case Mr. HOGG.- No, it is not the case now; and I believe in a few days it is intended to have another poll taken, when I have little doubt it will be carried. An Hon. MEMBER.- Why not make it compulsory? Mr. HOGG.- That is what the Bill proposes. We have had these experiments for a number of years. It has been tried by the local bodies at Eketahuna, at Pahiatua, at Palmerston North, and at Taratahi-Carterton, a district represented by the honourable member for Wairarapa. It has given the ratepayers an opportunity of altering it or of expressing their disapproval of it; but they have not done so in any instance, and there is no proposal to revert to the old order of things. I have not heard that in any place where it has been tried there is the slightest disposition on the part of the local authorities or the ratepayers to go back to the old system of rating. If there is no wish whatever to do anything of the kind, and the experiment is demonstrated, why should not the Government do the proposal amount to, after all? It is merely an adjustment of the common burden on equitable principles. I am astonished that labour representatives, such as the honourable member for Avon, should actually wish to retain the huge weight of local taxation on the back of labour. I have studied this question-

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land-tax against the property-tax long before I entered this House. I predicted that as long as we had the property-tax in existence New Zealand would never be truly prosperous. As soon as the Government removed that taxation what happened? Have we not been advancing? Has not New Zealand been increasing in wealth, in prosperity, year by year, simply because the huge burden that was pressing upon enterprise and labour and employed capital has been removed? But under the existing system of local taxation labour continues to be severely handicapped. It has placed upon its shoulders burdens it is scarcely able to bear; and yet the honourable member for Avon wishes to keep it in that humiliating position. Mr. TANNER.- I never said anything of the kind. You are grossly misrepresenting what I did say. Mr. HOGG.- It was a splendid Conservative speech you made this afternoon tend for is that labour should be emancipated, not merely from Government taxation-that has been done by the abolition of the property-tax and the introduction of the land-tax-but I want to see it emancipated by the local bodies, and the honourable member for Avon says, "No, they do not want it; the country is not ripe for it." Mr. TANNER.- I never said anything of the kind. Mr. HOGG.- Now, I represent not a city or a large centre of population, but a country district, and I know how it affects our smaller settlers, especially the tenants of the Crown. What has happened in some parts of my district, where we have a lot of tenants owning from 100 to 300 acres of land under lease in perpetuity? They pay \$8 or £12 a year to the Government for rent, and £15 or 120 a year taxation to the local bodies. That is owing to the present system of rating. Some time ago I had a complaint from some of these men, and when I referred the complaint to the Valuer-General, and asked him to enlighten me as to the reason why people who were only paying \$3 or £4 a year to the local bodies a few years ago were now, in the course of four or five years, paying double

and treble, and in some cases quadruple that amount, the explanation was very simple. These settlers had been working hard during those years ; they had cleared their land, put it in grass, erected fences, built good dwelling- houses for their families ; they had borrowed from the Advances to Settlers Office or from private lenders, and had made substantial im- provements on their holdings. Through their industry and enterprise their holdings were raised in value-in some instances doubled and trebled, and in exact proportion as the value was raised by their labour and the expenditure of borrowed money so were the rates increased. Now, I want to know why thrifty settlers should be penalised to such an extent tha in some cases the rates they pay are higher than the rent paid for the land to the Crown ? These rates have to be paid to the local bodies for the VOL. CXVII .- 18. speculative purposes. How many absentees contrive to get the unearned increment ? How often are sections in town and country practi- cally locked up against occupation or improve- ment, while the settlers around them, by working hard and spending freely, are involuntarily help- ing the owners to realise huge profits. Now, I, for one, am not prepared to offer a premium for idleness, however much the honourable member for Avon and some other members may desire it The taxation of improvements constitutes undoubtedly the offering of a premium for idle- If we are to have a proper system of ness. taxation, we should have taxes that are not liable to large fluctuations from year to year. We should have taxation that, though it may be altered, will be altered by slow degrees. We want as nearly as practicable fixity of taxation, so that people may know exactly the value of their property, the value of their substance. A tax upon buildings and improve- 4.0. ments is a tax that changes from year to year, but a tax upon land-values is a tax that is not subject to these sudden changes. It may increase, but it will be by a gradual process, in proportion as the unearned incre- ment makes the land of more value. It may rise steadily, and it may also go down steadily. But a tax on improvements is one that in- creases by surprising stages. The Crown tenants in my district have been astonished when they suddenly found that they were called upon by the local body to pay, instead of £3 or \$4, as much as \$15 or nearly 120. Why should the man that works hard and expends his sweat and his money be subject to this kind of penalty ? Is it not often radically unjust, and even indefensible ? The man who sits with folded arms and watches his neighbour doing the whole of the work is a gainer at the present time, but the man who works hard, who digs and plants his orchard and makes a good holding, that man has his taxes increased and doubled by the local body simply because he dares to do it. In another colony I have seen S iss vigneron taking up ten - year - old vines and laying the land down in pasture, because they could not afford to pay the huge taxes placed upon their improvements by the local bodies, while men with huge areas adjacent held as sheep-runs escape virtually scot-free. Directly the local body got hold of the pcor fellow who endeavoured to properly use the soil by planting the vines, for which it was suited, he was penal- ised by the merciless whip of taxation. I have seen vineyards torn up so that the land might be laid down in grass. An Hon. MEMBER .- Disease among the vines. Mr. HOGG .- No, it was not disease among the vines. Disease in the vines was not known then. On the contrary, there was plenty of splendid wine to be had for 2s. a gallon, and it would have paid the vigneron fairly well had it not been for the immense taxation that was immediately instituted by the local bodies when they began to improve their properties. They found it was better to keep sheep than grow vines.

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What I am Shire Councils and Road Boards. telling you is a fact. I have witnessed it with my own eyes. I have seen vineyards torn up simply because the taxes were increased pro- portionate to the way the owners improved their property. I do not want to see that here. Our best settlers are paying an undue amount to local bodies now, and the time has come to release them from their unequal burdens. If it is the proper thing to remove this impost from labour, the State ought to step in and do it. It is only doing the right thing if it removes a draw- back to improvements. I do not think I need say more ; I hope that I have

said quite sufficient to convince honourable members who are open to conviction that a Bill of this character should be passed. Mr. MORRISON .- The Bill is not wanted. Mr. HOGG .- "The Bill is not wanted," the honourable member for Caversham says. I am astonished to hear him say so. If anything is keeping back the suburbs of Dunedin it is the fact that this rating on the unimproved system has not been brought into operation. There is one thing I wish to point out to honourable members, and it ought to be conclusive, and that is that the system of rating on unimproved values, or the removing of rates and taxes from labour and the products of labour, is the necessary corollary to our present system of Government taxation, under which the land-tax and income-tax has taken the place of a property tax. Mr. TANNER (Avon) .- I rise to a matter of personal explanation. I wish to protest against the gross way in which the member for Masterton has misrepresented my words. I stated clearly enough at the commencement of my speech that I had supported the principle of the Act five years ago, that I supported it now, and that I should support this Bill ; but I asked for consideration for those tenants who paid rates on land which they did not own. I did not use the words that were thrust into my mouth by the honourable member for Masterton, and I can only account for his statements by the supposition that he was asleep when I spoke. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) .- Sir, I desire briefly to say a few words in connection with this Bill, even at the risk of being called "a hide-bound Tory." The honourable member who has just sat down has, perhaps, raised the argument which is in favour of this Bill to my mind, and that is with regard to the man who owns a practically vacant section. But he says that he is surprised at any member representing labour who does not desire this system of taxation. I admit that the honourable member knows something about the country, and if he desires this Bill for the country, and will confine its working to the country, I am willing to accept it. But, if it is to apply to the centres of population, I am going to be as strong an opponent of it as any honourable member in this House. In my own particular district we have twelve local bodies, and not one of those local bodies have ever prise nine boroughs, the Dunedin City Council, the Taieri County Council, and the Peninsula Road Board. Between them there is a population of something like seventy-four thousand. To hear some honourable members talk, one would think that that part of the colony was a barren waste, but if they will take the trouble to look up the statistics they will find that the unimproved value of the lands in these places is £2,975,533, whilst the value of the improvements is £3,691,385, the two combined amounting to six millions and a half of money. Now, Sir, if the taxation is going to be taken off the capital value, as at the present time, and placed on the whole of the unimproved value, then the taxation is to be on the unimproved value of nearly seven millions. Now, let me point out some of the things that have taken place in my own district, and the argument will apply to other large centres. Some years ago, owing to the high rates in town, the workmen were forced out into the suburbs, where there was vacant land, and there they put up buildings according to their means, and which suit them at the present time. But since that time, owing to the increase of wealth among the people of Dunedin, there has been a migration of people of a more fashionable class going on steadily to those suburbs, people able to build eight, nine, and ten-roomed houses, and these have been built in the suburbs side by side with those that were erected by the working-men ; and in the suburbs you will find more of that class of house than you will the cottages of the men who went out there originally. Now, the labourers who went to these outlying districts said nothing of the hardship of walking two or three miles to their homes, before a large population went to their particular districts, and now they are to be taxed to the extent of four times the amount of taxation they pay at the present time. Hon. MEMBERS .- Oh, no. Mr. MILLAR .- You can make nothing else of it. If their revenue is \$3,000 per annum now on the capital or annual value, whichever they assess on, then under any system of taxation they have to get that sum in. If you take the taxation off the improvements and place it on the unimproved value, then the unimproved value must bring in that sum of \$3,000. The honourable gentleman also mentioned the question of the unearned increment. In what way does the local body get any benefit from the unearned

increment? He also spoke about fixity of tenure. Will that affect the land- value? If they fix a low valuation the taxation must be high, and if they make a high one the taxation is low. They must get in a certain amount of revenue. Therefore until I see some stronger argument in favour of making it compulsory I shall support the present system. It is my opinion that, in this as in other matters, the people will demand the rating on unimproved value when the time is ripe for it; but to say that, because thirty- three bodies have carried a poll to have rating

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other body is to have the same is radically wrong. It is going against the principle we have always advocated of trusting the people. We are afraid to trust them to say what is the best system suitable to their requirements. I think I can speak for the majority of the town members in the House and say that if the honourable member for Masterton wants compulsory rating on the unimproved values for the country districts we will help him to get it. The only county we have round about Dunedin is the Taieri County. It is well developed, and there is as much taken out of it as there is out of any county, and I find its unimproved value is \$925,259, whereas the value of the improvements is only \$357,259. Now, I leave it to the country members to work out for themselves how the taxation will affect that county ; and. if that is an instance of what the effect will be elsewhere, it will be seen exactly how the taxation is coming out. I have taken out the figures of all the boroughs round Dunedin, and in not one case does the unimproved value come anywhere near the improved value. These are the figures :- Unimproved Improve- Value. ments. £ Port Chalmers .. 160,463 59,828 West Harbour 61,839 71,430 .. North-East Valley 152,228 104,130 Maori Hill 73,970 99,057 .. Roslyn 218,093 263,461 . . . Mornington 109,150 191,957 2,071,548 City of Dunedin. . 2,268,196 Caversham 279,934 186,911 204,655 South Dunedin .. 91,964 Any honourable gentleman may see those figures for himself : and I maintain, in the face of that table, that if you alter the system of taxation and make it compulsory you are going to levy a heavier tax on the workers of the colony than they pay under the present system. An Hon. MEMBER .- NO. Mr. MILLAR .- It is no use saying "No." What is my own position? I have an eight- roomed house, which is side by side with a five- roomed house. That five-roomed house suits the owner's requirements. He may not require to improve it, and yet under the present proposal, he will have to pay the same amount of taxation as I pay. An Hon. MEMBER. - Has he the same size of a section ? Mr. MILLAR .- Yes ; and he will have to pay the same amount as I pay. What will be the result of such a system in the case of a man who holds a vacant section ? He will do better under this system than at the present time, because he will do this: He will find temporary work in the labour-market while he puts up a building that will make that land of equal value; but the class of building he will put up will make it five times the value of the building opposite. His taxation is to be reduced for all time, and in that way you are improving that man's position. suburban districts are concerned-and it is there that the bulk of the workers are settled --. they will pay greater taxation under this system of rating on the unimproved value than they pay under the present system, and therefore I shall do all I can to oppose it, unless the country members desire that it should be applied to the country, in which case I would support it. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) .- Sir, I intend to vote against this Bill because of its compulsory clause. I could not but listen with a sense of admiration to the speech delivered by the honourable member for Masterton. That honourable gentleman has a few stock phrases with regard to settlement and settlers' improvements which he applies to every subject that comes up in the House. He has a remarkable gift that way; and I can only account for the ability with which the honourable gentleman can talk so eloquently, so freely, and so continuously on those subjects, by the words of a writer, who, describing one of his friends, wrote that he was a very nice fellow and very clever, but a faddist, and when he launched forth on his fad he had an art of putting his brains in his pocket and allowing his jaws to take charge. Sir, I do not apply the simile to the honourable gentleman

for a moment, but I will say he has a remarkable speciality for talking glibly on this one particular topic with a singular absence of practical intelligence. There are a few members in this House who, I am sure, have got thorough command of the Premier's ear on the subject of taxing on unimproved values, and though I feel certain the honourable gentleman does not believe in it himself for a moment, yet in order to please and amuse them he has brought this Bill forward, so that the House may talk and vote on it. Sir, I know that there are people who have peculiar notions, and there have ever been faddists. I once read a book by, if I remember rightly, Sir Mathew Decker. He died about the year 1749 or 1750. He was in business, a man of eminent ability, and also as a writer obtained as strong possession of the mind of the people in his day as George has in our times. He advocated a theory by which all the revenue was to be raised, with a sinking fund, by taxation on the people's dwellinghouses. It was a theory that took a very strong hold on the public mind at that time, and his writings ran through several editions. But who knows Mathew Decker to-day? And the day is not far distant when George will be put in the same category as Mathew Decker. I intend to be brief in my remarks, Sir, but I know one or two cases which govern my mind as to the manner in which I shall vote on this Bill, and I may mention them to the House. I know of two allotments, each of 50 ft. frontage, side by side in a comparatively valuable street. The allotments are valued at \$20 per foot, or unimproved value, £1,000. One of the allotments has a building on it which is valued at \$1,000, making a rateable value of \$2,000. The allotment with a building pays in rates £16 13s. 4d., and the

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honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar), the revenue for the local body must be raised. The two together are paying \$25, and the local body will require that that amount should be raised from those allotments by increasing the taxation on the unimproved value. At the present time they pay 2d. in the pound; but if this Bill should become law each of those allotments will have to pay £12 10s., or 3d. in the pound. The unimproved allotment will pay \$4 3s. 4d. more than it does at the present time, and that with the building will pay \$4 3s. 4d. less. But this is the position: One piece of ground has a building upon it, and for that building the owner is getting #165 per annum rent. The other allotment, yielding no revenue, belongs to a comparatively poor man, who is trying to save all the money he can in order that he may at some future time put up premises for business purposes upon the land, by which to obtain a livelihood; but he has not the means to put up the building, and he does not yet care to undertake the responsibility of mortgaging the land in order to erect a building. Sir, is it not unjust and inequitable that the man who is deriving a large income from his property should pay less than the poor man? Why should the man of straitened means pay this extra taxation for holding that land? I think anybody will recognise that the system in his case is inequitable, and altogether wanting in that equality of sacrifice of which so much is said about raising revenue from those best able to bear it. It has been assumed by several members that all vacant allotments are held by rich persons for speculative purposes. That is absolutely incorrect in most cases. In this respect this system will abound in anomalies, and will not work well; and the Bill, instead of bearing harder, as it is intended to do, upon land held for speculative purposes, will touch such cases but lightly. I know instances of right-down hardship which it will inflict on those that are not well able to bear it. Not only is it assumed that all vacant allotments are held for speculative purposes, but its supporters go further, and assume that all vacant allotments are being increased by what is called the "unearned increment," whereas we know that the unimproved value has in abounding instances suffered decrement. I am surprised to hear honourable members, almost with one voice, assuming that land speculations have been in all cases profitable, whereas it is only a small minority that have been fortunate in dealing with land for such purposes. If a young man came to me and said, "I have got £500 or £600; what shall I do in order to use it most profitably and with the best prospects of success?" I would say to

him, "If you have got business knowledge and capacity I would recommend you to go in for trade, but do not speculate in land." The few instances in which high prices have been secured for land must not be accepted as the general rule, because it is not the rule, but the Mr. Monk plodder, but is poor material for the speculator. There is another assumption of those who support this Bill -namely, that anybody who owns a vacant allotment can at once sell it, under the pressure of taxation, and make a profit by doing so. I admit that that may be the case in some instances, but it is not by any means a rule. There is another assumption by those who are in favour of this Bill : that it is immoral to own a vacant allotment. If that is so, what about our future, if all our cities and lands are to have a congested occupation by legislative pressure, rather than wait for the operation of natural laws? I will give another instance which has come under my own personal knowledge in connection with the place where I live, which is pretty well improved, and is nearly as profitable, perhaps, as it can be made. If this Bill passes, I, with a few others, will pay less than I do now ; but those of my neighbours who have not made the same amount of improvements will have to pay more. They will then have to pay as high a sum per acre as I shall have to pay, though they have not yet brought their land into the same state of improvement. It must strike honourable members that this is inequitable. My land is in a position which enables me to pay higher rates without hardship, but the Bill will act inequitably with respect to my neighbours. Where is there, in this case, the equality of sacrifice which the Liberal party talk so much about ? An Hon. MEMBER .- What about the property-tax ? Mr. MONK .- I did not support the property-tax. Read my speech made about 1888-and there are some here who remember that speech -when I spoke strongly against it. And I will refer honourable members to Professor Schliger, one of the foremost authorities on taxation. He denounces the property-tax because of its inequitable operations and the difficulty of properly administering it. The result of this Bill will be to allow men with large revenues derived from costly buildings to escape. The member for Masterton spoke a little while ago about the lives of the small farmers, and how this Bill will relieve them. The honourable member knows nothing about the exigences of a farmer's life; how a man may toil for fifteen or twenty years for comparatively little income, and it is while thus toiling that he feels taxation. When he gets into a comparatively good position he does not then feel the rates which the local bodies levy upon him. It is during the first five or six years of his work on the land that the rates and other charges press most heavily upon him. I shall vote against the Bill. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) .- Sir, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) stated just now that he intended to vote against the second reading of this Bill for the reasons which he advanced -- reasons which must commend themselves to the judgment of members of this House. The honourable member

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electorates desired this Bill to pass, and if they felt it to be in the best interests of their districts, he would support it. I am utterly opposed to the passage of this Bill, and I claim the member's assistance in voting against the second reading. I cannot understand the position taken up by the honourable member for Waitaki. He denounced the provisions of the Bill from start to finish, but, to my amazement, before he sat down he said he would support the second reading. Sir, I tremble for the passage of the Elective Executive Bill, now in the hands of the member for Waitaki, who appears to have no political backbone. Sir, the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) said there was a person at Eketahuna who owned about one-third of that township, and he denounced him for holding so much land. The honourable member must know that the ratepayers at Eketahuna have the remedy in their own hands. If they are not satisfied with the present condition of things, all they have to do is to take a poll of the ratepayers and rate themselves under the Act of 1896 on the unimproved values. And if the honourable member 4.30. for Wellington City desires to advance his views let him go to Eketahuna and give the people of that place a

lecture on their civic duties, and the provisions of the law on rating on unimproved values. Sir, I was disappointed with the speech of the honourable member for Masterton, Mr. Hogg. As a rule his speeches are characterized by common - sense, but his speech delivered to-day is the worst I have ever heard. I cannot understand his position. may again refer to the honourable gentleman a little later on. Sir, I believe that distinguished statesman Sir Robert Stout was the first man in this House to use the phrase " Trust the people," and I have heard that expression time and again echoed by the Premier. I have heard it re-echoed by the members of the Liberal party, and by gentlemen in the Opposi- tion. Yes, trust the people. Now, what does this Bill mean ? It means though we say one thing we mean another. I am prepared to trust the people. I have received my position as a repre- sentative of this House from the people, and, as an exponent of the people's views, I say, " Trust the people." Let the matter be referred to the people. The Act of 1896 is a fair one, and I am prepared to stand by it, as it leaves the matter in the hands of the people who are most con- cerned. The honourable member for the Grey stated there are five hundred local bodies in this colony, and, although the Act has been in operation for five years, it is strange that only thirty-three out of those five hundred local bodies have taken advantage of it and levied local rates on the unimproved value, showing that its provisions are distasteful to the people of the colony generally. We now propose to force a principle upon the people which they have not asked for. I represent three counties -Cheviot, Kaikoura, and Amuri --- eight Road Boards, and one Town Board, not one of which has approached me requesting that an altera- tion be made in the Act of 1806. I cannot this Bill, except because a meeting was held in the Exchange Hall, in this city, some eight or ten days ago, to advocate taxation on the unimproved value of land, when there was an attendance of only some thirty people -- not a large attendance out of a city of forty thousand people. At that meeting certain resolutions were passed and forwarded to the Premier. A coterie of gentlemen who believe in the single-tax waited upon the Premier, with the result that we have this Bill before us this evening. I listened to the speech of the honourable member for Avon. He under- stands the subject. I will go a little further than he went by way of illustration. The Christchurch suburbs extend for about six or seven miles up the Papanui Road, the Lincoln Road, and in the direction of Sumner, New Brighton, and Riccarton. There is a large suburban population. We will assume that an artizan has three acres of land four miles from Christchurch, and that he paid \$60 an acre for it. He has a four-roomed cottage on it, and he keeps two cows, a pig or two, and a few fowls. Being intermittently employed outside, he spends his spare time in improving his land. Not far from his cottage is one of those palatial residences that we have heard about, which is occupied by a merchant doing business in Christchurch. The tram or coach takes him there at the expense of a few pence daily. Under this Bill taxes are to be removed from all improvements in the way of buildings. Wealthy owners -- the owners of buildings cost- ling thousands of pounds-are to be relieved of taxation, but the owner of that little cottage is to be taxed double. An Hon. MEMBER .- No, no. Mr. MEREDITH .- I say. Yes. The honour- able member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) recommends him to subdivide and build houses and thereby obtain relief ; but will the honour- able member find him the money? Supposing he could finance the money, could he get tenants for the houses ? We have heard the term " un- improved value," and levying taxes on the un- improved value, but, like the word " Mesopo- tamia,' it sounds well, but, I venture to say, is not understood by half the people. Let me give an illustration of what I mean. Thirty-five years ago in North Canterbury there was a vast raupo swamp, containing flax, niggerheads, and rank vegetation. It remained in that state for years ; nobody had sufficient enterprise to purchase it. It was available to any person for \$2 an acre under the land-laws of the Canterbury Provincial Council. At length an enterprising man took it up, and, after spending his capital and labour on it, extending over years, he had it cut up into forty-, fifty-, and sixty-acre farms, and the market value of those farms to day is about \$40 an acre, while the taxable value is about \$30 an acre. I would ask the honourable member for Christ- church City (Mr. Ell) if he calls that \$30 an acre the unimproved value.

Shall we call the unimproved value of that land the £2 which was originally paid to the Provincial Council

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or the taxable value placed on it after a considerable expenditure of capital and labour ? It is all moonshine to say that this tax on the unimproved value is not a tax upon labour and capital, and enterprise, and industry of every description. One man labours for years on his farm ; he puts his capital into it. Another puts his capital into a palatial residence, or a factory, and under this Bill is relieved from taxation. On the other hand, it is proposed to tax the man who puts his capital into land. Such men are most certainly the backbone of the country. Sir, I look upon this question of taxing the unimproved value as a myth, and as only advocated by visionary politicians. The honourable member for Marsden asked me how I arrive at the unimproved value ? I go back to the original value at which the person bought the land in a state of nature fresh from the hands of the Creator. Now, Sir, what has lately been in operation to bring about the enhanced value of the unimproved value of land ? The valuation of land now rests with the Tax Valuation Department in Wellington ; the local bodies have no voice whatever in valuing for local taxation ; and I know, Sir, as a matter of fact that during the past three or four years the screw has been turned again and again to increase the taxable value in the country districts. I certainly hope the common-sense of the House will show itself by rejecting this Bill. There is not the slightest necessity for the Bill. The local bodies of the colony never asked for it ; and why this Bill should be forced on the people at the point of the bayonet I am at a loss to understand. Representing ten thousand people in the Ashley electorate I object to the Bill, and I shall vote against the second reading. Let us trust the people, and leave the matter in their hands. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- Sir, I rise to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down has done me some injustice, and two or three words will clear it up. The honourable gentleman said that, in speaking to this Bill, I had condemned it lock, stock, and barrel, and had then said that I was going to vote for the second reading. The honourable gentleman did not listen carefully, or he would not have misunderstood me. What I said was this : I disapproved entirely of the proposal to force the system of rating on the unimproved value upon every part of the colony alike; that I preferred retaining the option the people now have, but that I did agree that "The Rating on Unimproved Value Act, 1896," needed amendment, and in this particular way --- namely, that if the system of rating on the unimproved values was adopted in any place, it should apply to all classes of rates. I said I was going to vote for the second reading in order to get that provision in the Bill, instead of the provision which now appears in section 2, making it optional as regards certain kinds of rates. Mr. LANG (Waikato) .- I have always supported the system of rating on the unimproved value, and I have stated my reason for doing so, Mr. Meredith platform. I have supported the system because it has been permissive. But I have always said that I would not support it if it was made compulsory. I believe in cases like this, as in all other cases where it is possible to do so, in leaving the people to decide what form of rating they will adopt. Now, I am surprised that the Government should seek to take away We have this power from the ratepayers. heard a good deal during this debate about " hide-bound Tories," and " Liberals"; and I would ask this House who are the true Liberals ? Are not the " hide-bound Tories" those who seek to take away from the people the power of deciding which form of rating they will adopt ? I am ready to admit that, under certain circumstances, rating on the unimproved value would be very satisfactory and desirable, and more particularly in newly-settled country districts, where the whole of the country taken up has been alike in quality, probably in moderately small areas, and where the greater portion of the improvements have been made by the hard work of the owners or their families. In such cases I think it is desirable this form of rating on the unimproved value should exist, because under the present system a man is taxed for every improvement put upon his place. But I would also point out that under the present Act, where the people residing in such districts have expressed their wish to bring the

Act into force, there is not the slightest difficulty when the people desire it to have a poll carried to bring in the rating on the unimproved values. On the other hand, I think, so far as cities are concerned, it is very doubtful if this system of rating would be satisfactory. I do not think any one will say that it is desirable in a city to have every vacant allotment occupied by a high building. Even supposing the passing of this Act compelled every one who owned an unoccupied section to put a high building upon it, where would you get the people to occupy them ? It would simply mean putting them up and not having sufficient people to occupy all the buildings erected. Now, if the Premier introduced an amendment in the Bill to make it in any way easier for the ratepayers to carry the poll, I should be very glad to support him in that direction ; but I cannot see my way to support him in making the system compulsory throughout the whole colony. It has already been pointed out by many speakers that very few local bodies in the colony have adopted this system of rating on the unimproved values, or even attempted to adopt it. I believe that only forty local authorities out of between 400 and 500 have ever attempted to bring it into force, and of these thirty-three have carried the poll, and it has been lost in the case of seven. Some say it is working successfully in the districts where it has been adopted, and therefore that this is an argument in favour of making it compulsory. But, I would like to point out, this argument is entirely in the opposite direction. If it has worked well where it has been introduced. there should be no difficulty in having it

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making it compulsory. Who has been asking that this compulsory system should be introduced? There have been many speakers this afternoon, and they have pointed out that in their districts they have never heard a word about a local body asking that any alteration in the law should be made in this direction. It is true that in some districts there have been applications to bring it into force ; but they are working under the present Act, and if there was any reasonable desire to do so they could have brought it in quite readily. It seems to me a great change has come over the Government and their immediate followers. A few years ago they were the very people who talked much about trusting the people, and now they are the very people who wish to take away from the people this privilege, and make the Act compulsory. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) .- Sir, the Premier in introducing this Bill gave as an argument in support of it that the people of the country were unanimously in favour of rating on the unimproved value ; but, Sir, the discussion on this Bill has shown that whatever may be the case with the people, the representatives of the people are not at all unanimous on the point. In fact, Sir, and I believe that I speak with some knowledge of the subject, I say that a very large majority of the people of the country are satisfied with the present optional or permissive system, which allows a majority of those voting at a poll, to be taken for the purpose, to decide whether any district will rate upon the unimproved values, or by the present system of rating upon the capital value. Of course, like the last speaker, I am quite willing to admit that there are districts in the colony the peculiar circumstances and conditions of which render it desirable that they should rate upon the unimproved values system, and I have no objection to their doing so. But, Sir, when I heard it stated as an argument that because thirty-three districts of the colony have decided upon rating on the unimproved values system, therefore the other districts of the colony must be of the same opinion, I could only think that the argument was utterly fallacious. How many local bodies are there in the colony ? The Year-book of last year tells us that there are ninety-nine boroughs, eighty-five counties, 238 road districts, thirty-eight town districts, or 460 in all, besides a number of drainage districts and river protection districts and so forth. When such a statement is made in this House that, because thirty-three districts of the colony are in favour of rating on the unimproved value system, the balance of the four hundred and sixty must also be in favour of it, then I can only say that the statement is as nonsensical as anything I have ever heard. Then, the Premier in his speech went on to tell us that the effect of this Bill becoming law would be to compel property-owners, such as those owning property in Molesworth Street,

to erect substantial and expensive buildings on their sections. Well, if that be the effect of the Bill, what is to become of the present occupiers of the second-class buildings in Molesworth Street ? substantial and expensive structures, as the Premier puts it, what are the people who are living in Molesworth Street at the present time to do ? Will it be possible for them to pay interest or rent on these expensive buildings ? It will be probably impossible for them to do so, and what are they to do ? Of course, I know that the answer will be this: that they must remove to poorer parts of the city where they will not offend the aristocratic residents of Molesworth Street with their cottages or workshops or business premises, as the case may be. Is that what we are coming to ? I sincerely hope that it is not, and that that is not what the honourable gentleman intended. Then, we hear a lot about "equality of sacrifice" in connection with this question, and I cannot understand the people who profess to be in favour of "equality of sacrifice," as it is called, or placing the burden of taxation on the shoulders of the people best able to bear it, or of compelling people to contribute to the revenue of the colony in proportion to their ability-I cannot understand men who believe in these principles supporting such a Bill as this. The statistics for last year tell us that the unimproved value of the land in the colony amounts to £84,401,244, and that the value of improvements amounts to £54,190,103, so that the total value of land and improvements amounts to £138,591,347; and now it is proposed to exempt in connection with local taxation improvements to the value of \$54,000,000. I cannot understand the contention-the object in so doing ; and I say that I have not heard a single good argument in favour of the proposal. We are told, of course, that the passing of the present Bill will discourage land speculation, and encourage the making of improvements ; but will it ? We often hear a lot of people who sympathise with the single-tax movement say, "Tax the land ; increase the taxation on land." But those people evidently forget that land is paying more than its fair share now. Mr. SEDDON .- No. Mr. MASSEY .- The Premier is evidently of that opinion ; but I express my own opinion when I say that land is paying more than its fair share in proportion to accumulated wealth, and the Premier, and those who think with him, forget that the landowner commences by paying land tax, but that is not all- An Hon. MEMBER .-- How many of them ? Mr. MASSEY .- I am not able to tell the honourable gentleman the number, but the Premier knows that there are a great many people in the colony who own land, and who pay the land-tax. All those who own land with an unimproved value of over \$500 pay land-tax, and if of sufficient area or sufficient value they pay the graduated tax. And we have it on very good authority-on the authority of the Premier himself-that he is considering in the near future the question of increasing the graduated tax, and not only increasing the tax, but that he intended to reduce the exemptions. However, I was going to say that landowners have to pay, in addition to the land-tax and the

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great many people whose political creed may be summed up in the words, " Tax the land ; increase the land-tax," but I venture to say that, given the opportunity. these people could not make a living out of the land to save their immortal souls. The member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell), when speaking on this Bill, told us, as an argument in favour of passing it, that one effect of it would be to compel people to ; ceeded to drain the land thoroughly and erect build and to fill up the vacant allotments ; but the honourable gentleman forgets that in every large city, not only in Wellington and Christ. church, but in every large city in the world, there are only a certain number of people requiring to be housed ; but, after the demand has been supplied, he did not say what was to be done with the houses which are not wanted. Mr. ELL. I never said that. Mr. MASSEY. . I may not be giving the exact words, but I understood that is what the honourable gentleman meant. He also quoted figures to show that certain people will have to pay more than they do now, and those figures were rather convincing at the time ; but we discovered afterwards that they were only estimates of the honourable member's own calculation. Mr. ELL. - On a correct

basis. Mr. MASSEY. - That remains to be seen. There is no doubt in my own mind that if this Bill becomes law, the effect in the country districts will be that a wealthy man, who has a certain amount of capital at his disposal, and who is, consequently, able to go in for extensive improvements on his land, will pay less than he pays now ; while the comparatively poor man, who is not so well able to improve his section, would pay more than he pays now. Take the case of two : coaching firm, who use the roads more than all settlers occupying, say, 250 acres each, which is about an average farm. The one is a fairly well-to-do man, a man who has got into a good position, who has brought his land into a high state of cultivation, and who is in every sense of the word a well-to-do settler. The other man is perhaps a comparatively new settler, with most of his land unimproved, and finds a good deal of difficulty in making two ends meet, but who probably looks forward to better times in the future ; yet, according to this Bill, these two men will have to pay exactly the same amount of local taxation. I say the proposal is unfair. Then, what is the position in the suburbs of the large cities? On one section, perhaps a five-acre or ten acre section, you will see the handsome residence of a wealthy man, with, perhaps, grounds beautifully laid out, substantial outbuildings, everything in first-class order; and adjoining this section you will see on another section, of exactly the same area and unimproved value, the cottage of the mechanic or artisan employed in the city, with perhaps a vegetable garden and other improvements consistent with the means of the owner. Again, on the adjoining section you will probably see a market garden, and very likely occupied not by the owner, but by a Mr. Massey Bill, these three men will pay exactly the same amount of local taxation. I will now give an instance which came under my notice not very long ago. Not very far from where I live, two or three years ago a man who owned a forty-acre paddock made up his mind to sell it in two sections. One section was purchased by a man apparently of considerable wealth, who purchased a handsome residence, with substantial outbuildings, and went on to beautify the grounds generally. The adjoining section was purchased by a widow, who manages to make a living from it by keeping a few cows and fowls, and working as only small farmers have to work. Here are two cases which this Bill will apply to; and these two people will, under the Bill, pay exactly the same amount of local taxation. And, Sir, I say again, that the proposal is unjust and absurd. Here is another instance: In the Auckland Provincial District there is a township which was laid out as a military settlement many years ago. Military settlers were placed there, and each of them was given a quarter-acre section in the township for residential purposes. Many of the buildings are there to this day. As time went on, and population increased, some of these sections changed hands, and are now occupied as business premises. One of the sections is occupied as the headquarters of a coaching firm. They have a very extensive plant, and a large number of horses. The other sections are mostly occupied by working men who are employed on certain industries in the neighbourhood. The point I am coming to is this : that each of these working-men on the quarter-acre sections will pay just as much in local rates and taxes as the rest of the people in the township put together. There is the fact, and there is no getting away from it. Another instance was quoted in this House by Sir Robert Stout -then member for Wellington City-when he was speaking on a similar Bill some years ago. He said : - " Let us take two men- we will suppose, two miners. They have gone into mining, and we will suppose they have sold out their claims to a wealthy syndicate and are now wealthy. They have got, we shall say, \$2,000 or \$3,000 each, say, £3,000. The one man buys, we shall say, two thousand pounds' worth of land. He puts £1,000 in improvements. He has got two thousand pounds' worth of land. He has got to pay taxation on this two thousand pounds' worth of land. He pays it, first, to the colony, subject to the \$500 exemption ; he pays on \$1,500 to the colony his 1d. in the pound. Then, in municipal rates, he will have to pay 2d. or 3d. in the pound. In some cases, as much as 5d. in the pound will be paid in municipal taxation on the value of the land if this Bill becomes law. Suppose he only pays 3d. in the pound in municipal rates : he is paying 4d. in the pound in municipal and colonial rates. That is what the one man pays. The other

which, we will suppose, he gets 3 per cent. interest - £90 a year. What taxation does he pay to the colony? Not one halfpenny; he is exempt from all taxation. He is exempt from taxation to the colony; he is exempt from municipal rates. He does not pay anything for his capital. Is that fair? Is it a logical Is that not punishing system of taxation? the man who chooses to be industrious, trying to improve the land, and trying to become a good colonist, and allowing the other man to escape? And this is to be a logical system of taxation!" Then, just let me say a word or two with regard to the position in the cities. We all know in the large cities -Wellington, for instance - there are numbers of buildings, large warehouses, hotels, banking premises, like the premises of the Bank of New Zealand, or like the Government Insurance building; and I think the Government Insurance building is the type of what I am thinking of. That building, I am given to understand, cost about £40,000, and it stands on a section which is worth not more, at the outside, than £20,000. Mr. SEDDON.- What? Mr. MASSEY.- I am simply stating what I am informed, and, I believe, correctly: that the section on which the Government Insurance building stands is worth not more than £20,000, while it cost quite £40,000 to put up the building. Now, place the whole of the taxation on the land and it means, of course, that such properties would pay a great deal less than they are paying now-because there is no escape from the fact that the same amount of revenue would have to be raised-while the burden would fall on the shoulders of the very class of people who are much less able to pay than the owners of these properties I refer to. In fact, instances might be multiplied; there is no end to them; but I think I have quoted sufficient to show that the Bill before the House is no improvement on the present system. So far as I am personally concerned, I object to the compulsory rating on the unimproved value, and I object to it because it would press heavily on the owners of poor land, of land incapable of improvement, and on men in straitened circumstances who are not financially able to improve their land, and because the passage of the Bill will bring us just another step nearer to the single-tax. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine).- Sir, from the tone of the various speeches delivered by members on this Bill, I have come to this conclusion: that while the Bill might not be received with satisfaction in one part of the colony, still it is thought that it is necessary legislation to pass in the interest of other parts of the colony, and, consequently, although the Act in force is permissive, I believe that the permissive power begins at the wrong end. I mean this: that if the Premier can see his way to introduce a clause allowing those who object to compulsory rating on unimproved value an opportunity of voting against this measure being put in operation in their district-say, three months prior would meet any opposition. Mr. SEDDON.- I said on the second reading that I would agree to that. Mr. FLATMAN.- Then, certainly I think no right-thinking person can object to the passing of the second reading of the Bill, if that permissive clause is inserted. An honourable member says it is permissive now. Yes, it is, but in the wrong way; it gives the initiative to people who do not generally take an interest in local matters. By the method I suggest it would rest with those who are in a better position to initiate and put in operation the permissive clause. That is my way of looking at the matter, and I think that is the way that an Act should work. Well, Sir, some honourable members may dissent from what I am stating, but still at the same time those who are not in power do not care to initiate these matters without a lead. It is said that this Bill is in the interests of the wealthy. Now, Sir, if it had been in the interests of the wealthy, seeing that it has been in force for the last five years, I would ask why it is that the wealthy have not moved to put the Act into operation? They have had the opportunity to do that, and I am sure they understand how to vote for their own interest; and, as I say, the permissive clause of the present Act has been in force for the last four or five years, and yet we find the initiative is not coming from the wealthy but from the middle class; and therefore I think that is an argument that the Bill is not in the interests of the wealthy, but in the interests of those to whom justice should not be denied. I would like to instance from my point of view a case of a

farmer who has 200 acres of land, and who would probably be obliged to put up buildings to the same extent for working those 200 acres as the man who owns 300 or 400 acres, and the assessment under the present system on the buildings for working the 200 acres will be practically taxed the same as those for working the 400 acres; consequently it must be apparent to honourable members that the present system of rating is an injustice to the small man. And although my honourable friend the member for Avon speaks of the tenants having to pay the rates imposed on land which they hire in the suburban districts, still I may tell that honourable gentleman if they did not pay the rates imposed they would have to pay an extra rent, for the landlord would look after his own interest when leasing the land. An Hon. MEMBER. - They are not under lease. Mr. FLATMAN. - Perhaps all the holdings are not leasehold; but some are, and the tenants understand the terms of the agreement. They have signed with their eyes open, and know perfectly well they are liable for rates levied on the property. You cannot get at the "fat man" in that way, and the "fat man" will still stroke his corpulent stomach, as the honourable member said; you cannot get him that way.

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Mr. FLATMAN. - How do you propose to get at the "fat man"? Mr. TANNER. - I did not suggest. Mr. GUINNESS. - He is going to vote for the second reading. Mr. FLATMAN. - Then he is going to vote in the same way as I intend to do, providing the Premier is going to amend the Bill in the direction I suggest. As far as the unoccupied sections of the cities are concerned, I doubt very much whether it would be wisdom on the part of this House to dictate as to whether there will be any speculation in land or not. In some instances these town sections have been offered by the Government, and in other instances by private individuals, to the public, and they have been bought in all good faith that they will be more valuable in the near future. Now, so long as we invite speculation in that direction, why should the law come down upon those people and say, "You must build on your land, or you will be taxed out of existence." I do not think it would be just that the law should compel people to put up buildings that were not required. I think the argument brought forward by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Smith) was very full on that point. Then, there is another point in regard to rating on unimproved value, and I think the system would be beneficial in many districts. There are some districts in which there are water-races, and which have been declared special districts for that purpose - they have become responsible for a loan to construct water-races; but under the present system a person who is within that district not only contributes to the interest on that loan, but he also pays a special rate, because it is said by the valuers that the construction of these water-races has enhanced the value of the land to the extent of \$1 an acre. Now, the injustice of the thing is this: that the rest of the county is not liable for the responsibility of the loan that is raised for that portion set apart as a water-race district; and, therefore, at the present time in these cases the occupier or owner of land is rated for an improvement on which he pays special interest for a special improvement, constructed by special loan. Therefore, in many instances, while it would be advisable to rate on the unimproved value in some districts, it might not be beneficial in others. If the clause I suggest is added to the Bill I am sure it will be a great improvement, and under those conditions I shall have much pleasure in voting for the second reading. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka). - Sir, I have watched the course of this debate with great care and much interest, but have not got any information that will induce me to vote for the Bill. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) gave an example of a working-man who was now paying \$3 15s. in rates, but who would only pay 15s. if the Bill was passed - only one-fifth of what he is now paying. This! would necessitate the raising of the rate to five times what it is at the present time, so as to give the local bodies the same revenue as they therefore, be gained by altering the present system of taxation. It would press very heavily on many of the working classes in the outskirts of the boroughs in my district; in fact, they would

be almost rated out of their homes. Many of them have a few sections of land fenced in as paddocks for keeping a horse or a cow, and if they have to pay three or four times the rates they are now doing they will have to sell out and go somewhere else, and those who follow them will be no better off. This Bill will be very detrimental to the whole of my district from a financial point of view. The revenues of the three boroughs in my district would be affected as follows : Rates under the present system-Lawrence, £278; unimproved rate, \$68; Alexandra South, present rate, £97; unimproved rate, £29 ; Roxburgh, present rate, £82 ; unimproved rate, £10 Ss. And the counties would be similarly affected. The Counties Bill at present before the House only provides for a rate of ?d. in the pound on the capital values, and the local bodies would therefore be put in a very awkward position. I consider the Premier should either withdraw one Bill or the other. He should have allowed the Counties Bill to be disposed of before he brought this measure down. So far as I am concerned, I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill as being detrimental to the interests of the country settlers. Mr. R. MCKENZIE (Motueka) .- There appears to be a considerable misunderstanding in the House as to rating on unimproved values. Personally, I have always supported the principle : still I am opposed to this Bill. There is not the least doubt that rating on unimproved value is the only fair and equitable system of rating : but I fail to see where is the necessity for this measure at present. Last year we passed a measure giving local authorities power to take a poll on the subject every day in the week, if they liked. There is no reason whatever why we should not give that measure time to work. I cannot understand why the Premier will force this measure on the House. It reminds me of an old grandmother who makes a child swallow medicine whether it likes it or not, and when it is likely to be most injurious. Rating on unimproved value is a phase of the single-tax I very much approve of, as being the only fair and impartial method of rating, because our present systems are all more or less faulty, partial, and oppressive in their operation. This is the only phase of the gospel preached by the disciples of Henry George that I have any faith in. Most of them seem to me to be cranks, with cracks in their craniums or bees in their bonnets. But they are on the right track in introducing and advocating rating on unimproved value. We have had the man with a small section trotted out in this House to an enormous extent in this debate ; but we do not hear anything much about the large section-holder. There is an estate in my district containing 89,000 acres, and the rates paid on it amount only to a few pounds a year. An Hon. MEMBER,-Very poor land.

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land ; and on some of it there is excellent land carrying splendid timber. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- The local body are evidently not doing their duty. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- Well, they might want shooting, right enough ; but I undertake to say that if the local body were doing their duty they would adopt rating on unimproved value in that county. But what I object to chiefly is this forcing process, this compulsion, and that the people of the colony are not allowed the opportunity of asking for this compulsory measure. Why should we force it upon them ? The members of local bodies are intelligent men. They have on the average quite as much intelligence as members of this House. An Hon. MEMBER. - More. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- Well, they may have more, because on local bodies you do not get so much nonsense talked as you do sometimes in this House. At any rate they know what they are doing, and they know their requirements ; and if rating on improved value does not suit a local body, I undertake to say that it will very soon adopt rating on the unimproved value. There is no occasion, no necessity, no call whatever for ramming and jamming this ill-digested measure down people's throats when they do not want it. The present measure on the statute-book gives them every opportunity of adopting it. There is no necessity to go any further for some time. The principle is working its way gradually, and I am pleased to see it is being adopted. There is no use forcing it. Take the blustering bombastic speech made by the honourable member for Masterton ; was there any rhyme, reason, or sense in the arguments he brought forward ? I venture to

say on any local body he would not be listened to for a moment ; but these are the arguments used in support of this grandmotherly legislation we have forced on us. Then, take the arguments used by the honour- able member for Dunedin City. Does he under- stand the question? I undertake to say he does not. If he had, he would have told the House that a poor man alongside of him has just as much use of the streets as he has, and consequently should pay as much for their use and maintenance ; he should also have told the House that the land-grabbing monopolist who owns the vacant section on the other side of him, and which is generally used for a rubbish depot, scarcely pays any rates, but holds on for the unearned increment, and prevents the poor man from getting a bit of ground to build on. They should all pay the same rates towards the making of the street. But, at the same time, they are quite safe to be left to themselves to work out their own salvation in regard to rates. Then, what is the use of putting this on the statute-book when we have a new Counties Bill coming on this session ? I look upon the whole thing as one of the Premier's devices for spending the afternoon ; possibly because he has not got the Financial Statement ready. Mr. SEDDON .- There is plenty of work to do. a kind of which I do not approve. I should have preferred to spend my time to some better pur- pose than listening to the discussion we have had this afternoon. Mr. SEDDON .- A very good discussion. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- I do not consider it has been very instructive, or very entertaining, or of a very high standard. However, I suppose it has answered its purpose. I recommend the honourable gentleman to reconsider his Bill and bring it down next session. Let us have local government brought in first, and in that Bill a clause might be brought in giving every opportunity required to bring in rating on un- improved value. I do not see my way to sup- port a measure of this kind. Every locality ought to be allowed for a few years to decide for it- self. At present at least 75 or 80 per cent. of the people are against rating on unimproved value, and the Government will do themselves more harm than good if they force it. I shall vote against the Bill. I do not think it likely to pass this year, and I would recommend a post- ponement of its further discussion till we have had the Counties Bill before the House. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) .- I rise to support the second reading of this Bill, and I do so because it affirms what I believe to be sound principle. I believe that the tendency of democratic taxation generally is now to lessen taxation through the Customs and to put it on to the unimproved land-value -- in other words, in the direction of ceasing for the future to tax thrift ; and this is a sound principle. I was rather struck by an expression which fell from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in speaking on this Bill. He said we could only tax thrift ; that we could tax nothing else but the products of thrift. Now, where does the bulk of our taxation come from ? It comes from the Customs. The Customs produces about six times the amount produced by the land- tax and income-tax combined. What is thrift ? Thrift is simply economy and saving. Now, the most thriftless or extravagant man who ever lived is the most productive under our system in the way of taxation. If he is a good wage-carner or producer the more he earns the more he spends, and therefore the more he contributes to the State in the way of taxation. Yet we have the member for Hawke's Bay telling us that we can only tax thrift, or the products of thrift. I say that the most un- thrifty persons produce most in the way of taxation. An Hon. MEMBER .- It is the thrift of other persons that enables them to earn. Mr. LAURENSEN. - I only admit that to a certain extent ; but it is not those persons who pay the taxes, although they help towards others doing so. If a thrifty man earns 13 a week, and saves out of that #1 10s., and spends €1 10s., we only get taxation on the #1 10s., or a portion of it; whereas a man who earns £3 and spends every cent of it contributes far more to the revenue than the man who is thrifty and saves \$1 10s. a week. I would like to draw the honourable member's atten-

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being had ever been able to define to him what the unearned increment is. I will venture to define what the unearned increment is. We will assume that a man buys a piece of bush land at #2 an acre, and he

spends \$4 an acre in clearing it and making it fit for cultivation. The value of that land would be \$2, plus £4, plus interest on its cost until it begins to return the owner some income. If he sells that land at, say, \$12 an acre, the difference between what he spent on it, plus interest while waiting for a return from it—the difference between that and what he gets for it is the unearned increment. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not at all. Mr. LAURENSEN .- That is the unearned increment as defined by every political economist in the world. And it is the unearned increment which the country should get at by way of taxation. We say that this increase in the value does not belong to the owner of the land, but to the State. Then, the honourable member went on to say that the only way to tax land was to tax it on the selling value—in other words, he advocated the principle of the old property-tax. I thought that had been disposed of years ago. The honourable member for Bruce was very severe on my honourable friend the member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell), because the instances he gave were not concrete cases, but were supposititious cases. Say these supposititious cases are just as valuable as concrete cases, because they illustrate the working of the system. However, I am going to lay before the House some half-dozen actual cases in support of my contention with respect to this Bill. I was struck also by what fell from the member for Waitaki. He gave us an illustration of the evil effects of this taxation. He said that the Waimate Jockey Club, which now pays \$2 per annum, will under this system pay \$20. Sir, what are the facts of the case? They have got a racecourse practically in the Town of Waimate, and I say that if the Jockey Club choose to establish a racecourse there—An Hon. MEMBER. -- It is not in the town. Mr. LAURENSEN .- Well, it is alongside the town, and if they demand to have it practically in the town, they are worthy of taxation, and I would tax them up to the hilt, and so would everybody else who has the interest of his fellow beings at heart. I have been struck by one or two arguments of those opposed to this measure. One of the strongest—and it is not a very serious one—was that of the honourable member for Wakatipu, Mr. W. Fraser, who took the exceptional case of the unimprovable land. I admit that this is most difficult to deal with in this connection, because improvements cannot be put on it, and therefore taxation would fall upon land that might not be able to pay it. It is, however, impossible to legislate for exceptional cases like that. My honourable friend, the member for Avon, also instanced the zones of land that lie between the closely populated towns and the country—the places where market-gardeners and others are at work. That also appears to Mr. Laurensen we come to deal with actual instances they are found to be no worse than others. In fact, under this system they are better off. First, I will instance the case of a market-gardener in Sydenham. He has three acres and a half of ground, on which he grows cabbages and potatoes, and for which he paid \$125 per acre. Imagine paying £125 per acre for land on which to grow vegetables! But that was not his ulterior motive for buying it. He bought it for speculative purposes. He is now prepared to sell it for \$200 an acre; but until a purchaser comes along, he grows potatoes and cabbages on it to give him some return in the meantime. Then, when taxation on the unimproved value strikes him, he whines about the poor market-gardener, whom you are trying to tread underfoot. Mr. TANNER .- He is the owner; I spoke only of tenants. Mr. LAURENSEN .- I admit that he is the owner. Men who hold land like that are not holding it for the purpose of growing vegetables. The end they have in view is to receive a large price from people who want to settle in the zone that lies outside the more populated parts of the towns. A number of honourable members have dwelt upon the so-called brutality of the idea of making this system of taxation compulsory. I would ask those honourable members if they can tell me of any taxation system that is not compulsory. The present system is compulsory, but it levies taxation on the fruits of a man's toil. What we want is a system that will put taxation not upon the fruits of a man's toil, but upon the unimproved value of the land he holds. I think I shall be able to prove, by the instances which I am about to give, that the proposed system will inflict hardship upon no one, excepting upon the speculator who is holding the land with the object of making a rise out of the man who wants to buy a home for himself. I know a man who holds large blocks of land near Caversham. Now, in Caversham there are streets only

about 30 ft. wide, and in these streets there are a whole lot of poor people living in unhealthy surroundings, while all around them there are these huge blocks of land which speculators are holding with the object of some day reaping the unearned increment. I hope, Sir, that some day or other this House will say that those people shall never touch that unearned increment. Sir, I have heard a great deal of talk about the rich man who puts a valuable house upon his section. Now, I have an illustration in my mind's eye. There is a gentleman whom honourable members of this House have heard about, who has just erected a private residence in the immediate neighbourhood of Christchurch. It is said to be the most valuable and expensive private residence in the colony, and it has been estimated to have cost the sum of £18,000. I went into that matter to a certain extent about a month ago, and I found that that man had paid already to the country, through the Customs, on some of the material used in erecting that house, over \$1,200 by way

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months. And, Sir, he has not only done that, but what I want to point out to honourable gentlemen is this : that not only had he put a large capital value upon that land, but he had also increased the unimproved value of that land : because as soon as a valuable house of that description goes up in the neighbourhood it at once increases the unimproved value of the land not only on which it stands, but of the land by which it is more immediately surrounded. Now, Sir, since he put that house up not only has he paid an enormous sum to the Customs—surely he has almost paid sufficient to clear him for a lifetime—but he also increased the unimproved value of the land on which the house stood ; so he at once became subject to more extensive taxation than his predecessor did, who lived on that section in a four- or five-roomed cottage. Now, I am going to give one or two concrete examples of the working of the proposed system of rating, and then I will not detain the House any longer. First and foremost, several honourable gentlemen have dwelt on the fact that banks would escape. I will take the case of one bank in Christchurch. Under the system that at present obtains it is rated for local taxation purposes at the letting value of \$1,440 per annum. The result is that it has to pay by way of rates to the Christchurch City Council £178 4s. 10d. per annum. The Government valuation of the section on which that bank stands is \$15,000, and that section, under the unimproved value system, would pay to the City Council \$258, or \$80 more than it is paying at present on the letting value. I will take another illustration; I will take a hotel, which I need not name, but it is a well-known hostelry in Christchurch. That hotel is rated at a letting value of \$269 a year, or a little over \$5 per week. It pays the City Council at present £33 6s. 8d. by way of rates. The unimproved value of the section on which it stands is \$3,000, and if it was rated on the unimproved value it would pay to the City Council not £33 odd, but \$51 15s. Now, I am taking these illustrations because they deal with objections which have been raised by honourable gentlemen—that those places on which a large amount of capital has been expended would escape more lightly under the Bill now before us than under the present system. Now, I will give another illustration which shows one of the best effects of the Bill. In the immediate neighbourhood of the hotel which I have just mentioned there lies a vacant section. That section is paying rates at present to the extent of \$9 0s. 5d., and the owner is holding it for speculative purposes. Under the Bill that is now before the House, instead of paying \$9 0s. 5d., it would pay \$25 17s. 6d. Now, this is the sort of people we want to get at ; it is on their shoulders we want the taxation to fall. And, Sir, after all, the wise man is the man who so adjusts the burden of taxation as to cast it on the shoulders that are best able to bear it. For instance, I may put on a horse's back 5 cwt., not to drag in such a way that he can drag it along without feeling it. And I say the rating on the unimproved values system would so adjust taxation as to enable the population of this country to haul it along without their ever feeling it; whereas the rating on the capital value is a distinct and gross taxation upon nothing else but industry and the fruits of a man's labour. Now, Sir, I will deal with another set of people whom my

honourable friend the member for Avon dealt with, and who, he said, would be burdened under this Bill—that is, the people who live in the zone between town and country. Now, I will take a case in Halswell. Here is a man who holds an acre of ground. On it is a house and fencing worth \$100—not a very valuable place. This is one of the poor men who, it was said, would be ruined under this system. The unimproved value is \$47. Under 8.0. the present system he is rated at 9s. 4d., and under the Bill he would be rated at 4s. Take a larger section—a two-acre section. A man has put upon it a house worth \$20. 'There is also sixty pounds' worth of fencing on the place. His capital value is \$500, and the unimproved value \$240. It is a nice, fat, namely, \$120 an acre. piece of suburban land. The rates on the capital value are \$1 11s. 3d., and on the unimproved value they would be £1 0s. 7d. I believe that if the democratic portion of this House would only carefully consider the provisions of the unimproved system there is not a solitary member on this side of the House but 1 would vote for the Bill. Now, here is a ten-acre block, which is valued on the Halswell rate-roll at \$640. The unimproved value is \$300, and the improvements are valued at \$340. That is not a wealthy man's section. On the capital value system it is rated at \$2 a year, and on the unimproved system it will pay \$1 5s. 9d. Then, here is a one-hundred-acre farm, valued at \$4,000. The unimproved value is \$3,500. Here is a man holding a block of land worth \$4,000, and he has only got \$500 of improvements on it, and I say that you ought to tax that man so as to make him put more improvements on his place or else make him sell it. Such a man ought to be taxed, and he either ought to cut up the place or make improvements. It is in a portion of the neighbourhood suitable for small sections ranging from five to twenty acres, and where there is a large demand for land; and, if he is not in a financial position to improve that land, and if he is holding it for speculative purposes we ought to tax him, so as to make him cut it up and sell it in smaller sections. That farm is worth \$4,000, it is rated under the capital value at \$12 10s., while under the unimproved value its rates would be \$15 0s. 8d., or an increase in rates on the whole \$4,000 block of land of £2 10s. 8d. That is not a very extravagant increase. I am not going to detain the House any longer. These are actual examples, and they show the working of the

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valuable buildings or whether it be applied to almost unimproved sections in the suburbs, and they show in almost every instance, if worked out, to be for the benefit of the bulk of the people. I believe that eventually we will adopt this system. I do not know whether we are going to carry it through to-night or not, but I believe that the rating on unimproved values will actually be the system in vogue all through this colony in a very short period, and I only trust that the period may be shorter than some gentlemen who have already spoken seem to wish. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden).—We have just heard a very interesting speech from the honourable member for Lyttelton, who aspires to be one of the leaders of the single-tax movement in New Zealand, and I believe that we have got to thank that honourable gentleman and two or three gentlemen in this city for the whole of the time wasted on this Bill. I believe that the honourable member was good enough to form a deputation some time ago to the Premier, urging upon him the necessity of bringing in this Bill; and, now that his vanity has been a little bit pleased by having had this question discussed for the last twenty-four hours in this House, I think it would be a very good thing if the honourable gentleman would tear himself away from that flourishing Township of Lyttelton and go and take a farm and try and get a living off the land, and then come back and tell the House what he thinks of the single-tax movement, and of land-taxation in general. I would say that there are very few places where the land is more heavily taxed 32106019788246 than in New Zealand, when you come to reckon the load of taxation for various purposes additional to the land-tax. I have no wish to make a long speech on this question. I have been listening to the whole debate, and I have sometimes asked myself the question why this Bill was brought in at all. Who has asked for the Bill? The honourable member for

Lyttelton and two or three of his friends. And then to please these two or three gentlemen who hold extreme views on this question our time is to be wasted in discussing this measure. I fail to see why the Premier should be so anxious to deprive the ratepayers all over the colony of any discretionary power with reference to this question. Every local body in the colony now has it in its power, by a poll of the ratepayers, to say whether their rates shall be levied on the unimproved value or not. Why not leave the people to decide for themselves ? I am not going into the question of whether it would be right or wrong to go in for that principle, because, candidly speaking, I have no objection to the principle of the unimproved value in rating, provided we can get a proper valuation and a proper definition of what is the unimproved value of land. In the large cities I admit it is a very easy matter to settle that question ; because, if a section is not built on, the unimproved value is settled by what it will realise in the open market-what it will sell at. That is all very well in the city ; but go into the country, and Mr. Laurensen Department to-day who can go on a farm and are competent to say what the unimproved value of that farm is? I have not known one officer of the department who can do it. I need only refer to the illustration given by the honourable member for Ashley a short time ago, when he referred to one farmer in his district who some years ago took up a farm on swamp land that had been lying unoccupied for a number of years, which was then valued at 4:2 per acre. He had the pluck and sufficient capital to go in for improving it. He spent probably nearly the whole of his lifetime and probably all the capital he was possessed of in improving that land. He has now got it up to such a high state of productiveness that the capital value is estimated at \$30 an acre. Now, who is to decide what the unimproved value of that land is to-day? Who is to say what assessment shall be placed on that land for taxation purposes? Is it to be one of the perambulating creatures called land valuers by the Government-men who never owned an acre of land in their lives, and who have been a failure at everything they have tried in their lives ; men who have been dead-beats in every occupation they have been at? Yet these men, having got occupation under the Government as land valuers, go on to a farm and presume to tell the farmer who has worked all his life on the land what the unimproved value of that farm is. And if the farmer does not accept their valuation, these men, having the funds of the Government at their back, can employ as many witnesses as they choose to bring forward, and who will go into Court and swear to any valuation these men may put on the land. That is the position every occupier of the land is put in. Men can be got to go into the Assessment Court and give any evidence that the valuer wishes them to give-men who have no regard whatever for the sacredness of an oath, and who are quite prepared to swear to anything, and I am afraid you can hire them by the dozen for that purpose. And, Sir, they are hired for that purpose. An Hon. MEMBER .- In Whangarei. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- Yes, it has been done in Whangarei, and it is done in other places ; and I say if you pass such a measure as this it is the duty of the House to define what the unimproved value of land is, and how it is to be assessed, and not leave it for inexperienced men and men who really know nothing about the value of land. Now, we will take, for instance, a small borough. There are many of these small boroughs in the colony, perhaps containing two thousand acres of land, while the business of the borough may probably be centred on ten acres of that land. Within the last few years many of those small boroughs, through the influence of business people, have gone in for loans for draining, water, and various other purposes ; and if you pass such a Bill as this you immediately relieve those who are responsible for the loans of most of their taxation, and you throw nearly the whole burden of those loans on to the small farmers who are

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the position you will find many of the small boroughs in. Sir, the honourable member for Geraldine suggested a short time ago that the second reading of this Bill should be carried, and then a clause should be inserted giving power within a certain time to vote against it. Why, the people now have the

power to vote the other way, and why should we pass this Bill and put a clause in giving the people power to vote against it ? Leave the people as they are, and they themselves will decide whether they want the Bill or not. Then, if you bring this Bill into force, how is it going to affect the outlying districts where new settlement is going on? I venture to say, if you pass this Bill making it compulsory all over the colony, every Crown tenant who has gone on the land during the past ten years, and who may go on the land under our present system during the next ten years, will pay at least three times the taxation they are paying at the present time. The old-established settlers who have farms highly improved will be relieved to a large extent from their taxation, and every penny you take off the old-established settlers must go on to the new settlers. I say that nothing more damaging to the new settlers of this colony could be done than was proposed in this Bill. I feel certain that if honourable members will look at the matter seriously they will hesitate before bringing such a Bill into operation. I cannot myself understand how the Premier has been led to introduce it, and I feel sure that if he had given the matter careful and due consideration he would never have brought the Bill in, seeing that the people themselves have the power to introduce the system in their own districts already. So far as I am concerned, I must vote against the second reading, although I have no objection whatever to the rating on unimproved value. Before we pass a Bill like this, however, we must reorganize the whole of the Valuation Department—we must provide the machinery for proper valuations and define what is the unimproved value of farming property. Take, for instance, a bush farm. A man fells the bush, grubbs and grasses the land, and lives, perhaps, for ten or twelve years upon it. As soon as he thinks the stumps are rotten he commences building and clearing and putting the land down in grass. I know several instances myself where the unimproved values of farms which have been grubbed and ploughed is higher than on the farms where the stumps are still standing. It happens in this way : The valuer, who in nine cases out of ten knows nothing whatever about the cost of farming, comes along and sees a farm with paddocks beautifully grassed and fenced, and the farm, he knows, would, if placed on the market, probably sell at so-many pounds per acre. He allows so much for grassing and fencing, and the balance he calls the unimproved value. Therefore the more a farmer improves his land the more he is taxed. An Hon. MEMBER. - Under the present system. volcanic land which are covered with stones. It is quite a common thing for persons in the Province of Auckland, on a small area near a township, to spend \$100 an acre in clearing stony land. The land is little better than a quarry, but year after year they carry the stones off it, and perhaps after half a lifetime they are able to put in a plough. A few years later on a valuer comes in, who knows nothing of the cost of clearing, and he values the grass and the stone walls and fences, and puts down the remaining value as unimproved value. That is the system that is going on throughout the colony. And hitherto I find the farmers -- especially the small farmers—have not troubled themselves in the least about how the valuer allocates the unimproved value and the capital value, for the reason that so long as the unimproved value does not exceed \$500 he does not care. But if this Bill is passed, and the whole taxes levied on unimproved value, I venture to say we shall hear a howl amongst the farmers from one end of the colony to the other. Unless the Government are prepared to remodel the whole Valuation Department it will not be wise to pass such a measure as this, and I feel sure, after the Premier has heard the opinions of honourable members, he will see it is in the best interests of the Government and of the colony not to force such a Bill on the ratepayers, but to allow them to bring the Bill in operation if they desire. If they do so they must take the full responsibility. Mr. WILLIS (Wanganui) .- For many years I have held the opinion that rating should be on unimproved value. The time I had the honour of speaking on this measure I urged it very strongly indeed, and I believe I was one of the first in advocating it on the floor of the House something like nine years ago. At that time Government taxation on the unimproved value had only just come into operation in regard to the land-tax. I have never altered my opinion since that time. I am not a single-taxer ; I do not go to extremes as many do ; but I think, looking at it from every point of view,

rating on the unimproved value is the best and fairest system that can possibly be adopted. Instances have been given of individual hardships, and I have no doubt that the institution of every change will show cases of unfairness. But when any system is first introduced you can always pick out cases that can be brought forward on either side to suit different speakers. I instanced then-and it was a strong point, I think-the case of a man with thirty acres of land. He went to large expense ; ploughed, and fenced, and laid out a valuable orchard. As year after year went on, however, he received no return, but his taxation increased as his improvements increased, and it was five or six years before he got any return whatever for the money he spent. This I consider a very hard case. But under the system of rating on unimproved values such a case would not occur. What I attach more importance to than anything else is that it will do

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difficulty in the way of speculating and holding land idle for increased value that speculators will seriously consider before they resolve to hold land idle for a rise. Take the case of town lands. People with capital now invest in land, and then leave it for a long period perfectly idle, being satisfied that in the natural order of things the land is going to increase in value, because other men will spend money in improving and in putting buildings upon their property, and thus, while these are doing good to their fellow-men by giving employment, they will also benefit those who hold for speculative purposes, and who do not deserve it. These progressive men are now heavily taxed, while the others who have done nothing go nearly scot-free, and their lands are improved at the expense of the men who use their money to raise up a business or to improve the land. I consider that is not a fair system. I think if any one should be encouraged it is the man who makes improvements, not the man who holds his lands idle, it may be for years, in order to get a larger price for them. Now we come to the case cited by an honourable member-the case of a poor man who is driven out of the city where land is dear to find land for a home. Such a man goes a few miles out where land is cheap, takes up a section, and puts a house upon it ; and then in the course of time, settlement takes place around him, and large houses follow. It is said he would be in a pitiful condition under such a system, as he would have to pay much higher rates for his land because it has been permanently increased in value. Well, do you think a man in that position deserves our pity? Does he deserve our sympathy because his land has been trebled, or perhaps increased tenfold, in value ? I think, instead of pitying, we ought to congratulate him. So far from requiring sympathy, he should be regarded as being extremely lucky, as he is able to get a good deal more for his land because of the handsome residences that have gathered round it, and if the man chooses he can again go afield ; but the difference would be that if he so went to seek a place of residence he would be able to sell his small place at perhaps ten times the value he had paid for it. I think it is not a case for pity where a man finds his property thus improved-it is not a case of hardship where a man is so fortunate as to find his property so materially increased in value. The number of boroughs that have tried the system go to prove that it has been a success. I do not know a single case in which there has been dissatisfaction when the rate has been levied in this way. Surely if there had been any want of success in these experiments we would have heard of it. But there has never been a single complaint of the non-success of this rating on the unimproved value. An Hon. MEMBER .- Have you carried it in Wanganui ? Mr. WILLIS .- I hope it will be carried there Mr. Willis a poor man his rates will be increased through the local body not being able to rate on the buildings of his richer neighbour under the unimproved system. But, Sir, the richer neighbour will have the rateable value of his land raised as well. The same amount of revenue will require to be raised, and the proportion of the rich man's land will be increased in value the same as the poor man's land. The unimproved value will have to produce the same amount as is produced under the present system. Sir, I am rather surprised to find members of this House, who profess

to be in favour of an advanced system of legislation that will be for the benefit of the people of this colony, opposing the Bill. I consider that the system we are proposing will be one of the most advanced kinds of legislation we have had, and I believe also it will be a benefit to all classes of the community. I will only ask, If the system has not been successful, how is it there is no discontent with the present system of rating on the unimproved value for the Government land- tax ? At the present time, no matter how palatial the residences, those buildings and improvements are not taxed by the Government. Well, Sir, I consider if this system has answered with the Government land-tax it will be equally successful with local bodies, and I think it is extremely unfair that one man who spends large sums of money on improving his place should have to bear heavy taxation, while his neighbour, who has done nothing, escapes scot-free. I will say nothing further on the subject, but I deemed it right to express my opinion on the fairness of the measure. When I hear honourable members say they hope this Bill will not pass its second reading I can only say I hope it will, and if honourable members have induced the Premier to bring down this Bill so much more honour to them. I did not know the Bill was coming down until I saw it on the Order Paper. I can only say that a Bill of this kind will have my most hearty assistance, and I shall be pleased indeed to help in placing it on to the statute- book of the colony. Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister for Public Works). - Sir, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate. The reason for doing so will be given by the Right Hon. the Premier. Debate adjourned. DEATH OF SIR JOHN MCKENZIE. Mr. SEDDON (Premier). - Sir, the reason why the debate has been adjourned arises, I regret to state, from the fact that I have just received the following communication :- " FATHER just passed away at half-past seven. His end was peace. " T. J. MCKENZIE." I move, Sir, That the House do now adjourn, and to-morrow I will move a further adjourn- ment, so as to enable members, who so desire, to pay a last mark of respect to our old friend and colleague. The House adjourned at half - past eight o'clock p.m.

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Wednesday, 7th August, 1901. Death of the Dowager Empress of Germany-Death of Sir John McKenzie. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. DEATH OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF GERMANY. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- On this extraordinary occasion I wish to claim the indulgence of the Council while I move a motion expressive of our deep regret at the deaths of distinguished personages. We have had two in one day, and the motion I now beg to move is as follows : That the following Address of condolence be presented to His Most Gracious Majesty the King on the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany :- "We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Council of New Zealand, in Parliament assembled, humbly submit to your Majesty the expression of our sincere condolence for the loss which your Majesty has sustained by the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Frederick of Germany. "We humbly beg to assure your Majesty that our feelings of devoted loyalty to your Majesty's throne, and of affectionate attachment to your Majesty's person, lead us to feel deep interest in all that concerns your Majesty's domestic relations, and to pray earnestly for the happiness of your Majesty and your Majesty's family." Sir, I do not think it requires many words from me to emphasize the feelings of the Council in this matter. The late Empress Dowager of Germany and Princess Royal of Great Britain was born within the recollection of many of us, and was the first-born child of Her late Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. Her life was followed with interest by all Her late Majesty's subjects. Her great accomplishments and her many charms which endeared her to the English nation were expected to have good results in her future married life. We all know that it was a happy married life, and it was one of the regrets of us all when her late distinguished husband passed away after a comparatively short reign. She has had to endure the solitude of many years of widowhood, and now that she has gone to her rest, I feel quite sure that we, like all the King's subjects, deeply regret her demise. I beg, Sir, to move the resolution. The Hon. Captain

BAILLIE .- I rise, Sir, to second the resolution which my honourable friend has proposed, and in doing so I cannot add very much to what my honourable friend has said. We all know that the illustrious lady who has just departed this life was the first-born of our late illustrious Queen, who has only recently closed her long and glorious reign. This lady was, I believe, most highly educated, VOL. CXVII .- 19. in all the great political questions of the day, and had considerable influence with him in the various questions of continental European polity. I am sure, Sir, that all the honourable members present deeply sympathize with our illustrious King in the bereavement which has just happened to England and the other European Powers. Motion agreed to. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I desire to move, That an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the above address, and praying him to transmit the same to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be laid at the foot of the throne. Motion agreed to. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I desire also to move, That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, requesting His Excellency to convey to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, for presentation to the German Government, the expression of the deep sympathy of the Legislative Council with the Emperor and the Royal Family of Germany, and the German people, on the occasion of the death of the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany. I think, Sir, that the sentiments that have already been expressed as regards the address to the King may be applied very forcibly to this motion. The Royal Families of England and Germany have been closely allied for many generations- perhaps none more closely than the present generation- and I believe that, with a thorough understanding of each other's good qualities, and a reasonable amount of consideration for the national defects of each country, it is only due to ourselves on an occasion of this kind to endeavour to show that we feel for any sorrows, national or Imperial, that may happen to the country. Sir, I beg to move, That this resolution be agreed to. Motion agreed to. DEATH OF SIR JOHN MCKENZIE. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I beg also to move a resolution with reference to the lamented death of our late friend Sir John Mckenzie. His memory has not only got claims on us as an old public servant and an old Minister, but his memory can also appeal to us and to our sympathies as he had been appointed to our body, and only illness prevented him from taking his seat. I am certain that when he was appointed to this Chamber every one hoped- certainly his late colleagues did -- that Providence would give him many years of usefulness as a member of this Chamber. But the inevitable had to be faced. The decree had gone out, his days have been numbered, and we have now to mourn our loss. It is difficult for any one who has in the past had much private intercourse with a gentleman of so much capacity and with such sociable characteristics- it is difficult for an old friend- to say very much upon an occasion of this kind. I believe there are none of us in this Chamber who have not.

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capacities, and the more we knew of him the more we esteemed him. I knew him when he first came to Parliament in 1880, but I am quite certain that no one who met him then would have ever dreamt that his life was one of those which would be cut short. Certainly when I first joined Parliament in 1884 I never dreamt that his life was going to be shorter than the ordinarily allotted span of life, and, if anything is to be said on that subject, I have no hesitation in stating that the late honourable gentleman's devotion to duty and the sacrifice of his health and comfort shortened his days. He was a most extraordinary worker, and after he became a Minister never spared himself night or day to get through his work, and, coming perhaps after many years of open-air work, this devotion to desk-work very likely undermined his health ; so that really we may look upon the honourable gentleman's premature death as being the result of his devotion to duty. However, quite apart from that, the honourable gentleman's life-work in the politics of this country has been written in letters that will always live. I can hardly imagine but that for generations to come the late Sir John Mckenzie's name will be connected with the administration of our lands -- not

only to-day, but also for some time to come ; and the time he took up that portfolio will be looked upon as the time when the turning- point in the history of land-administration was arrived at in this country. Then, Sir, he was a good friend. Some people might say he was a man who knew his enemies and had animosi- ties. Well, I deny that absolutely. He was a man who believed in principles, and he worked on broad principles. But I deny that Sir John Mckenzie ever carried private animosities into public life. In fact, from my own knowledge, he was the most generous administrator I ever knew, in a department where generosity is appealed to very often. I need only recall to the Council that measure giving relief to the sheep-farmers of the South Island, when they were overwhelmed by the snow disaster a few years ago. I am pretty certain that if he had been an administrator who sought simply to relieve his personal or political friends he would never have lifted a single finger to help those people. I believe his mind was of a very much broader character. He knew what the pastoral interests were, and be- cause he thought it was a measure of national importance, whether those gentlemen were his personal and political friends or not, he intro- duced that measure and got Parliament to pass it because he thought it was right. I have every reason to know that he was one of the most generous-minded men who ever lived, and I feel quite certain that many people in this colony were really his friends, although poli- tically they differed from him. I trust that the Council will pass the resolution, which I will now read : That this Council desires to place on record its high sense of the faithful and distinguished services rendered to the colony by the late Sir John Mc Kenzie, K.C. M.G., and of the serious loss the colony has sustained by Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker Mckenzie and her family the assurance of its sincere sympathy with them in their bereave- ment. The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY .- Sir, I re- spectfully beg to second the motion, and in doing so I wish to say that I also agree with everything that has been stated by the Hon. the Minister with regard to the motion. Sir, we. all agree that in the death of Sir John Mckenzie the colony has suffered a heavy loss. As a friend he was warm-hearted and true. He was a very able administrator, a man of unwearied energy, firmness of purpose, and unswerving integrity. The settlement of the people on the land was to him a passion ever present in his thoughts, and from his purpose he never swerved. He had a great opportunity, which he in a great measure created himself, and he rose to the occasion, and during a long course of administration his enthusiasm never abated. A really great Minister has passed away, but his work lives. His devotion to the great office which he held for so many years will long be remembered, and gratefully remembered, I am quite sure, by the people of this colony. I sin- cerely regret his loss as a public man and as a private friend. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY .- Sir, it is with great regret that I rise to support this motion, because I have known the late John Mckenzie from the time he first entered the House of Representatives. I was then a member of that Chamber, and I believe there are now only five or six members present in that House who were there when the late statesman took his seat for the first time in 1882. I have known him for twenty years, and have worked with him both in the House and in Committee for years. It is in Committee you can see the nature of a man, in the line of action he takes with regard to public affairs, and I can say that Sir John Mckenzie always knew what he wanted, and if he thought his action was in the interest of the public at large he fought for it until he secured it. Something has been said about the strength of his personal feelings. I always found him a generous opponent. He never treated a man unfairly, and, with regard to his public services, I can say he was a strong and steadfast advocate of giving land to the landless on fair terms, and he will be gratefully remembered by a very large section of the community. It is a matter of sad regret to see a statesman cut off at an age when he is just as well able to do good public work as ever he was. It has been the fate of us all to have seen great statesmen from both sides of the House taken away in the prime of life, when they could still have done good service for their country. We are consoled, however, with the reflection that the name of Sir John Mckenzie will not willingly be allowed to die out of public recollection. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Sir, the long-expected has come at last. No one who had seen the honourable gentleman who has lately departed this life since his

serious indisposition could come to any other conclusion than that he could

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and somewhat anomalous that we should be here to-day to pass encomiums on such a man as Sir John Mckenzie. He was one of those men who write their names on the scroll of fame. Throughout the whole of New Zealand he has erected tangible and practical monuments to his memory. But, Sir, it is pleasant to dwell upon the virtues of a departed friend. It is pleasant and profitable too, I think, to look upon those virtues, to glance at what the man was, and to try to live up to the high standard which he set up. Sir John Mckenzie's character and his attributes were peculiar. There have been very few men who have lived in New Zealand and moved on our political stage possessing similar attributes. He had a strong mind and a strong hand. What he deemed to be right he was resolved to see carried out so far as in him lay. When he had a conviction he was uncompromising. There was no surrender, no compounding with evil, in order to attain his object. He was no opportunist. Everybody who has had any association with the honourable gentleman will be aware of these facts. He was, as it were, our political Kitchener, and as I once before said in this Council-I wish to emphasize it now -- there is in the field of our politics as much heroism and indomitable pluck displayed as have ever been shown on the field of battle. As the people's champion, just at a very important juncture in the colony's history, Sir John Mckenzie came forward and promulgated his land policy. At the outset he was met with bitter opposition. Things were said and written of him which the utterers and writers have since regretted, because he has lived down all opposition and silenced all his enemies; and the honourable gentleman would have this consolation on his death-bed : there was nothing left but admiration for his principles and for the way in which he carried them out in the interests of the colony. More than that, there was a time in the history of our advanced Liberalism when things were just trembling in the balance. There was just a chance that the great policy which had been set up by Sir John Mckenzie might fail. Sir, there was just the possibility, indeed, that the Liberal Government might fail ; but he not only saved the cause of those who were carrying out the principles of that cause, but he raised to a high pinnacle its popularity. Sir John Mckenzie's name will last as long as the principles he professed and practised will be admired ; and I do think, Sir, that the world is growing better, and that in the history of the human race we shall yet find that those principles are more and more admired as the years roll along. Sir, though unyielding, the deceased gentleman was never unjust, and beneath a rough exterior he carried a genuinely kind heart. We must all regret having lost such a man, but we should feel grateful that we ever had him amongst us. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- I should not like, as an old friend of the late Sir John Mckenzie, to let this occasion pass without availing myself of the opportunity of making some contribution to the well-merited eulogies honourable gentleman. By the sad event which has occurred I think this Council has been deprived of services which have been very conspicuous, and which, to my mind, would have added very much to the value of our deliberations. Sir, he has gone. The varied experience of his public life enabled him to render effective those natural qualities which he possessed in forming and guiding the policy of a new country. Brought up as a humble son of the soil, he very quickly came to the front against all opposition, and he became a great authority on all matters connected with agricultural life. And what evidence has he left behind him of what he has done ? Take the reform of our system of land tenure, and his land - for - settlements policy, and I think it may be said that he has left behind him almost a peaceful and unintentional revolution. At any rate, I think I may say that in carrying on his work he was first of all inspired by high ideals, and his work has been done with great perseverance and with great skill, and always with a transparent honesty of purpose. As a private friend I have known him for many years. I have visited him and been visited by him, and I have always recognised that he had the true qualities of a good, kind, and generous friend, and I shall always appreciate his memory in that respect. I saw him only a week before I came up to the Council, and was pleased

indeed to find that his health had made so much progress, and he then shared with me the hope that within a few weeks he would make his appearance here. But, Sir, that was not to be, and I am quite certain the Council will join with me in regretting that is not so. Sir, I take a wider view of the loss we have sustained by the death of the late statesman. I feel quite sure that the colony has lost one of its best servants, and that his memory will always be cherished and kept green by those who regard honesty, true patriotism, and devotion to duty as the finest attributes that can be attached to men taking part on life's stage. Motion agreed to. The Council adjourned at a quarter-past three o'clock p.m., until Tuesday, 13th August. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Wednesday, 7th August, 1901. First Reading-Death of the Dowager Empress of Germany-Death of Sir John Mckenzie. Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Sale of Preventives Prohibition Bill. DEATH OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF GERMANY. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose the following resolution :

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That the following address of condolence be presented to His Most Gracious Majesty the King on the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany :- " We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the House of Representatives of New Zealand, in Parliament assembled, humbly submit to your Majesty the expression of our sincere condolence for the loss which your Majesty has sustained by the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany. "We humbly beg to assure your Majesty that our feelings of devoted loyalty to your Majesty's throne, and of affectionate attachment to your Majesty's person, lead us to feel deep interest in all that concerns your Majesty's domestic relations, and to pray earnestly for the happiness of your Majesty and your Majesty's family." Sir, ere the wounds are closed, caused by the death of a beloved mother, our good and gracious Queen Victoria, of blessed memory, this further bereavement has overtaken our Gracious Sovereign and the Royal Family. It is sad in the extreme, and our Sovereign must have keenly felt not being able to be with his dear sister in her last moments. It will to some extent, I feel sure, comfort and console him to know that those, though far distant in this colony, through their representatives, take the occasion of conveying to His Majesty our sincere and heartfelt sympathy and condolence. I feel sure, Sir, that one and all present feel deeply the loss that the German nation has sustained, and also the loss our nation has sustained by the death of the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany, and better known by us as the Princess Royal. I move, Sir, the resolution. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) .- I rise to second the resolution moved by the Right Hon. the Premier. When I cast my mind back for many years, I can remember the Princess Royal of England, before she became the wife of Prince Frederick William of Prussia, joining in good work, and by her artistic skill adding considerably to the patriotic fund for the benefit of the English soldiers, or, rather, for the widows and children of those who died in the Crimean war. Sir, if one considers the memory of Her late Imperial Majesty the Empress of Germany, one cannot but realise how, though she left England a young girl, scarcely a woman, she continued always devoted to her native country, and how great her influence has been in fostering, I may say perpetuating, the feeling of goodwill between the Imperial family of Germany and that of England. Although she became by marriage and by life-long residence rather, perhaps, a German than an Englishwoman, yet in her heart she never forgot the land of her birth. Of the people of contemporaneous history it is more than possible that her influence for good has tended most to perpetuate the friendship between the great branches of the Saxon races- the German and the English people - which is so conducive to the peace of the world. Though, of course, not one of the most remarkable examples in history, she has been known for Mr. Seddon sound judgment more than, perhaps, we can realise, for at times of strained relations between Germany and England her influence has always been in favour of the

country-not in favour of, but favourable towards the country in which she was born ; and, though it is said in these days that the alliances of Royal families do not affect the destinies and policies of nations, yet it is incredible that they do not in some degree tend to harmony amongst the rulers of empires ; and I, at any rate, cannot but feel that in the death of Her Imperial Highness the Dowager Empress of Germany England has lost a power which has always been friendly and for peace in the world. Motion agreed to. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I now move, That an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the above address, and praying him to transmit the same to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies to be laid at the foot of the Throne. Motion agreed to. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Sir, I now desire to move the following : " That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, requesting His Excellency to convey to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, for presentation to the German Government, the expression of the deep sympathy of the House of Representatives with the Emperor and Royal Family of Germany, and the German people, on the occasion of the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany." To-day, Sir, two great nations are mourning the loss of one who in life has done great service to both. There can be no doubt whatever that during her life, if we are to credit what has been written, to some extent Her Imperial Highness suffered because of the work which she did in assisting to promote the good-will of both nations, and in seeing that the interests of our nation did not suffer. I feel sure to-day that both nations tender to the German Emperor on the loss of a beloved mother their sincere sympathy ; and towards our Sovereign on the loss of a dear sister there is only one feeling, and that is heartfelt sympathy and condolence. The work done in life will not end now. I feel sure that this sad occurrence will bring both nations closely together. It is in the interests of the world, it is for the promotion of peace, that Germany and Great Britain should be on the most friendly terms. And we in this colony sympathize with those German colonists who are with us, and of whose great help and assistance we can speak. We can also speak of how on each and every occasion they have sympathized with us when loss has overtaken us. To them to-day we heartily reciprocate-nay, we are bound together, for we are both mourners ; and I repeat this will help, in my opinion, to bring us closer together. In moving this resolution, and asking members to support it, I can only say that we deeply deplore the sad ending of the Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany. We cannot forget the courage, the fortitude, the devotion of the wife

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mate death of the late Emperor ; and that devotion evoked universal admiration. As the Princess Royal, her good work in the Mother-country is well known ; and I feel satisfied her views, her aspirations, and her only desire has been to do good and to improve that which was for the benefit of both nations. I move the resolution. Motion agreed to. DEATH OF SIR JOHN MCKENZIE. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Sir, I rise to move, That this House desires to place on record its high sense of the faithful and distinguished services rendered to New Zealand by the late Sir John McKenzie, K.C.M.G .. and of the serious loss the colony has sustained by his death, and respectfully tenders to Lady McKenzie and her family the assurance of its sincere sympathy with them in their bereavement. I feel sure that members will sympathize with me on this occasion, because my heart is too full to permit me to be able to do justice to the memory and to the services of my late esteemed colleague and friend, Sir John McKenzie. We spent years together in this House as private members in the Liberal party, having feelings in common, and it is struggling under adversity which brings out the truest characteristics. Subsequently we were for many years colleagues together, having great responsibilities, and the tie of friendship was further strengthened until nothing but death could sever it. Sir, I might perhaps refer to one incident that is now almost forgotten. On one occasion, and in the small hours of the morning, the Waihemo County Bill, which had been introduced by Mr. McKenzie, was brought on during his absence. It came on suddenly,

and the Bill was in danger. Taking up the matter, and almost alone, I fought for an hour, time was gained, and then I well remember his figure coming into the House, and looking round as much as to say, "Who dared to take advantage of my absence?" And it was not long, Sir, ere the whole scene was changed, the Waihemo County Bill was passed, not rejected; and my distinguished colleague was the first County Chairman. It is well on occasions of this kind, sad as it is, that we should, as it were, place on record for all time the valuable public services rendered by those who have been called away. The younger generation of this colony, nay, all those from the Mother-country as well, might well copy his example, and endeavour, if possible, to emulate and to succeed as our late comrade so well succeeded. Born in Ardross, in Rosshire, in 1838, he had only reached mature manhood, and that makes our regret all the greater, because had it not been for the sad affliction that overtook him we might have hoped for, as we should indeed have succeeded in having from him, years of faithful service to the colony. Leaving his father's farm in 1860, and arriving in Otago, we find him first commencing his duties as a shepherd. Then, we find he succeeded so well that he was made manager of the station upon from that we find him able, owing to his thrift and care and energy, to acquire a small farm for himself in Shag Valley. We then find him, as many others in our Parliament, commencing at the lower rung of the ladder as a member of a Road Board—the Bushy Road Board; and in that, as in all else in life, he succeeded. He also devoted some portion of his time to school matters, and was secretary to the local School Committee, showing a deep interest in the rising generation, and endeavouring to secure for them that which had been denied to him in his younger days. In 1868 he unsuccessfully contested an election for a seat in the Provincial Council, but in 1871 he was returned, and held that position until the provinces were abolished. There are still those among us who met him in the Provincial Council, and I have learnt from his colleagues in that Council that while there he more particularly interested himself in land administration, and the laws affecting the lands of Otago, and that he was ever liberal in the extreme, and ever desirous of putting the people upon the land. A few years later he was elected as a member of the Waikouaiti County Council, and was also appointed Property-tax Assessor for the same district. In 1882 he was successful in having the Waihemo County created, and he was elected the first Chairman of its Council. In 1881 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives for the Moeraki constituency, and from that time until the beginning of last session, when illness caused him to resign, it may be said he ever represented the one interest and the one people. We all feel for them, because they recognise that by his death they have lost a true friend, a true resident, and one whose interests and theirs were inseparably bound together. I may also say that in 1883 he secured a seat on the Otago Education Board, which he held for nine years. For many years he also occupied a seat on the Otago Land Board. The positions that he held in the Parliament of this colony are well known. I mentioned his first connection with the Liberal party, and how he laboured well and faithfully for what he conceived to be in the best interests of the people. What I have just mentioned to honourable members will show them how well equipped and how well fitted was the late Sir John McKenzie for the position of Minister of the Crown. First there was his practical knowledge of farming, and pastoral pursuits; then his knowledge of valuing, and the nature of lands; then his training on the local bodies—all these qualifications well equipped him for a more responsible position in the government of the country. Then, there was his training in the Provincial Council, the Education Board, and even on the School Committee. I say, Sir, it has fallen to the lot of few to have had so complete and so general a training as had our late worthy comrade, and my friend and colleague, Sir John McKenzie. The measures with which his name is connected I cannot refer to as I would like, for time will not permit of my doing so, nor would the occasion be a

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brought before Parliament and was so successful in having placed on the statute-book. Suffice it to say

that first in order we have the consolidation of the land laws of the colony in "The Land Act, 1892." Prior to that time our laws dealing with this question had been for some time fragmentary, and there was difficulty in dealing with the subject ; but he, by the passing of that measure, assisted Parliament and assisted the country in having a concise and consolidated law bearing upon land and land-administration. Then we had the Water-supply Act, and all will admit the very great benefits that have been derived from that legislation. Then, so far back as 1892, we had the Dairy Industry Act. When we look back on the position of affairs, at the dairy industry at that time, and realise the magnitude of the industry to-day, and the great boon it has been to the people of our colony, one and all must admit that a great deal of the credit for the success must be given to the late Sir John Mckenzie. Sir, that credit will not now stintingly be given. Sometimes during life there are those who do not feel called upon or who hang back in paying due tribute to the merits of those who have helped to do good for their fellows, and to promote the well-being of the country. But in this respect I say he did noble work ; and, proceeding from the time of the passing of " The Dairy Industry Act, 1892," we have had in succession grading and cool-storing, and in each and every detail there was no better friend to those engaged in this industry than the one who has passed away, and whose loss we so deeply deplore. Then we had also " The Stock Act, 1893," and "The Cheviot Disposition Act, 1893," and I can speak in respect to the latter with authority, because I know what occurred at the time, and that any hesitancy in respect to the Cheviot Estate would have caused serious loss to this colony. I say that the name of our late friend will ever be connected with that action, which he fully supported, and which has led to the success of that settlement. Then, there is "The Land for Settlements Act, 1894." There were those who differed then, and who to-day conscientiously differ, more especially in respect to the details of that measure ; although I think I may say that, in respect to the policy of placing people on the land, that policy is generally and universally indorsed. But there can be no doubt of this fact : that there are many now who enjoy homes, there have been many who have been lifted from anxiety and almost from want, who will ever respect the memory of him who helped in a great measure to give them their life's opportunity. I leave the question of the Land for Settlements Act, and I come to the Land Improvement and Native Land Acquisition Act. All these measures had the one object in view - namely, the desire to place the people upon the lands of our country ; and he lived to note and to see the success and the fruits of his labours. It will be, Sir, in connection with our land legislation, and the Mr. Seddon upon the land of our country that the name of our respected comrade, my friend and colleague, will be remembered. I, Sir, know that one and all present feel that we can never do full justice to his memory in this respect ; but I feel also sure, Sir, that one and all will endeavour, even though he has passed away, to still further promote that great object which he had in view, and for which he made the greatest sacrifice that man can make-namely, the greatest of God's blessings, good health ; because there can be little doubt that his unstinted services to the country, his faithful discharge of duty, his leaving, as it were, and neglecting health for the carrying-out of the objects he had so much at heart, has shortened his days. Feeling that to be the case, one and all of us now will do all that lies in our power, and we can do something, to comfort those who have been left behind to mourn the loss of a loving husband and affectionate and kind father. Our minds to-day will be with the bereaved family group at Heathfield. His home and family life was perfect, and worthy of emulation, and bright in the extreme. I can only say, as a late colleague, that in counsel he was of incalculable assistance to me. He was a kind and true friend. He could always give good and sound reasons for his every action, and all will admit that to be the case. Although you might differ, you could only come to one conclusion - namely, that our comrade who has just passed away was sincere, that his honesty of purpose could never be questioned, and that he was upright in all his dealings, public or private. He was one of those men with a strong personality, and though you differed from him you would always respect him. He was respected in life, and in death his memory will ever be kept green in this country, and there are those thousands to-day and thousands

to come hereafter who will bless the name of John Mckenzie. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay). - The House has listened to a description of the services which have been rendered to the colony by the late Sir John Mckenzie. It never was my good fortune to sit on the same side of the House that that honourable gentleman did; but I trust that, though many of us may have been in antagonism to him in political life, there is scarcely a man - - I think I may say there was no single man-who was other than a friend to him in a personal capacity. A great personality passed from life to history at the death of Sir John Mckenzie. Time will enable a truer estimate of his career to be drawn than his contemporaries can sketch. His was a remarkable figure. Bold, though rugged in outline, fashioned in grand proportions of the best Scotch granite. In a political world much deteriorated by a vigilant opportunism his uncompromising adherence to his convictions was worthy of all admiration, even by those who sometimes doubted the wisdom of his methods. Those who may have thought his view was sometimes narrow admitted that his path was always straight. Concentration of

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vision is almost essential to a clear appreciation of an end to be attained. There was in his temperament that mixture of practical and poetic strains so constantly to be found in the mountaineer, and I can conceive that the guiding principles of Sir John Mckenzie's land legislation may have been based on Robert Burns's celebrated dirge, " Man was made to mourn." One can figure himself as the young man apostrophized by the hoary octogenarian wanderer ; - See yonder poor, o'erlaboured wight, So abject, mean, and vile, Who begs a brother of the earth To give him leave to toil; And see his lordly fellow-worm The poor petition spurD, Unmindful, though a weeping wife And helpless offspring mourn. One could understand Sir John McKenzie determining to devote his mature life to remedying the wrongs that he witnessed in his youth. And how pathetic and pitiful his end. Though mourned by his fellow-colonists and decorated by his Sovereign, he could not be saved from years of almost unceasing anguish. With patience and submission that impatient and unsubmissive man bore all his sufferings- an object-lesson to men of smaller souls. And as his earlier life may have been stimulated by the earlier lines of Robert Burns's poem, so his last hours may have been solaced by its last verse : O, Death, the poor man's dearest friend- The kindest and the best ! Welcome the hour my aged limbs Are laid with thee at rest. The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow, From pomp and pleasure torn ; But, oh ! a blest relief to those That weary laden mourn ! I second the motion. Major STEWARD (Waitaki). - Sir, having been for nearly thirty years the intimate friend and for nearly a quarter of a century the political comrade of the late Sir John McKenzie, I desire to add a few words of tribute to his memory. Those who knew him best loved him most, and the better he was known the more highly he was esteemed. Rugged and firm as the hills under whose shadow his childhood was passed, his faults-and they were few -- were those of an essentially strong man ; and the environment of his youth not only helped to mould his character, but was destined to have an influence for good on these far-away islands which became his manhood's home ; for the brave, strong man that came to us in the early sixties brought with him a knowledge of the evils of a . pitiless landlordism, and a determination that no such evils as afflicted the crofters of his beloved Highlands should curse, if he could help it, the land of his adoption. And to him in due course came the opportunity to pass and administer liberal land-laws, to help his fellow-men to establish themselves on the soil in comfort and happiness, and well and nobly he fulfilled the task-nay, not a task, for to him it was always a labour of love. Of him, as of Sir Christopher Wren, it may be written " Si monumentum requiris, circumspice !"; though in his case the testimony to his successful work is not bounded by the walls of any one building, but is borne by thousands upon thousands of fertile acres and hundreds upon hundreds of happy homes. We can ill spare him, and we shall feel his loss for many and many a year. But, though he be dead he yet speaketh ; he speaks by a patriotic devotion which we may all well imitate, for while he

"rests from his labours his works do follow him." We mourn his loss, we sorrow for his loved ones, but we sorrow not for him, for "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well." He has exchanged its storm and strife for the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. It is well with him; and it remains only for the country he served so well to do honour to his memory. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) .- Sir, it is now over twenty years since I had the fortune to make Sir John McKenzie's first acquaintance, and very soon after that we were connected in politics, being elected at the same election-1881-he for Moeraki and I for Wai-taki. In those days there were very few who represented the farmers in this House, and I think previous to our advent they were fewer still. In 1882, when Mr. Rolleston passed his Land Bill, had it not been for the assistance of Sir John McKenzie and myself his own supporters at that time would not have carried the Bill, and the division-list will show that. So that no matter from what side improvement in land-settlement came-whether in opposition or whether he was on the side that brought it forward-he supported measures that were for the good of the people of this colony. I suppose I was more intimately connected with Sir John McKenzie than many even of his colleagues, after he joined the Ministry ; he often consulted me about matters, and there were very few questions he brought up in the House on which he did not obtain my opinion to see if it coincided with his own. I may say that had he been a less strong man, had he been a waverer or a man easily turned aside from his object at the time when he started the land legislation of the Government of which he was a member, there would have been very little progress made, and none of the great reforms we have now would have been brought about. It was his indomitable will and the courage of his convictions that impressed the House, and many a time he got votes through this from some who had doubts in the matter ; the earnestness and conviction he showed convinced them that, at any rate, he was determined to do what was right, and they gave him the benefit of the doubt, even when they had great doubts of the wisdom of the measures he brought up. So that a less strong man would have made very little progress. And as has been truly stated by the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, and by my friend Major Steward, he always and at every time had the welfare of the masses of the people at heart. Coming as he did, as has been stated previously, from the Highlands of Scotland, and seeing the devastation that was made

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soil, and made it really worth having, owing to the labour they had spent on it-land that was in many instances valueless-and seeing these people ruthlessly cleared away to make room for deer for the pastime and sport of a few wealthy men, impressions were made on the strong individual mind of John McKenzie that were never effaced from it. They never could be. The idea of preventing similar things in New Zealand was always before his mind, because he has said to me time and again, " If ever I have the opportunity you will see that I will do all that I can so that the lands of New Zealand will be for the people." And he stuck to that from the day he entered Parliament until sickness overtook him and laid him aside. Then, he was a kind man; although rugged in politics, and to the Opposition generally he was of a very different disposition, yet he was more kind by far than many people would give him credit for. And when he had a friend he was one of those men who would stick to that friend until he was convinced that he was a fraud or an impostor. Nothing short of that would shake his friendship. He was a true friend and a true legislator for the people, and one that could be very ill spared. I cannot say any more, only that I deplore with others the loss the colony has sustained, and that I desire to support this motion that a vote of condolence be forwarded to his family. In that I heartily join. Mr. GILFEDDER (Wallace) .- Sir, as one of the younger members of the House, and as the representative of a district in which the deceased gentleman had many warm friends and many political admirers, I wish to add my tribute of respect to the memory of the statesman who has done so much to mould the destinies of this colony. By his strict integrity, honesty of purpose, and indomitable perseverance in promoting the welfare of this country,

and in endeavouring to advance the best interests of his fellow - men, Sir John Mckenzie has earned the good-will, the esteem, and approbation of every right-thinking man and woman in New Zealand. His career has been an honourable one, and by his unswerving adherence to political principle, as well as by the success that has attended his legislative enactments, his name has become a household word, and he has made for himself a reputation which I venture to say will never pass away. Well might he exclaim towards the close of his political career, " Exegi monumentum ære perennius "-" I have completed a monument which will be more lasting than brass." "The path of glory leads 3.30. but to the grave," and, although Sir John Mckenzie has passed away, his good works remain as a monument of his sterling qualities and of his undoubted ability. They reflect the highest credit upon himself and upon the Administration of which he was a worthy member and at the same time a tower of strength. Though he has left us, his memory will not be forgotten, and so long as the sparkling waters of the Shag River flow down that Mr. Duncan memory of Sir John Mckenzie be remembered and revered by the people of this colony. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) .- As successor to the late Sir John Mckenzie in the electorate of Waihemo I desire to say a few words on this occasion. On behalf of his late constituents I wish to express the great grief they have experienced through the loss of so able a man-a man who has been stricken down in the vigour of his manhood. He has been stricken down at a time when this House was justified in expecting important legislation and most valuable assistance from him. I can testify to the grief and regret of that important constituency ; but it would be out of place for me to say more on this occasion, for his career has been ably dealt with by older and abler members than myself. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley).

- Sir, I cannot refrain from saying a few words on this solemn occasion, although I can scarcely trust myself, so strong are my emotions. When the Premier read the telegram last evening the biblical quotation flashed through my mind, " A great man has fallen this day in Israel." This quotation becomes the occasion in its application to the late Sir John Mckenzie. The deceased statesman was a son of the soil. Born in Scotland, he came out to Otago in 1860, and is therefore a colonist of forty-one years' standing. He possessed a splendid physique, a strong will, an inflexible constancy of purpose, honesty of intention, heroic courage, and a kindly heart. These are some of the qualities that enter into the composition of great men. He was neither an adventurer nor an opportunist. He was an honest man, which is "the noblest work of God." In all his actions he was actuated by the highest principles of statesmanship. He was a manly opponent, worthy of a foeman's steel; he neither cherished revenge nor brooded over defeat. He has died prematurely. Those who knew him best know that he practically sacrificed himself upon the altar to his country. His memory will live in the hearts of the people of this colony ; and, after all, the noblest shrine that a man can have is the consciousness within himself that he has tried to do his duty to the best of his ability, and that he lives in the hearts of the people whom he has served. Sir, I cannot do better than close these few remarks by quoting some lines from one of Emerson's poems :- Life is too short to waste In critic peep or cynic bark, Quarrel or reprimand. 'Twill soon be dark ; Up! Mind thine own aim, and God speed the mark. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) .- I only have a few words to say. Sir John Mckenzie's perseverance, and his high purpose, and his success are undoubtedly an example to all New Zealand politicians and politicians elsewhere ; and no doubt he will be remembered in New Zealand very largely, and perhaps mostly, by his successful political career. But there is another side to his character-the side that, to my mind, touches an even sweeter chord-that part of his nature

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in his own home before I came into politics, and I have known him there since, and I think I can safely say that all the rugged side of his character disappeared within the walls of his own home. He was blessed with a sweet and noble wife, and, Sir, they lived a sweet and noble life together. I know that Lady Mckenzie will mourn his loss even more than the country will. But, Sir, that side of his character, coupled

with the other more rugged side which we are more closely connected with, formed a character in the whole which I feel certain will go down in New Zealand history. Sir, I think those who have lived with him in politics, and those who have known him in his own home, will have received a benefit which, I feel sure, will be lasting. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) .- Sir, I am sure, on behalf of the people living in the extreme North, I can join with the people in the extreme South in expressing our deep and solemn sympathy at the death of a fellow-man and fellow - worker in political life. We all acknowledge the great force of character of the late statesman who was the Macandrew of the South Island ; and, just as Macandrew was the great power in southern railway-construction, so Sir John McKenzie was the great power in land matters. I am sure the people in the South Island will ever reverence his name, and whatever my constituency may think as regards his land policy, which is perhaps not exactly in accord with their sentiments, at the same time they join in the reverential expression of regret at the death of Sir John McKenzie. Motion agreed to. #cc-zero Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- A very large number of members desire to pay their last respects to our late comrade, and the arrangements are that the Government steamer leaves at midnight and will proceed to Oamaru, and from there a train will take members to Palmerston, where, so far as I know at the present time, the interment is to take place. Others will probably go by the afternoon's steamer ; but, whichever way they go, there will be a special train leaving Palmerston for Lyttelton in time to catch the steamer " Hine-moa " for the North. Members will therefore be enabled to reach Wellington again about midday on Saturday. This being so, I feel sure I shall be consulting the wishes of members and paying respect to the memory of our late comrade, and the visitation to our Empire by the death of Her Imperial Highness the Dowager Empress of Germany, by moving, That the House do adjourn until Tuesday next, at half-past two o'clock in the afternoon. Motion agreed to. The House adjourned at twenty minutes to four o'clock p.m. Tuesday, 13th August, 1901.

Death of the Dowager Empress of Germany-Government Arch-Land- and Survey Report -Cemetery Trustees Validation and Appointment B.II -- Stare-school Children Drill Bill - The Wellington Harbour Board Act 1879 Amendment Bill- Election of Chairman of Committees. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. DEATH OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF GERMANY. The Hon. the SPEAKER read the following messages from His Excellency the Governor :- "To the Honourable the Speaker and Honour- able Members of the Legislative Council --- " I have received the resolutions passed by the Legislative Council, the one to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the second requesting me to convey, through His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Emperor and Roval Family of Germany the expression of the deep sympathy of the Legislative Council on the occasion of the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress. " I have forwarded them both by telegraph for submission. "RANFURLY. " Government House, Wellington, 8th August, 1901." "Napier, 12th August, 1901. "To the Honourable the Speaker and Honour- able Members of the Legislative Council,- " The Governor has received through the Secretary of State for the Colonies the command of His Majesty the King to convey his grateful thanks to the Legislative Council for their address and condolence on the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Frederick. RANFURLY." On the motion of the Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER, it was ordered that these Messages be entered on the Journals of the Council. #

GOVERNMENT ARCH. The Hon. Mr. ARKWRIGHT asked the Minister of Education, When the Government intend to have the arch near the Government Buildings removed ? Perhaps he might be allowed to explain why he put the question. It was rumoured that the Public Works officials were so pleased with their work that they were thinking of erecting something permanent. He hoped that the honourable gentleman would be able to tell them that the arch would soon be pulled down. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said the Wellington public required a good deal of education in regard to "architectural beauty," and no doubt that was the reason why the arch had been left so long standing. However, he could assure the honourable gentleman that the arch would soon be removed.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister of Education, When the annual report of the Department of Lands and Survey, and the report on the working of " The Land for Settlements Act, 1894," will be laid on the table of the Council ? The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he was informed that the report would be down as soon as possible. There had been a heavy amount of work in the Printing Office, and consequently this and other work had unfortunately been delayed longer than the Government liked. # CEMETERY TRUSTEES VALIDATION AND APPOINTMENT BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I move That the amendment proposed by His Excellency the Governor, namely : To omit clause 3 of this Bill, and insert in lieu therefore the following, "It shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint the Rotorua Town Council as the Trustees of the Rotorua Cemetery," be agreed to. It will be seen that it is simply substituting the same thing, but in different words, as was passed by the Council before. Motion agreed to. STATE-SCHOOL CHILDREN DRILL BILL. The Hon. Mr. KERR .- Sir, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. When this Bill originated in another place it contained provision for compulsory military drill ; but these provisions were struck out. In the original Act of 1877 it was provided that there should be military drill for boys in public schools ; and this Bill simply provides that physical drill for both sexes shall be compulsory, which is not so provided in the original Act. Clause 2 of the Bill says :- "It shall be the duty of the Board of Education in each district constituted under ' The Education Act, 1877,' to cause physical drill to be taught to all boys and girls over the age of eight years attending the public schools in the school district." Clause 4 provides,- " Every Education Board shall furnish a quarterly report to the Minister of Education showing that the requirements of this Act and the regulations made thereunder are being complied with." Clause 6 gives power to the teacher to exempt any boy or girl whom he considers unfit to undergo physical drill. There can be no doubt but that this will be of great benefit to some of the children attending our State schools. It will teach them deportment, obedience, exercise their physical powers, and do away with that slovenly gait that many of our school children have - dragging their legs along in a most slovenly way, with their faces towards the ground and their shoulders up. I think that if for nothing else but to develop their physical powers this Bill should be passed. There is nothing whatever drastic in it, and I trust the Council will pass the Bill. not wish to speak disrespectfully of this Bill, but it is a very insufficient Bill to carry out any object whatever. In the first place, it is very clumsily drafted, and, in the next place, it undertakes to effect that which is already given effect to in the principal Act. I do not know why it relates to physical drill only, because any one taking up the principal Act will see that not only is physical drill enjoined in our schools but military drill also. The Education Act of 1877 enjoins that, in our public schools "pro- vision shall be made for the instruction in military drill of all boys, and, in such of the schools as the Board shall from time to time direct, provision shall also be made for physical training, and whenever practicable there shall be attached to each school a play-ground of at least a quarter of an acre." Well, I think any one who goes about the schools, as I dare say most of us do-of course, it is my duty when going about the different parts of the country to visit the schools to see how things are going on. But, Sir, quite apart from official duties, I am quite certain most of us, when we go to different parts of the colony, attend these different schools and see what is going on from the pleasure it gives. I am quite certain most of us attend these schools, to see how the rising generation is coming on, with a great deal of pleasure. I think the mover spoke about the slovenly gait of our children. Well, upon my word, I will not take that as a real allegation against our school-children as a whole. I think our boys and girls may be frank, and blunt, and not afraid of anybody. If you speak to them they will speak to you, and they will answer you from the bottom of their hearts in the manner in which you address them. But I will not admit for one minute that our children are slovenly, or slouching, or anything of the sort. They are the boys and girls who are going to make the right sort of men and women when they grow

up. They are not afraid of any one so long as they have not a care on their minds, or anything they need be ashamed of. Perhaps this is going away from the question at issue, which is this Bill. It is a harmless Bill. My honourable friend on the left says, "What is the use of it?" I cannot say; but I maintain that we have got just as much provision as we want in the Education Act of 1877 to enforce the teaching of drill to the boys, and also physical training to every scholar in the schools of the colony. And, more than that, I maintain that if you go to the schools you will find that drill to the boys, and physical drill to the girls, is being afforded in nearly every school in the country. Of course the drafting of this Bill is very extraordinary. It is called, in the first place, "The State-school Children Drill Bill." What is a State school? It is a form of nomenclature which I never saw before, and which applies to nothing in this colony. I know what a public school is, but I do not know what a State school is. And so on throughout the Bill. It will have to be amended clause by clause, so as to bring it into conformity with the circumstances of the

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am not prepared to say whether it is to be of any use or not, but it simply is affirming a principle already on the statute-book. I do not want to vote against it, because I do not want to say that the necessity of drill should not be emphasized; but I hardly like to do it, because it seems to me that in passing this Bill we are simply emphasizing what already exists. I have just laid on the table to-day a paper giving the report of the organization of the cadets at the Royal review at Christchurch, and I am certain that any one there must have felt quite satisfied at the work that is going on in the colony at the present time with respect to the cadets. They were got together under great difficulties; for although the cadets are trained in each school, and armed by the Education Department, still they have not the organization necessary to go into battalions and into brigades. Yet, with the necessary officers placed over them, these boys were brought on the parade-ground in a manner that did the heart of every one who saw them good. To my mind they were immensely superior in appearance and drill even to what we saw in Melbourne, where the expense of the cadet organization is very heavy indeed. They made real soldiers of them there; whilst ours simply were school-boys who had mastered the drill, and walked past the flag like little heroes. Therefore I do not know As I said what the necessity for this Bill is. before, I do not like to object to a Bill which evidently has got a good intention behind it, but I do not think the intention is well expressed. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY.- With respect to this Bill I am in a similar position to my honourable friend. I highly approve of physical drill in schools; but, as he says, that is already provided for by "The Education Act, 1877." I must say that the Education Boards throughout the colony in the larger schools have put it into operation, but, unless the colony intends to subsidise the Boards with more funds, it is absolutely impossible for them to carry this out in every school. It means the appointment of a drill-master, who must be paid to go round the schools, giving instructions in drill. If the colony is going to supplement the funds of the Boards for this, well and good; but if that is not to be done, then it simply means that this Bill will be a dead-letter. It is want of funds that prevents the Education Boards of the colony carrying this out in the way intended by the Education Act of 1877. To my mind, the better way to deal with this Bill - the object of which we all sympathize with, but it is duplicating legislation -- is to refer it to the Statutes Revision Committee, and see whether anything can be done to supplement the existing laws. I do not like to vote against the Bill, the object of the mover being to make physical and military drill more general throughout the colony. This Bill, however, does not provide means to do that; but leaves matters as they are at present. I think if the honourable member will allow the matter to go to the Statutes Revision Committee something might be done. inclined to vote against the Bill, because I am strongly in favour of any move which would tend to strengthen the physique of our children. It seems, however, from what the Minister of Education told us, that practically all that is provided for in this Bill is provided for in the principal Act, and, if that be so, then this Bill is not required. If what is provided for in this Bill is not

provided for in the principal Act, then I think it is the duty of the (Government to bring down an amendment of that Act, and to see that the children throughout the whole of the colony are systematically drilled, as is intended in this measure. Whatever may be said as to military and physical drill being given to the youth of the colony, I do not think it goes far enough, judging from the gait and deportment of some of our children. When a man becomes old, naturally enough we expect him to stoop, but we do not like to see children stooping, and if they stoop when they are young they will not get any better as they grow older ; and I think the bigger the chests of our men or women are, the better able are they to go through the world, to fight the battles of life, and do their duty as citizens. Now, it strikes me that, although in many of the schools great care is exercised to see that the children shall keep themselves straight, and observe decent deportment, yet there are some schools in which that is not done. I have seen children stooping at their desks in school, and I have pitied them, because I have felt that they are being injured for life. Children often crouch down over their books, bringing their eyes close to their lessons, and the result is that they are contracting their chests and hurting their eyesight. I say more care should be observed in these matters, and that Inspectors should be instructed to see that that is not done. The objection raised by the Hon. Mr. Kelly that, if this drill is made compulsory, additional drill-instructors would have to be provided, seems to me not to be warranted. The teacher, whether male or female, could surely give such instruction wherever necessary. If the Bill which is now brought forward by the Hon. Mr. Kerr should have no other effect than to call attention to the fact-for I say it is a fact that children are often kept crouching over their lessons too long and too severely-then it will have effected a good purpose. Hon. Captain BAILLIE .- Sir, as one of those who have had some experience in educational matters for the past twenty years, and having taken notice of what has been done in many of the schools, I can see that there are great difficulties in the way of carrying out a measure of this nature. Many of the teachers would have to be taught physical drill themselves, before they could instruct their pupils. You would require to send drill-sergeants all over the colony ; and, as there are so many small schools of not more than twenty or twenty-five pupils in out-of-the-way places, it would take a good many men all their time to go round visiting these schools. and instructing the teachers. I would also.

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there are already cadet corps. I have had some acquaintance with most of them when they have been under my command in various camps, and I can say that generally the boys of these cadet corps are the best drilled in the camp. I have seen them at Wanganui, Nelson, Christchurch, Wellington, Taranaki, and other places. The boys are well set up, and capable of doing any amount of physical work. The last camp I attended at Nelson I saw physical drill performed by the cadets, and also by the men, that was quite a treat to witness, and the instructors deserve every credit for their work. It is almost impossible not to sympathize with my honourable friend who has introduced this Bill, but the honourable member does not seem to see the difficulty. The Education Boards have not the funds to provide the necessary instruction, and, therefore, I think the Bill, if placed on the statute-book, will be only so much waste-paper. The Hon. Colonel PITT .- Sir, if I thought the Bill before us was only so much waste-paper I should vote against it, because, as honourable members know, I am one of those who hold a strong opinion against an unnecessary number of statutes being passed by Parliament. But, with all respect, I think the Hon. the Minister of Education did not quite state the whole case when he referred to this Bill being unnecessary, because he said the same provision was made in section 85 of the Education Act of 1877. If the honourable member refers to that section he will see that it only mentions military training for boys. This Bill provides for physical training for boys and girls. Now, I think the physical training of young girls is quite as important as the physical training of boys. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- That is covered by section 85. The Hon. Colonel PITT .- I am not so sure of that. I think if section 85 is correctly interpreted,

it will be found that girls are not included in it, and that it is confined to the boys. At all events, this Bill makes it perfectly clear that the girls are to be instructed in physical drill as well as the boys ; and I am one of those who think that it is a very good thing indeed. These girls are to be the mothers of the future, and it is important that their physique should be developed quite as well as that of the boys. Now, as to the expense, which my honourable and gallant friend Colonel Baillie says would be incurred by the employment of hosts of drill-sergeants: That is quite unnecessary. My honourable friend knows that the present Volunteer regulations provide for that. The Commanding Officer of the district is required to allow the services of his staff sergeants to be available for the instruction of boys attending the public schools, when it does not interfere with the other military duties of these sergeants. These instructors could teach at least one of the teachers at each school, and then the teacher in turn would be able to impart physical drill to the scholars. But, Sir, the physical drill is so very simple that any teacher Hon. Captain Baillie without instruction from a drill-sergeant at all, and therefore I think that this Bill should, at all events, be read a second time, so that we may affirm the principle that physical drill is necessary. Let us emphasize it. I see that this Bill also provides for physical drill being imparted to children over eight years of age attending the Maori schools. Well, I do not think that provision is contained in the principal Act, though it is a provision of which we all can approve. But there is one provision in this Bill-the last one - of which I most decidedly approve. It says this Act shall not come into operation until the first day of January, 1902. A similar provision to that used to be contained in most of our statutes- that is to say, they did not come into operation until some months after they had passed. We have now got into the habit of making statutes come into operation on the day they pass, and the consequence is that very few people know anything about them. I think the Government might take a hint from this provision, and, in the case of most of our important statutes, unless there is something which makes it inadvisable, postpone the date of their coming into operation for a few months. I shall support the second reading of the Bill. The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND. - Sir, I have listened to the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, advocating the passing of this Bill, and from his speech and the speeches of other honourable members in its favour one would imagine that there is no provision already existing for developing the bodies of boys and girls attending the public schools of the colony. I hold, Sir, that the proper physical drill is to be found in the play-ground ; and I believe that the boys and girls of this colony will compare favourably with the boys and girls at the Government schools in any other part of the world. I have myself two boys at school, and I think I am not egotistical in saying you will not find boys better set-up in the colony. They are a great deal straighter in the back than I am, or ever was, for the simple reason that I had not their opportunities, when I was at a public school, of going into a play-ground and of strengthening my body at out-door games. I think the play-ground affords the very best of physical drill ; but if we introduce the system of quasi-military drill that this Bill provides for in our schools, in addition to the ordinary time passed in the play-ground, I think too much time will be taken from the schoolroom and from the studies of the boys and girls. I cannot help thinking, if I may be allowed to say so of a Bill which comes to us from another place, that this Bill ought not to have been introduced by a private member. It should have been left to the Government to determine whether such a measure was actually necessary for the physical development of the boys and girls of the colony. I think it is not. The Hon. Mr. KERR .- I would like to say a few words in reply before the question is put. I scarcely think the Minister of Education has rightly read section 85 of the principal Act. If

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provision whatever made for the physical training of girls. This Bill, therefore, makes special provision for the physical training of girls, and the Education Boards have to report to the Minister of Education that the requirements of the Act are being complied with. As regards expense, I quite agree with the Hon.

Colonel Pitt when he says that physical drill can be taught without any heavy expense. am indebted to that honourable gentleman for the manner in which he has interpreted clause 85, and also for his support of the Bill. The Minister of Education probably thinks that this Bill should have emanated from himself. I can only say that it passed the other House, and that I was asked by the honourable member who introduced it there to take charge of it in this Council ; and surely the other House must have seen some virtues in it, otherwise they would not have passed it. When a Bill has been passed in another place, I do not think that it is reasonable to come to the conclusion all at once that it should be thrown aside here. I do not approve of work being performed in that way. I think every Bill sent to this Council ought to have the fullest consideration. As I said before, I quite agree with the Hon. Colonel Pitt, that if this Bill is passed great good will result to the girls of our public schools in the matter of deport- What is not provided for ment and discipline. in the original Act is provided for in this Bill. Clause 6 states, " Upon the principal teacher of any school being satisfied that any boy or girl is unfit to undergo physical drill, such boy or girl shall be exempted from being instructed in such drill." I hope honourable gentlemen will vote for the second reading of the Bill. Bill read the second time. THE WELLINGTON HARBOUR BOARD ACT 1879 AMENDMENT BILL. The Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON .- This Bill origi- nated in another place, and is promoted by the Wellington Harbour Board for the purpose of restoring representation to those districts which at one time formed part of the County of Wai- rarapa North and the Hutt County. It also proposes, by the addition of one member, to give representation to the counties in the Manawatu district, which they did not enjoy under the principal Act ; and, further, by clause 7, it is proposed to alter the date of the annual ac- counts from December to September, Decem- ber being found to be a very inconvenient time, both on account of holidays and the press of work at that period. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON .- I do not want it to be thought that I am showing captious opposition to this Bill when I point out that there is a clause in it amending " The Harbours Act, 1878," while the measure itself is called "The Wellington Harbour Board Act 1879 Amendment Bill." This may not be thought to be very important, but it is one of those things that give rise to the suspicion that Bills emanating from the Wellington Harbour Board watched in both Houses of the Legislature. This happened in reference to a Bill that was passed two years ago called "The Wellington City Reclamation and Public Baths Bill." It was a very harmless little measure when it passed through the Council. It gave power to the Harbour Board to grant permission to the Wellington City Corporation to build a reclama- tion wall some distance along Clyde Quay, and I also to build baths, the cost of which the Har- bour Board, I think, was to share to the extent of one moiety. Some time before a vote of the ratepayers was taken regarding the borrowing of money for this work, and the proposals as put before the ratepayers were, along with other works, the widening of Clyde Quay to a distance of 100 ft., building a retaining wall for some quarter of a mile along the front of it, and to build baths. Now, these proposals went to the ratepayers, and the result was that the ratepayers gave permission for the money to be borrowed, and the work was gone on with. Several hundred feet of the wall had been built, and some reclamation done, when, a few weeks ago, a paragraph appeared in the Evening Post to the effect that after the wall was finished it was intended by the Harbour Board to enclose about five acres of water, by building another wall, or rather two walls, overlapping at the ends, some 250 ft. outside the wall now being built, to serve as a breakwater, and to put up boat-sheds against the inner wall, and also on the skids on the inner side of the outer break- water. When the plans came before the Local Bills Committee in 1898 dealing with the recla- mation and public baths, there was absolutely nothing to show that a boat-harbour was going to be formed, or that boat-sheds were going to be built outside this wall. I venture to say, if such a project had been shown, the Bill would not have passed through this Chamber without alteration, and this objectionable proposal elimi- nated. And I am quite sure that, when the proposal was put before the ratepayers, there was not one ratepayer in a hundred who had any idea that the Harbour Board or the Cor- poration had any intention that these

boat-sheds were to be placed outside the walls. The ratepayers understood, and the general citizens of Wellington also understood, that it was to be a promenade -- an esplanade, such as exists at Thorndon--and that it would form one of the very few walks in Wellington. They are now startled with the proposal that immediately outside the wall these boat-sheds are going to be built. If the ratepayers had known of this ridiculous proposal they would, I am sure, have never given their sanction for the work to be done. When the Corporation was approached on the matter, a few days ago, they got out of the question very quietly by saying that the Harbour Board was well within its rights in building the boat-sheds, and that the roofs of the sheds were not to extend more than 4 ft. above the top of the wall. Well, the top of the wall is about 3 ft. 6 in. above the level of the road, so that another 4 ft. makes it 7 ft. 6 in., which will absolutely prevent any view of the

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very object for which it was intended is lost. And, not only that, but a great number of boat-owners have already built sheds in different parts of the harbour, and they themselves are totally against the boat-sheds being placed on this wall, being of the opinion that it is unsuitable. It is not as though they were cramped for space in Wellington Harbour; there are numerous other places and better positions for boat-sheds. This particular complaint may not be quite analogous to the Bill now before the Council, but it points to the fact that Bills as introduced by, at least, Wellington public bodies, and passed by the House, sometimes have ulterior objects which the members of the House do not see, not being acquainted with the circumstances of the case; and the plans showing the ultimate alterations that are to be made are not put before the House. There is one great saving clause in the matter of these boat-sheds, inasmuch as this Harbour Board, or any Harbour Board, is not empowered to build without permission from the Minister of Marine .. understand that permission has not yet been given by the Minister of Marine in this case, and, I trust, will not be given. I also understand that numerous petitions are being got up asking the Minister to withhold his consent to allow the Wellington Harbour Board to put up these sheds. Sir, I called attention to the fact that this Bill amends two Acts. It deals with and purports by its title to amend "The Wellington Harbour Board Act, 1879," but it also deals with "The Harbours Act, 1878." The latter is not a very important amendment, I admit, but it is these little things connected with these local Bills which, as I said before, arouse suspicion and cause reports to go about that Bills dealing with Wellington in any way whatever have to be watched very closely by the Houses of the Legislature. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY .- Sir, I move the adjournment of the debate on this Bill. I have just seen the Bill for the first time, having been absent from Wellington, and it seems to me it requires a little inquiry on my part to satisfy myself that the Bill is a fair one and does no injury in any way. It deals with the constitution of the Board, I understand, very materially, and I should like to know if the local bodies who are interested have had their opinions asked in regard to the alteration. I know that the public bodies as a rule have no conscience; if they want a thing they strive to get it, without regard to the public interest generally; and therefore it is the duty of the Council to protect the public interest. The remarks made by my honourable friend who has just sat down throw some suspicion over the dealings of the Wellington Harbour Board in other matters. Of course, the interests of the public at large are supposed to be guarded by the Government under the general Harbours Act of 1878. No Harbour Board can infringe the public rights on the foreshore without the consent of the Governor in Council. That power ought to be ample, but sometimes we find that local importunity and local representation Hon. Mr. Jenkinson things that he ought not to do. The Governor in Council is sometimes so weak as to submit to local pressure, and then the public interests are sacrificed. I think the best thing to do with the Bill is to adjourn the debate until members have had time to look over it and satisfy their minds that the Bill is a right one and in the public interests. The Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH .- I do not think it is necessary to adjourn this debate. The Council must remember that this Bill has been before

the Local Bills Committee, and that there it must have been carefully looked into. It has also been before another Chamber, and no doubt fairly dealt with there. I have looked into the Bill and can see nothing unfair in it. It is an ordinary Bill, dealing with the matter of the constitution of the Board, and a Bill which has been brought in by a number of other Harbour Boards. I think the second reading can be taken now, and there will be sufficient time to make further inquiries before the Bill goes into Committee. The Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON. - I hope the Hon. Mr. T. Kelly will not press his motion. There is really no need to adjourn the debate. The Bill simply proposes to increase the representation of the country districts on the Board, a step which I think the honourable gentleman entirely approves of. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY. - When do you propose to commit the Bill ? The Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON. - There is no hurry, and I will move for its committal to-morrow week. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY. - Then, Sir, I would like to withdraw my motion. Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn. Bill read the second time. # ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES. ADJOURNED DEBATE. The Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH. - I would just like to say that I do not think there is any necessity for this resolution. A certain procedure has taken place in this Chamber and in another place ever since the Constitution was drawn up, and I do not see what advantage would be gained by making an alteration. If we do make an alteration, and if we go to the ballot, let us put it on a fair and reasonable basis. The present position, if we go to a ballot, is the worst possible. We have to vote for three persons, and that means that members of the Council have to vote for two persons who they do not wish to vote for. I know of no place where, when a ballot is taken, persons are made to vote for persons they do not want to vote for. The result is that in nearly every case the lowest one voted for on the first ballot will, in the end, have a majority, and will be elected to the position. One member of the Council gets, say, fourteen votes, another member twelve votes, and another member four or five votes in the first ballot. There would then be three names that would be voted for.

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ballot the supporters of the members who got fourteen votes and twelve votes would not vote for one another. They would be watching one another, and naturally say, " We will not assist an opponent," and then cast their second vote for the man who got five votes. In the second ballot, most likely, the man who originally got fourteen votes would go out, and then, in the final ballot, the supporters of the man who got fourteen votes would go for the man who only got five votes, and he would be returned. A worse system of electing by ballot than that used here it would be hard to conceive. If we are to have election by ballot, let us have it pure and simple. Let nominations be made on a certain day to be fixed, and on those names nominated let a straight vote of the Council be taken, and the majority return whoever they wish. Under the present system there are quite a number of informal ballot-papers. I hope, at all events, if we do make a change, it will be in a fair and reasonable direction, so that we shall have a proper ballot, and not a ballot by which we shall have to vote for persons we do not want to vote for. No such form of ballot, under the same circumstances, is used in any other part of this colony. Forty odd names are put before members, and we do not know whether any of those gentlemen wish to stand, and they have to cast a vote for two members they do not wish to vote for. I hope, if the Council alter the system, they will put it in a proper way. I shall vote against the resolution because I can see no need for the change. At present, any member has a right to move to strike out the name of the person nominated, and insert another name. That is proper and straight-out voting. Surely the Council, who have no constituents, are not afraid to show how they vote on a simple question of this kind. If we are afraid to vote openly in this Chamber, and the other Chamber is not afraid, then it shows the Council is going backward and not forward. I shall oppose the resolution for the reasons I have given. The Hon. Mr. REEVES. - My reply will be very short. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down has given us a bit of a lecture on how we ought to vote

for Chairman of Committees. I have no doubt that, to a certain extent, the honourable gentleman is right ; but this motion simply says : "And it be an instruction to the Standing Orders Committee to prepare the necessary new order." I presume it will be in the power of the Standing Orders Committee to bring in such a form of voting as they may think necessary. That is all I have to say on the matter, excepting this : that we have seen, on more than one occasion in this Council, when a gentleman has been put forward who has not been particularly with the Council, that the result has been that we have had to go to the ballot. If we have it laid down in the Standing Orders that a ballot must be taken, it will do away with that difficulty. That is all I have to say in the matter. The Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH .- As a matter of personal explanation, I wish to say that I a reflection on me. I say that he himself wished to be a candidate, and therefore I was personally unpopular to him. The Hon. Mr. REEVES .- I must take exception to the remarks made by the honourable- gentleman. I never was a candidate for the position of Chairman of Committees, and I never even mentioned a word about it. But I reiterate what I said before : that it will do away with what we have had on former occasions if we carry this motion. The Council divided. AYES, 15. Johnston Baillie Pitt Reeves Barnicoat Jones Kelly, T. Bolt Rigg Feldwick Smith, A. L. Kerr Jenkinson Swanson. Montgomery NOES, 6. Smith, W. C. Arkwright Kelly, W. Scotland Walker, W. C. Harris Majority for, 9. Motion agreed to. The Council adjourned at forty-three minutes past three o'clock. # HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Tuesday, 13th August, 1901. First Reading - Coconut Oil - cake - Forest-tree Planting - Freehold Estates - Native Land Titles - Lease in Perpetuity - Cook Island Laws - Civil Service Examinations - Standard IV. Examination - Death of the Dowager Empress of Germany - Fiji - Local Government Bill Committee - Unauthorised Expenditure - Health Officer for Waimate- Copy-right Act - Carriage of Artificial Manures - Encouragement to Local Industries -Prevention of Cruelty to Animals-Railway Charges-South-bridge Brauch Trains-Infant Mortality : Population - Health Officer, Hawke's Bay - Railway Sleepers-Varnish Industry-Wool-market - Inspection of Buildings - Railway Traffic on Sundays -Government Balneologist - Railway Freight on Manure-Lawrence Railway Offices- Grey District Hospital and Charitable Aid Board - Sanatorium for Consumptives - Cook Islands Auxiliary Steamer-Junior Civil Service Examination-papers-Teachers' Certificate Examinations - Increase to Salaries of Deputy- Registrars - Mine-managers' Certificates-Flax-grader for Wellington-Gladstone Association- Lime for the West Coast -Paikakariki Road- Ruapekapeka Pa-Tax on Stallions-Dairy School at Levin-Revaluation at Hokianga and Kaihu - Lime-burning, Albury Estate - Small-bird Nuisance - Masterton Courthouse - Levin and Weraroa Townships - Patent Rights - Waste Lands Boards-Wellington City Abattoir-Workmen's Homes -Imported Stud Stock - Cattle-landing in Auckland Harbour-Makuri-Pongaroa Road-Rating on Unimproved Value Bill. Mr. Speaker took the chair at half past two o'clock p.m. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Egmont County Bill.

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On the motion of Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing for the year ending 31st March, 1901,-(1) The amount of coconut oil-cake imported into New Zealand ; (2) the amount of imported oil-cake carried on the railways, and the rate charged : (3) the rate of duty charged on imported cake ; and (4) the amount of oil-cake manufactured in New Zealand, sold in New Zealand, carried on the railways, and the rate charged. # FOREST-TREE PLANTING. On the motion of Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing, -- (1) The total area planted with forest-trees up to the 31st March, 1901, under the provisions of " The New Zealand State Forests Act, 1885," or any other Act ; (2) the total cost of such planting ; (3) the area, if any, which has been destroyed by fire or otherwise ; (4) the present estimated value of such plantations ; and (5) the amount proposed to be expended on forest tree planting during the present year. # FREEHOLD ESTATES. On the motion of Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty), it was ordered, That there be laid

before this House a return showing the acreage of all freehold estates in the colony at 31st March, 1900, together with the number of owners and the capital value, in the same form as the Return No. 27 .- H, laid on the table of the House this session. # NATIVE LAND TITLES. On the motion of Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) it was ordered, That there be laid, before this House a return showing the area of Native land in the colony the titles of which have not yet been ascertained by the Native Land Court or the Crewera Commission. # LEASE IN PERPETUITY. On the motion of Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return giving the total amount of revenue collected by way of land- tax from the holders of leases in perpetuity. # COOK ISLAND LAWS. On the motion of Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a copy of all laws in the hands of the Government in force in the Cook Island Group other than statutes of New Zealand or Great Britain. CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS. On the motion of Mr. GUINNESS (Grey), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return giving the compulsory and the optional subjects for teachers' D and E and Senior and Junior Civil Service Examinations, together with the name and occupation of the examiner in each of the said subjects, from the side. # STANDARD IV. EXAMINATION. On the motion of Mr. GUINNESS (Grey), it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the number of pupils in each education district who have within the last ten years, ending the 31st December, 1900, reached the age of thirteen years without passing Standard IV. # DEATH OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF GERMANY. Mr. SPEAKER read the following message from His Excellency the Governor :- " To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives,- " I have received the resolutions passed by the House of Representatives, the one to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the second requesting me to convey through His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Emperor and Royal Family of Germany, the expression of the deep sympathy of the House of Representatives on the occasion of the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Dowager Empress. " I have forwarded them both by telegraph for submission. " RANFURLY. " Government House, Wellington, 8th August, 1901." On the motion of Mr. SEDDON (Premier), it was ordered, That the message be entered on the Journals of the House. Mr. SPEAKER read the following further message from His Excellency the Governor :- "Napier, 12th August, 1901. "To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives,- "The Governor has received through the Secretary of State for the Colonies the command of His Majesty the King to convey his grateful thanks to the House of Representatives for their address and condolence on the death of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Frederick. "RANFURLY." On motion of Mr. SEDDON (Premier), it was ordered, That the message be entered on the Journals of the House. FIJI. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I desire to lay on the table a copy of a letter from the Rev. W. Slade, with further reference to the situation in Fiji, and I move, That it be laid on the table and printed. Motion agreed to. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- 3.0. Sir, in connection with this letter from the Rev. Mr. Slade, which contains a further reference to the position in Fiji, may I ask the Premier whether the letter of Mr. Chamberlain, in which he refers to Sir George O'Brien's action in Fiji, and to the newspaper comments upon those acts, has been laid on the table ?

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sent by the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain to Sir George O'Brien has been ordered to be laid on the table. The newspaper comments have not been laid on the table, nor is it usual to lay newspaper comments on the table. Mr. MASSEY .- We have nothing to do with newspaper comments. Mr. FISHER .- Sir, I did not ask that the newspaper comments should be laid on the table. I merely said that Mr. Chamberlain, in the letter to which I referred, had expressed a very decided opinion in regard to the newspaper comments upon Sir George O'Brien's action in Fiji. # LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL COMMITTEE. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) brought up an interim report from the Local Government Bill Committee, recommending that the House

should meet on Tuesdays and Fridays at such an hour as would enable the Local (Government Committee) to sit during the forenoon of those days, and complete its labours. He moved. That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government for consideration. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) might say that he would think over the matter, and would personally take the opinion of honourable members on the question. If he allowed the motion now before the House to pass, it might be taken that he acquiesced in it. The motion was passed by the Counties Bill Committee in his absence that morning. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) would like to point out that, according to the rate of progress the Committee was making with the Bill, it would be entirely unnecessary to take away the morning sittings to facilitate the passing of the measure. He thought that one meeting a week for the next three weeks would finish the Bill, and, under the circumstances, it seemed unfair that they should trench on the morning sittings, which so far had been a great success. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) would like to say, in reply to the last speaker, that so far the Committee had not dealt with any debatable matter in the Bill. The Committee were unanimously of opinion that leave should be granted to sit on Tuesdays and Fridays. Owing to the number of Committees sitting on Wednesdays and Thursdays those mornings were fully occupied, and it was almost impossible for the Counties Committee to do any work on those days. The work of this Committee was at present just as important as the business of the House, and he hoped that some arrangement such as had been suggested would be made. Mr. W. FRASER (Wakatipu) said that so many Committees sat on Wednesdays and Thursdays it was almost impossible for the Local Government Committee to meet. The general feeling of members was that they should not do Committee work on Saturdays and Mondays. Therefore, if the Committee was to make due progress with the Bill, it would be ! in reply, said that instructions had been given VOL. CXVII .- 20. Fridays. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) said the Committee thought they should have an opportunity of meeting on Tuesdays and Fridays, because on Wednesdays and Thursdays so many Committees sat that the members of this very large Committee could not be got together. Motion agreed to. UNAUTHORISED EXPENDITURE. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked as a matter of urgency, When the Colonial Treasurer intended to lay on the table the return of unauthorised expenditure for the year ending 31st March last. According to the Public Revenues Act this return should have been laid before Parliament within ten days from the commencement of the session. Last year it was laid on the table on the 29th June. This was the 13th August, and the House had not seen the return yet. Mr. SEDDON (Colonial Treasurer) thought the matter referred to might with advantage stand over for a notice of motion. HEALTH OFFICER FOR WAIMATE. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) asked the Minister of Public Health,-(1.) When the Health Officer will be appointed for the Town and District of Waimate? (2.) When the department will be able to comply with the request of the Waimate County Council, conveyed in a letter dated the 1st July, that a thorough examination be made of the surroundings, water-supply, et cetera, at a locality known as Princes Street, outside of the boundary of Waimate Borough, cases of typhoid having recently occurred there ? The Waimate County Council, in a communication to him, had raised this question of the appointment of a Health Officer. On the 19th June they wrote to the department asking who had been appointed Health Officer for the district ; and they received a reply on the 26th June, to the effect that, owing to unavoidable circumstances, all the local Health Officers had not been appointed, but that an appointment would be made at an early date. On the 1st July the Council wrote again, notifying that they had been apprised of the occurrence of two cases of typhoid in a certain locality, and urging the necessity of a proper medical inspection of that portion of the district by the Health Department. A reply was received on the 14th July to the effect that the department hoped to have the inspection made at an early date. Something like two months had elapsed since the request was made, and the object of the question was to point out the ineffectiveness of a system which failed to provide for an examination in a case where the presence of infectious disease had been reported, although a period of something like two months had elapsed, and he thought the

Minister would therefore see that there was justification for the question which he now put. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister of Public Health).

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Canterbury, to proceed as soon as possible to Waimate, and report on the matters referred to. The other question, of the appointment of a Health Officer, he was looking into, but he could not give a definite answer respecting it at present. # COPYRIGHT ACT. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) asked the Colonial Secretary, -- (1.) If the Government will consider the advisableness of amending the Copyright Act with a view to providing further protection to authors, dramatists, and musical composers against the piracy of their plays or works ? (2.) Whether, in any proposed amendment of the existing law, a provision will be included making such piracy an offence punishable by imprisonment, with or without option of fine ? The reason for this question was this : There were persons who paid large sums of money for the copyright of plays, et cetera ; and there was a case the other day in which it was reported that \$4,500 had been paid for such a copyright, and the proprietor's interests in the matter having been infringed, the only remedy he had was by way of injunction, which was sometimes a cumbersome and expensive process. It occasionally happened that there were persons, who were practically men of straw, who were willing to run the risk of a fine because there was no option of imprisonment, and further, because they had the chance of making money by their piracy to an amount sufficient to make it worth their while to run the risk of a fine, as they could pay it out of the proceeds. It was, therefore, desirable that a discretion should be given to the Court, which would enable it to hold offenders in terrorem - namely, of imposing imprisonment as the alternative of a fine, or, in its discretion, without option of fine. Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary) said there were now before the Imperial Parliament Bills amending the Copyright Act, with regard to, he believed, literature and dramatic works. These Bills had been under the consideration of a Commission of Law Lords, and, as soon as any legislation was passed in the Old Country on the subject, the working of the Copyright Act in New Zealand would be considered. CARRIAGE OF ARTIFICIAL MANURES. Mr. LANG (Waikato) asked the Minister for Railways, If he will take the necessary steps to have bone-dust and other artificial manures carried free on the Government railways? Last year he asked a similar question, and he then pointed out that the free carriage of lime had been the means of doing a large amount of good in some parts of the country : but there were some districts where lime was of little or no value for agricultural purposes, and where it was of far more importance to the farmers that bone-dust and artificial manures should be carried free. By doing so, the railways would benefit ultimately by the increased amount of produce that would be produced, and that would have to be carried over the Bir J. G. Ward that the manures in question could be carried free, he still hoped that the Minister would be able to reduce the freight on artificial manures, and that at an early period he would be able to carry bone-dust entirely free. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) was sorry he could not give the honourable member an affirmative reply, for the simple reason that he did not think the railways ought to be used for the carriage of anything free -- not even for the free carriage of lime. He did not think that anything should be carried over the railways free that required necessarily an initial cost to be provided for by the department to enable that article to be so carried. If the principle were applied to one article it ought to be applied to many more ; but he quite agreed with the honourable member in his desire that manures should be carried at as low a rate as possible, and he personally strongly favoured this. He might say the question of the reduction of the freight on manures was now under consideration. # ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOCAL INDUSTRIES. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) asked the Government, If they will consider the question of giving special encouragement to the wine industry of New Zealand, the manufacture of white-lead, and other colonial industries not now being supported by the Government, but requiring support ? He would like to see the Government paying some attention to the

internal wants of the people, such as providing employment for the returned members of the contingents, and in a practical manner aiding the development of many of the industries which, in the future, were going to make the Colony of New Zealand. There was one industry - the wine industry - in the North Island which was capable of great extension. The district of Auckland was capable of producing wine in great abundance, and it would be far better for the people to drink good wine than bad whiskey. Another industry that ought to be encouraged was the manufacture of white-lead. There was a firm in Auckland who, if a bonus were granted, were quite prepared to undertake the manufacture of that article. All these industries would absorb labour, and if the Government would take into consideration the question of offering facilities for and encouragement to the establishment of industries of this nature, there would be no difficulty in finding employment for the returned contingent troopers, who, under present circumstances, it was said, could not get work because the official avenues were all filled up. and there would be no difficulty in a country so rich in natural resources as New Zealand in finding employment for the whole of the British Army in South Africa if they came to New Zealand. He hoped the Government would drop all experimental legislation for a time, and set to work and consider the resources of the colony and the requirements of its people, many of whom were wanting

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the colony would progress to a greater extent than any other British colony. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said one could not but admire the optimism of his honourable friend-a characteristic which it would be a good thing for a great many people in the colony if they possessed. In suggesting that bonuses should be given for the building-up of industries in the colony, his honourable friend, however, was asking for the initiation of a policy which he thought was undesirable, if not impracticable. If industries required to be built up in that way, it was only a matter of time when they would end disastrously through the withdrawal of the bonus. The proper way to build up industries was by a broader and more natural system, and he thought the fairest way of all was through the Customs duties, and under them they could be built up. If the honourable gentleman asked in what direction the Government could encourage the wine industry, and the manufacture of white-lead, he must reply that while he would be pleased to see them legitimately furthered in every way, they must be allowed to grow up in the natural order of things under the existing Customs tariff protection.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) asked the Government, Whether they will consider the advisability of granting societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals subsidies of, say, £1 for #1, thus assisting them in their laudable and necessary work? Speaking from his own knowledge, he could say that a great amount of extremely useful work was done by these societies in the community, and they prevented a great amount of cruelty. He was further quite sure that they saved the police a very considerable amount of work. Taking all these things into consideration, he thought the movement deserved, more than others, consideration at the hands of the Government. He was not wedded to the amount of the subsidy, but so far all the funds available had been raised by voluntary contributions, and he thought the time had now come when the Government ought to assist in some degree. If the Government could not give £1 for \$1. perhaps the honourable gentlemen would say how much they would be prepared to give. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said one could not but admire the laudable work carried out by these societies ; but at the same time he had always regarded it - and, no doubt, others did -as a labour of love, and the outcome of a desire on the part of well-disposed people to prevent cruelty to defenceless animals. He did not think it was advisable, however, that these societies, which had for so many years carried on this good work. should be supported by subsidies from the Government. There was, he was assured, no very heavy expenditure entailed, and, so far as he knew, no representations had reached the Government showing that these societies were so financially weak as work. He hoped the societies

would continue their good work in the future without asking assistance from the Government. Mr. COLLINS said he knew in many cases the power for good of these societies was greatly curtailed owing to want of funds, and their work was not supported by the public as it should be ; they as a rule did the work and contributed the money too, and, that being so, he thought they were deserving of some help from the Government. Sir J. G. WARD pointed out that it was the duty of the police throughout the colony to prevent cruelty to animals: and if private societies were to receive Government aid for doing the same thing, it would be better for the Government to set up a department to do the whole business. # RAILWAY CHARGES. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) asked the Minister for Railways, If he will reduce the charges on the Opuia-Kawakawa and on the Dargaville-Kaihu lines to bring them into conformity with other lines in the colony ? A great injustice was being done to the settlers on these small lines, one of which was seven miles long and the other about sixteen. A first-class fare on the Opuia-Kawakawa line was 3s. for a distance of seven miles, and the second-class fare was 2s. ; the freight per ton measurement was 10s. ; and there was not another line in the colony that could show such exorbitant charges. Then, on the Dargaville-Kaihu line the freight was 11s. 4d., while on other lines it was 3s. 4d. The freight on gum on this line was 11s. 4d. and on other lines 9s. 6d. He felt satisfied if the Minister considered the matter he would see the injustice of this, and endeavour to have it rectified. He would point out also that while concessions had been granted on the other lines of the colony no concession had been made in these instances. He hoped to get a favourable answer, and that the reproach of neglecting the far North would be removed. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said this was not a case of neglecting the far North. The difficulty was that these lines did not pay. The working of the Opuia-Kawakawa line last year resulted in a loss of £185. The matter was a difficult one. No member of the Government was desirous of seeing differential rates in operation in any part of the colony. Mr. HOUSTON .- The railway system is a complete system in itself, and one individual railway should not be separated from it. Sir J. G. WARD said, At the same time it would never do, where the traffic on a line was inadequate to give a reasonable return. to charge the same rates as in the case of lines which were assisting to pay their cost. In regard to the Dargaville Kaihu line the question of rates there were now under the consideration of the Government, with a view to seeing whether relief could be given. Mr. HOUSTON said the reason why the traffic was not paying was because owing to

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of Kerikeri. Sir J. G. WARD said he was afraid that was not the actual cause, but he was prepared to look into the honourable gentleman's representations. SOUTHBRIDGE BRANCH TRAINS. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) asked the Minister of Railways, If he will make provision for the construction of a turn-table at the terminus of the Southbridge line, so as to enable more powerful engines to be employed, and thereby increase the speed of the trains running on that branch ? It was a matter of very great complaint amongst those who travelled by this line that the trains between Christchurch and Southbridge were remarkable not only for their slowness, but also for their unpunctuality. The trains were frequently late, and almost always on market days; so much so, that persons living in the neighborhood of Greenpark, Lincoln, and Springston preferred to drive rather than go by train, and were then able to get into town before the train, even when starting at the same time. There was a 'bus leaving Lincoln a few minutes before the train which was able to land its passengers in Christchurch at the same time as the passengers by train. The Minister ought to be able to run the trains so as to compete successfully with the road. Therefore, he asked the Minister for Railways if he could give them a more powerful engine on this line, so as to increase the rate of speed, or give them a passenger and a goods train throughout the year. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) might say, in reply, that if the difficulty could be got over in the way suggested by the honourable member, he would be very glad to give effect to the suggestion ; but it

would not get over the difficulty. The reason of this was, that there were fourteen intermediate stopping-places in a journey of thirty-one miles. Nine of these were separated by a distance of only a mile and a half each. Now, when trains were stopped at such short distances, in any part of the world, it necessarily took time ; and the inevitable result was that, if they wished to give railway facilities to people a mile and a half distant from each other, they must take a longer time over the journey. The construction of a turn-table at the Southbridge end of the line, and the placing of a more powerful engine on the line, would not affect the matter whatever. The only thing that would be of any use was the complete separation of the passenger and goods traffic, and the running of passenger trains -through trains which would require to pass a number of the stations, the next train passing those the first one stopped at, and calling at the other stations-in other words, stopping at the stations alternately. The solution of the question was difficult. There were an unusual number of stopping- places close together, and the trouble was that the body of the traffic did not warrant a complete separation of the goods and passenger traffic. That being so, he was afraid they must Mr. Houston the duty of the department to do its best to carry on the mixed traffic, and he could assure the honourable gentleman that would be done.

INFANT MORTALITY : POPULATION. Major STEWARD (Waimate) asked the Minister of Public Health, - (1.) Whether, in view of the fact that a considerable proportion of the infant mortality arises from ignorance on the part of parents, he will cause the Chief Health Officer to prepare a leaflet or pamphlet for free public circulation, containing simple rules for the proper care and feeding of infants and young children ? (2.) Whether he will give consideration to the expediency and practicability of providing cheap maternity attendance for the poor ? (3.) Whether he will further consider the expediency of introducing legislation with a view to restricting the sale of certain medicaments known as " preventives" ? As the wealth of a country consisted more in its population than in its products, it was not surprising to find a reference which bore on this question in the Speech from the Throne, with which His Excellency had opened the present session. The falling-off in the birth- rate was a matter of national concern : but as the third part of his question, dealing with this matter, had already been provided for by the introduction, since he had given notice of the question, of a Bill by the Government, he need not enlarge upon that point. With regard to the other two branches of the question, he might point out that if it was desirable a country should increase by accretions from within by natural increase, as well as by accretions from without. it was equally important that those born in the country should live and grow up to manhood and womanhood. There were some very startling figures to which he wished to draw the honourable gentleman's attention - figures connected with the death-rate. He found from the last report that the deaths of children under five years of age represented about one-fourth of the total deaths in the whole population. That was to say, out of 7,000 deaths, 2,000-using round figures-were those of children under five years of age. The exact figures were 1,898 deaths of children under five, as against 7,198 deaths of all ages. Then, if the honourable gentleman would turn to the figures given in the report, he would further find that they show that the deaths of those under one year of age, as contrasted with the births, was 9.6 per cent. In other words, of the children born in the colony, nearly 10 per cent. died before attaining the age of twelve months. That was to say that, out of every ten children born in the colony, one died before it was twelve months old. Now, as we have one of the most healthy climates in the world, that must be very largely the result of ignorance on the part of the parents. There were many young people who were married and had children born to them who were quite ignorant of the laws of health as affecting child-life. The Agricultural Department very properly issued leaflets in-

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saving and of bringing up stock ; and it had occurred to him that, as there was now a Health Department, it would be a very useful thing to prepare and circulate leaflets or pamphlets teaching young parents how

best to preserve the lives of their children. He therefore hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to give him a favourable answer. With regard to the third branch of the question, " Whether he will give consideration to the expediency and practicability of providing cheap maternity attendance for the poor ? " he would say that he believed a number of deaths resulted from want of proper attention at the time of birth, and, as there were those who could not afford to pay for proper attendance, he thought it was a very desirable thing that the necessary assistance should be provided. This also was a subject to which he hoped the honourable gentleman's attention would be directed. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister of Public Health) might say in reply, with reference to the publication of a pamphlet containing rules for the proper care and feeding of infants, such instructions had been prepared in the office, and would be printed and circulated at an early date. He might also state that a lady lecturer had been appointed a week or so ago, who would also visit outlying places, and give instruction in this and kindred subjects. She had been appointed for six months, and he hoped that her services would be of very considerable value in reference to these matters. Respecting the second part of the honourable member's question, there were difficulties in connection with it. In Great Britain there was an officer termed the Poor Law Medical Officer in every district ; but in this colony the only officer of the kind was appointed by the Charitable Aid Boards, and his duties consisted principally in attending people in the Charitable Aid Institutions. The honourable gentleman would see that, if the Government were favourable to appointing such officers it would mean the appointment of a great many ; for to meet the necessities of the poor in all parts of the colony would require a great number of medical officers, and this was more than the colony could undertake. He might state, however, that medical officers generally throughout the colony were by no means indifferent as to the requirements of the needy. In fact, there was no medical man of standing who would not give his advice gratis to the poor if required, or even attend them at times of maternity. He was glad to say that that was the character of the medical practitioners throughout the colony ; but he was afraid it was too large an order for the country to establish a system of what might be termed poor-law medical officers. To do this would require the appointment of a great many, and he was afraid the difficulty in the way of expense was so great that it could not be overcome. Mr. BOLLARD said the Charitable Aid Medical Officers did this in Auckland. Sir J. G. WARD was glad to hear that was so ; he knew that medical practitioners through- services gratuitously, and they did a large amount of good for which they received no remuneration whatever. As to the latter part of the question, as the honourable gentleman knew, that had been met by the Bill which had been introduced by the Government. HEALTH OFFICER, HAWKE'S BAY. Mr. HALL (Waipawa) asked the Colonial Secretary, When the Health Officer for the district of Hawke's Bay will be appointed ? He believed that all the Health Officers had been appointed excepting the one for Hawke's Bay, and the people there were very desirous that- such an officer should be appointed, so that a responsible person should report upon the condition of the several townships. He believed that already reports had been made by officers who were not to be the permanent Health Officers of the district ; but reports from a permanent officer should be made as soon as possible. He would therefore ask the honour- able gentleman to kindly say when he intended to appoint a Health Officer for Hawke's Bay. Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary) might say that the question of the appointment of a Health Officer for Hawke's Bay was now before the Cabinet, and that he hoped a decision would be arrived at at an early date. If a Health Officer was appointed, it would be Dr. De Lisle, who had been strongly recommended. There was one condition necessary, and that he understood Dr. De Lisle was willing to comply with. A diploma of Public Health was required which would probably necessitate a visit by him to the Old Country. All the other qualifications required were possessed by Dr. De Lisle, and when the other requisite condition was fulfilled by the doctor obtaining the D.P.H. degree, he would be recommended for final appointment to the position. RAILWAY SLEEPERS. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked the Minister for Railways, Whether it is true that the Government have imported half a

million sleepers from Australia ; and, if so, does the Government intend to continue the importation of sleepers ? He might state that he had no official or actual information as to quantities, but it was stated by some that it amounted to half a million. In travelling along the railways of the colony, members must have seen lying alongside the railway lines at various parts large quantities of sleepers of Australian wood that had been imported. He need hardly point out to the Minister that there was any quantity of New Zealand timbers that were quite fit for sleepers, and which rendered it unnecessary to go outside the colony for supplies. He would be very glad to hear a statement as to the facts with regard to this matter, and a favourable expression of opinion from the Minister to the effect that the Government did not intend, if they had transgressed in this matter, to transgress again by going outside the colony for railway sleepers. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways)

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tion, that probably the honourable member got his information from the man in the street, as to the Government having imported half a million of sleepers from outside the colony. Mr. GUINNESS asked how many had they imported ? Sir J. G. WARD would be very happy to give the information that had been asked for. The department had been importing sleepers from Australia for many years, as far back as 1880, and in some years over 20,000 had been used. Altogether, to the end of last financial year, they had used 172,664. Of late years the importations had increased, due to the necessity of providing a better class of sleeper than was obtainable in the colony, and to the fact that the sleeper supply in New Zealand was not equal to requirements. Notwithstanding the fact that the price paid for silver-pine sleepers had been gradually increased from 2s. 4d., the amount originally paid, up to 3s. 3d., the class of sleeper had deteriorated, and the number required had not been offered. As he had stated before in the House, and would repeat now, they required to go abroad for supplies of a certain class of hardwood sleepers that were necessary on the New Zealand railways at particular portions where there were curves in the line, and, for this kind of work, excepting the best of the known woods in New Zealand, of which they unfortunately could not get sufficient, the woods of this colony were not considered to be perfectly safe. Those members who were anxious to make much of this matter had not the serious responsibility resting on their shoulders that the Minister for Railways had, and if he authorised the using of sleepers of unsuitable New Zealand woods for carrying heavy trains containing human beings around the curves, and other portions of our lines which the responsible officers reported required timber of exceptional strength, he would be guilty of doing a very improper thing, and more especially when it was borne in mind that the General Manager and the Chief Engineer, and their other responsible officers whose advice had to guide them in these matters, had advised that it was not safe for the class of sleepers obtainable in this colony to be used in certain places. The responsibility rested on them to adopt every precaution to safeguard the lives of the hundreds of thousands of passengers who used our railways. That being so, it was clearly their bounden duty to do all in their power to insure the safety of the tracks, and he would be no party to sacrificing this for any sentimental consideration, however great the pressure. At the same time, he wished to say that the Government gave preference to New Zealand woods wherever it was possible to do it. They tried to get New Zealand sleepers all over the colony, and found they could not get as many as they wanted. Moreover, he might state that the price for silver-pine sleepers had risen gradually from 2s. 4d. to 3s. 3d. per sleeper, and puriri at 3s. 0d. and 4s. 3d., and even at this enhanced price they were not able to get a sufficient quantity of New Zealand sleepers. Sir J. G. Ward large contractors had asked that the conditions should be abrogated altogether; and, whereas the Railway Department had to depend upon a certain number of sleepers being supplied every year, it was obvious that unless they could depend on a certain number of the sleepers coming in, they could not possibly carry out the railway requirements of the colony, and there would, if this matter was dealt with in

a slipshod way, be a considerable risk of the traffic on their lines being dis-organized, or even in part stuck-up at various places. He might say that the department advised him as follows :- "Silver-pine and totara sleepers cannot be used exclusively owing to the fact that the class of engine now running on our lines (weighing upwards of 64 tons), and the increased speed of trains, necessitate the department using the strongest timber. Preference is, however, given to New Zealand timber whenever it is practicable to do so without affecting the stability of the road." He might tell the honourable member again, that while the Government were anxious to have, and were in fact, asking for supplies of New Zealand sleepers all over the colony, they had been under the greatest difficulty in getting the people of the colony to supply them with sufficient sleepers even at the price he had named-3s. 3d. for silver-pine and 3s. 9d. and 4s. 3d. for puriri. So he said again, and it was idle to disguise the fact, that we must have a certain number of imported sleepers of the hardest quality it was possible to get for carrying heavy engines and trains with safety round railway curves. In different parts of the colony, many of these engines were 64 tons weight, and drew many carriages filled with human beings behind them ; and instead of honourable members trying to force the hands of the Government- by asking them to do away with using hard-wood sleepers, and by their advocacy trying to create the impression that in a particular district or districts the Government were not favouring the use of the local article, when as a matter of fact they were doing so in every instance where they could do so with safety-they should rather strive to assist the Government, and especially the Minister for Railways, in seeing that all the materials used on our railways was of the very best quality procurable, so as to render the risk of accidents to human beings as remote as possible in a colony such as this, where the railways were so freely used by our people. He was just as anxious as the honourable member who asked this question to have nothing but New Zealand woods if they could be used with safety ; but as Minister for Railways he had of necessity to give the utmost consideration to the advice of the responsible officers of the department, and where he was advised that for various railway curves a particular class of wood-the hardest we could obtain-must for safety purposes be used, sooner than take the responsibility upon himself of ignoring that advice in a matter of such moment, and thereby imperiling the lives of railway

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Mr. MASSEY asked, Could not the honourable gentleman obtain puriri sleepers for the curves ? Sir J. G. WARD said his answer to the honourable member was that they had invited tenders from all over the colony at different times, and if the people in the district represented by the honourable member for Franklin could provide a sufficient supply of sleepers of the class of wood which the department could use, why did they not send in their tenders ? They were prepared to take New Zealand wood of proper quality where it was possible to use it, but they were not prepared to take for particular purposes a class of wood that might contribute materially to the danger of the people who daily travelled over our lines. # VARNISH INDUSTRY. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) asked the Government. If they will give a bonus to encourage the varnish industry ? He was very pleased indeed to note the energy displayed by the Minister for Railways, and in certain questions in particular showing he was quite up-to-date. As for himself, he did not think the Government would be quite up-to-date until as a Labour Government they could find profitable work for every able-bodied man in the colony who required it. The Minister for Railways, in reply to the last question, had said that he was prepared to use New Zealand wood wherever it was right to do so. This being so, he wished now to know if the Government were prepared to take New Zealand varnish as well ; and in this connection he would remark that, when it came to a question of bonus, they said they would not give a bonus to the local article. But what were the Government doing in using the imported article? Were they not paying a bonus to the foreign producer in buying his goods? That was why he asked why, in a country like this, where there was such an abundance of raw material

for the manufacture of excellent varnish, something should not be done to encourage the varnish industry. In this case it was not a question of the safety of the passengers by railway-trains. It was only a question whether we were to keep in the colony the money expended upon varnish ; whether we should employ our own labouring men in the manufacture of this product, or send away the raw material and the money to build factories and employ the labouring people in other countries. That was why he asked the Government, Would they give a bonus for the encouragement of the varnish industry, so as to assist in building it up? Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said his answer to the honourable member was that wherever it was possible for the Government to assist in the building-up of a local industry he thought it was the duty of the Government to do so, and if the selection of particular industries for bonuses was to be undertaken, as his honourable friend suggested, then he thought it were to give a bonus to the varnish industry, why not also give a bonus to the coffee industry, to the spice industry, the coal industry, the glue industry, the twine industry, the saddling industry, and every other industry of the colony? If they were to take up one particular industry for assistance in this way, then they opened the door at once to a system of bonuses which would of necessity mean the imposition of heavy taxation on the people who provide the money with which to pay these bonuses. Now, let them take the case of this varnish industry. The duty was 2s. the gallon, and the freight of bringing it from the Home-country to New Zealand would probably be about \$2 5s. a ton. There was thus a heavy impost of duty and freight against the imported article, and to that extent it took the place of a bonus in favour of the local article. That certainly was of some considerable advantage to the local people who were making the varnish, and it ought to assist them very materially in building up their industry. While the honourable member was anxious to see local industries built up, he was afraid they would have to devise some other way of bringing that about than by the granting of bonuses. If the Government undertook to pay a bonus in one instance, they would have to consider at the same time how many other industries they would extend the same kind of help to. # WOOL-MARKET. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Government, Whether consideration has yet been given to a scheme recently furnished to the Government for the improvement of the wool-market of the colony, and to follow on and fit in with the appointment of a wool expert or experts for the instruction of farmers ; and, if so, whether the Government approves of such scheme, either wholly or in part ; and whether it is intended to set this or any other scheme on foot for the benefit of the wool-growers of the colony ? The very serious drop in prices in the wool-market would at once make manifest to the House the necessity for some such scheme as had recently been suggested to the Government -the scheme referred to in the question. It had been stated by a Minister outside the House that the scheme had been put forward by some person who was in want of a billet. That might be so, for all he (Mr. Field) knew ; but whether it was so or not, he thought it behoved the Government to do everything possible to improve the condition of the wool-market. As he understood the scheme, it provided for the classification by a Government expert at Wellington of all the wool exported from the colony, and the shipping of the wool, not as at present, to the London market, there to be purchased by the merchants, and by them distributed to the manufacturers; but the shipping of the wool to the various textile districts, classed so as to suit the requirements of those districts. It was a scheme that had for its object-an object to be sought in the case of all our

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of which, he was certain, the Minister saw the grave importance. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister of Industries and Commerce) said, Anything that would raise the price of wool by a better system of classification ought to be supported by every one. The difficulty in connection with such a matter was that the wool was usually baled at the wool-sheds on the ground where it was shorn, and if grading was to take place it ought to take place there. What the honourable member desired was to provide, as far as possible, for

the education of those who baled the wool. Mr. FIELD said that was his own proposal ; but there was a second scheme built on his. Sir J. G. WARD said, At any rate, if anything was done, it ought to be done by the permanent experts who were attached to the Stock Department ; and if the Inspectors had the requisite knowledge, and could be spared to do so, there was no reason why they should not impart it to those engaged in shearing. The Government were not favourable to the appointment of a number of wool-graders. If a staff of graders were appointed, they would require to travel during a large portion of each year from end to end of the colony. It was a matter that was in the hands of the Minister for Agriculture, and it really rested with that honourable gentleman to take any steps that might seem to him to be practicable.

INSPECTION OF BUILDINGS. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) asked the Government, Whether any of the Borough Councils have appointed Inspectors of Buildings under section 318 of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900" ; and, if not, will the Government demand that the section be put in operation at once, according to the intention of the Act ? He thought he was correct in saying that there were many houses in Wellington that took in lodgers, in which there were no means provided of fire-escape. It was an important question, that should be looked into in the interests of the public. An Act had been passed by the House, but had not been carried out, with the result that many of the houses were nothing but traps in case of fire, and the owners of these places, if they had what they deserved, should be put in gaol for their neglect. Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary), was sorry he could not give any definite information on the matter, for the reason that the Act did not require such appointments to be notified to the Government, and no notifications of the kind had so far reached the Government. He agreed with the honourable member that the subject was one of great importance, and he thought that his department would be justified in calling the attention of the local authorities to it in order that it might receive attention.

RAILWAY TRAFFIC ON SUNDAYS. Mr. J. W. THOMSON (Clutha) asked the Minister for Railways, Whether he is aware Mr. Field would be possible to avoid railway traffic on Sundays ? He was not aware from his own knowledge that sheep were trucked at Pukerau on the day named, but a resident of the place had written to him about it and asked him to interview the Government on the general question of Sunday traffic on the railways, with the view of seeing whether such traffic could not be avoided. As the subject was one of general importance, he thought the best thing to do would be to ask a question in the House about it. He did not know whether Sunday traffic was general all over New Zealand, but, at all events, in the southern parts of the colony there was more or less railway traffic almost every Sunday. It was hardly necessary for him to say that this was not in accord with the religious sentiments of a large section of the community. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said that, personally, he was averse to the running of trains on Sundays, except in cases where it was absolutely necessary. There were conditions, however, in certain parts of the colony where a number of trains were required to be run every Sunday for the convenience of the people. He might state that only recently a circular had been sent out to the District Traffic Managers throughout the colony calling attention to the running of Sunday trains, and asking that they should not be run wherever it was possible to avoid it. That, he thought, was only right. He would like to say, in reply to the honourable member for Clutha, that the running of the particular train he referred to on the 21st of July was unavoidable. It was not put on for the purposes of conveying the sheep, but had to run under any circumstances, and he was advised that the owners of the sheep had represented that they were anxious to get them away owing to shortage of food, so that the department gave the necessary permission to send the sheep by that train. The Government would not only discourage the carrying on of goods-traffic on Sundays, but they would allow it to be done only in cases of absolute necessity. Of course, cases might arise in any part of the colony where, owing to exceptional circumstances such as drought, bad weather, or floods, trains might be required by people for the purpose of saving their stock or their crops, and in a matter of that sort he thought that whoever was running the railways ought to be guided by the exigences of the moment - by

what they considered right under the circumstances. At the same time, he felt that they ought to avoid trains on Sundays whenever it was possible, and he had regularly refused his assent to every application for the running of Sunday trains. There were, however, and doubtless would continue to be, cases where it was necessary to make exceptions. GOVERNMENT BALNEALOGIST. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked the Government, When the appointment to the position of Balnealogist is to be filled ? This position had appeared on the estimates for

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engaged at Home to fill the office. Up to the present, however, he had not appeared. As there had been some change in the management of the Tourist Department lately, he wished to put the question to the Minister in charge in order to find out whether he was still of opinion that a balnealogist was required, and, if so, whether he would shortly appear on the scene ? Sir J. G. WARD (Minister of Public Health) presumed that by a balnealogist the honourable gentleman meant a medical officer who should be attached to the baths. Mr. HERRIES said the explanation previously given was a general superintendent of all the baths of the colony. Sir J. G. WARD said the whole question of the working of the baths was at present under the consideration of the Government. For himself, he thought something would require to be done to bring them more up-to-date than they were at present. He did not think, however, that Dr. Kenny, Resident Medical Officer of Rotorua, who had done good work in the past, should be displaced. If anything was done it should be in the direction of getting a man who had had wide experience of thermal springs in the Old Country, to control and improve the baths of the colony generally. It would pay the colony to do so. The matter, as he had already said, was now under the consideration of the Government. RAILWAY FREIGHT ON MANURE. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister for Railways, Whether he will abolish the railway freight on the carriage of manure for the use of country settlers throughout the colony, and thus encourage the improvement of land ; and confer the same privilege on all parts of the colony as has been conferred on those districts where lime is found, and is carried free of railway charge ? The Minister would agree with him that if ever there was a time in the history of the colony when the farmers should be encouraged it was the present time. He was very loth to ask the Minister to carry anything free on the railways ; in fact, he was rather of opinion that nothing should be carried free ; at the same time, as lime was carried free in certain parts of the colony, he thought in other parts of the colony where lime could not be easily obtained, that other manures should be carried free. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said he must give a similar reply to that which he recently gave to the honourable member for Waikato. He did not think anything should be carried free on the railways; and if it was to become a question whether, because lime was carried free, they should therefore carry manures free, then the alternative was whether the free carriage of lime should be abolished. He might say that the free carriage of lime had not been availed of to anything like the extent that was anticipated. While he thought manures should be carried at the lowest possible rate, he felt it was, as a matter of principle, a Manures and the haulage also cost money. should be carried at the lowest possible rate ; but he hoped that the good-sense of the settlers would enable them to see that some charge should be made for a service that could only be performed at a certain cost to the colony. If they kept on giving free carriage first upon one article and then another, it must inevitably result in the amount being provided by taxation in some other form. LAWRENCE RAILWAY OFFICES. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka) asked the Minister for Railways, If he will during the financial year authorise the erection of suitable offices at the Lawrence Railway-station ? The railway traffic at this place had considerably increased, and the present accommodation was far from adequate. In bad weather there was no shelter for passengers or people waiting for the train. It was absolutely necessary that improvements should be made. The buildings were not only unsuitable but unsightly in the extreme, and he hoped the Minister would give him a favourable answer. Sir J. G. WARD

(Minister for Railways) said it was contemplated making improvements at the Lawrence railway-station yards as soon as the necessary funds were available. # GREY DISTRICT HOSPITAL AND CHARITABLE AID BOARD. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked the Government, Whether they will reconsider their decision not to allow the appeal lodged by the Greymouth Borough Council against the levy made by the Grey District Hospital and Charitable Aid Board ; if not, will they state why they refuse to grant to the Borough Council the right to appeal against what is considered an unjust levy ? It appeared that the Grey County Council, which represented the largest majority on the Charitable Aid Board, had made a levy upon the local bodies-that was, the Borough Councils in that county : but, in making that levy, they had not taken into account the revenue derived from the rates levied upon mining property. The Borough Council contended that all rates received - whether from mining or general property-should be taken into account in order to base the calculation as to what each local body should contribute. Against that decision the Borough Council of Greymouth had appealed, and passed a resolution and had forwarded that resolution to the Colonial Secretary. Section 26 of " The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885," made it mandatory on the Colonial Secretary to grant the appeal. He was very anxious to know on what ground the department or the Government declined to grant the appeal. He believed it was said that the same question that was now raised was decided by a prior Magistrate some three years ago : but as the Magistrate's decision unfortunately in these matters was final and conclusive, the local body for whom he was asking this question deemed it right that this new levy

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of the law given by the Magistrate who decided the question some three years ago. Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary) said the position was as follows: In 1898 the Greymouth Borough Council, being dissatisfied with the valuation made by the Grey District Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, appealed against the levy of the Board on the ground that the Board had excluded mining property from such valuation. An inquiry was held as provided by the Act, and the Commissioners disallowed the appeal on the ground that mining property was exempt from rating for hospital and charitable aid purposes. The Borough Council had again appealed against the levy made by the Board, on the ground that it was unjust ; and the Government had decided that an inquiry was unnecessary, as the question was decided in the former appeal, and the decision then given was final under the Act. That was why the Government was unable to grant a further appeal. The matter had been before the Cabinet, and that was the decision which had been arrived at. Mr. GUINNESS desired to call the honourable gentleman's attention to sections 26 and 44 of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885," under which an absolute right of appeal was given. Sir J. G. WARD said they had appealed. Mr. GUINNESS said, Not this year, but against the decision given three years ago. If the honourable gentleman would refer this question to the Law Officers of the Crown he ventured to say that they would inform the Government that the Colonial Secretary had no right to refuse the appeal-that it was an absolute appeal given by the Act against every levy that was made. That was a point, according to the honourable gentleman's own statement, that evidently had not been considered. Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable gentleman was asking them to reconsider a former decision. Mr. GUINNESS said, Yes, because that decision had evidently been made erroneously, according to the two sections he had quoted. He asked whether the honourable gentleman would obtain the opinion of the Law Officers, so as to avoid the necessity of the Council going to the Supreme Court for a decision. Sir J. G. WARD said he would be very glad to look into the matter. He could only tell the honourable gentleman that the answer was that the decision formerly given was final under the Act, but, as he had said, he would be very glad to further consider the matter. SANATORIUM FOR CONSUMPTIVES. Mr. STEVENS (Manawatu) asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether it is the intention of the Government to establish a sanatorium for consumptive

patients in the colony ; if so, will he have a report made as to the suitability of the locality of Levin for the purpose : should the report be favourable, will he consider the question of erecting the establishment in that locality ? He did not profess to have any Mr. Guinness informed by a high medical authority that it was thoroughly suitable for the purpose suggested. Although his question did not necessarily imply that the sanatorium should perforce be located at Levin, one great advantage, if the climatic conditions were favourable, would be, that it was within easy reach of the chief city of the colony, and of the centre where the department was managed from, it also had the advantage of railway communication, enabling patients to be taken to the doors of the establishment without difficulty. Another advantage would be that there would be no necessity for the Government to purchase land at a high price, as there were large blocks of Government land in the locality, and also plenty of suitable timber. In fact, all the circumstances pointed to the assumption that Levin would be a very suitable locality for the purpose indicated. Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary) in reply, said that the question of a site for a sanatorium was a very important one, and when a site was being selected the question would have to be gone into with the view to having the establishment placed in a part of the colony where the climate was considered the best for the treatment of consumptives, and without any other consideration for any particular locality or district. If the climatic conditions at Levin and Otaki were considered superior to those of any other place, then when the time arrived to establish such an institution, that place, he took it, would be selected. He knew it was a very healthy locality, and that a great deal could be said in its favour ; but, as he had stated, in the selection of a site for consumptives, the climatic conditions would be placed before everything. In addition, the site would require to be close to a railway to enable the patients to be taken to and from without difficulty. All parts of the colony would be reported on before a final decision was arrived at. Mr. STEVENS asked if the Minister was in favour of having an inspection made of the locality in question. Sir J. G. WARD said, Yes. He would be very pleased to have an inspection made of that locality, with others.

COOK ISLANDS AUXILIARY STEAMER. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) asked the Minister of Marine, -- (1) Whether the engineer appointed to the Cook Islands auxiliary steamer, " Countess of Ranfurly," is a properly qualified person ; (2) what grade of certificate does he hold ; and (3) what rate of wages is he being paid ? Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister of Marine) said the reply to the first part of the question was, Yes. The engineer appointed to this vessel was a properly qualified person. He held a license issued prior to the passing of the legislation of 1899 dealing with oil-engine vessels, and under the regulations issued under that Act there were only two classes of certificates for such service-the one was for deep water,

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licenses this engineer held had been equal to that of a deep-water certificate. The wages paid to the officer in question was \$15 per month. He was a man who had had several years' service in the class of vessels referred to, in addition to experience in an engineer's shop, and he was the best officer that could be obtained for the position. # JUNIOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION- PAPERS. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked the Government, Whether the Minister of Education is aware that in the Junior Civil Service examination, which is competitive, and upon the result of which the future of so many candidates depend, many of the examiners mark the work of their own pupils ; and that the papers containing the candidates' answers are, when valued, retained by the examiners, to be afterwards given out to their pupils as scribbling- paper, to the great annoyance and even injury of those candidates who have been examined ? Mr. HALL-JONES (Minster of Marine) said the question consisted of two parts. In regard to the first part, he might say that the greatest care had always been taken in the selection of examiners ; for instance, none of the examiners for the examination of January, 1901, were primary or secondary school teachers ; and he thought there was no ground for the assumption that any of the

examiners marked the papers of their own pupils. This held equally for previous years. Secondly, it has been usual hitherto to follow the general practice in examinations, and to allow examiners to retain the candidates' answers. He saw objections to this course, and had already directed that in future the worked papers should be sent to the department, to be kept for one year, and then destroyed. # TEACHERS' CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked the Government, What steps does the Minister of Education propose to take in order to have the examinations in music including singing, and in sewing, for teachers' certificate examinations conducted by independent examiners instead of by teachers appointed on the recommendation of a Secretary or an Inspector of an Education Board ; and will he abolish the present system under which the examiners value and decide upon the work of their own pupils ? Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister of Marine) said the department was quite sensible of the disadvantage of being dependent upon local examiners for some of the subjects of the certificate examination. Formerly writing, music (including singing), and sewing were examined locally by examiners nominated by the Supervisors. For the last two years writing and the theoretical part of the music examination had been provided for by means of independent examiners, and a similar change was in contemplation in regard to needlework, but it was not found practicable to make recent examination. Three out of twenty-three examiners in needlework at the last examination were teachers, and two were relatives of teachers ; these were all at smaller centres. At the next examination it was proposed to have all the needlework examined by one or more independent examiners for the whole colony. As regarded the only remaining subject not thus provided for-namely, the vocal test in music, they had always found it difficult to get qualified examiners at the smaller centres. They had had to pay as much as \$17 for an examiner to go from elsewhere to examine one or two candidates. These examiners were not appointed by the Inspectors or Secretaries of Boards, but the latter were sometimes asked to recommend a suitable person. Last January three of the local assistant examiners in singing were teachers-namely, those at Whangarei, Greymouth, and Lawrence. The marks for the written paper in the theory of music and for the vocal test were added together. He must remark that the teachers' certificate examination was not a competitive examination. Directions for the vocal test were drawn up by the examiner who set the theoretical part of the paper, and were sent separately under seal to the Supervisor at each centre, so that the same vocal test was given everywhere. ## INCREASE TO SALARIES OF DEPUTY-REGISTRARS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister of Justice, Whether, in view of the large amount of additional work and responsibility imposed on Deputy-Registrars of the Supreme Court by reason of their having to perform the duties of Clerks of Awards under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Government will provide additional salary to such officers, commensurate with such increased work and responsibility ? Under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act the duties of the Clerks of Awards fell on the Deputy-Registrars of the Supreme Court, and entailed extra work on these officers. The Act of last session, he was informed, put even more work than usual on these officers, and it seemed a very unfair thing that they should receive no additional salary for the extra work involved. Of his own knowledge he knew that their ordinary duties filled up their time, and he hoped the Minister would be able to see his way to give them some additional salary, as was really deserved. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) said he was not aware that the Registrars did any more work than was sufficient to occupy the time that they had to give to the service of the colony, and, if that were so, then he did not see that any additional salary should be claimed, because they happened to do a little more work at one particular time than another. If their time was filled up by their doing the work within the service hours, he did not think the Registrars had any great grievance. At the same time, he would make inquiries, and if it were found the amount of work they were called upon to do was excessive, he would

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matter would be taken into consideration in framing the estimates. **MINE-MANAGERS' CERTIFICATES.** Mr. E. G. ALLEN (Waikouaiti) 4.30. asked the Minister of Mines, When the result of the examination held in January last for mine-managers' certificates will become known? Since he had given notice of the question, the examiners had announced the results of the examination referred to. He would, however, take advantage of this occasion to state that six months seemed to him to be an absurdly long time between the holding of the examinations and making known the results of such ; and it was a very great hardship on the students, many of whom had to wait for the results of their examinations before they could enter into engagements. He was personally acquainted with some cases of hardship. One person had an offer of an engagement in South Africa, provided he passed his examination as a mine-manager, and he had to wait six months before getting the result. Was that right? He was quite aware that the Minister of Mines had no responsibility in the matter ; but he put the question with the view of getting the Minister to impress upon the examiners the necessity for being more thoughtful for students' interests, and more expeditious in making known the results of the examinations. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) said the honourable gentleman had himself answered the question. The Board of Examiners met on the 22nd of last month, and the results had been communicated to the candidates. At the same time, he agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was to be regretted that so long a time was allowed to elapse between the holding of the examinations and the making known of the results. As the Board was appointed by Act, however, he had no power to alter the present condition of things, but attention having been drawn to the matter publicly, he hoped that in future the results of the examinations would be issued more promptly.

FLAX-GRADER FOR WELLINGTON. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister for Agriculture, Whether it is true, as suggested in certain newspapers, that the Government propose to cancel the appointment of the Government Flax-grader in the City of Wellington ; and, if they so propose, what is their reason for such proposal ? Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture) said that some twelve months ago those engaged in the flax industry and representing the Flax-millers' Association waited upon him as a deputation for the purpose of having a grader appointed. In reply, they were told that if they were prepared to pay a small sum for grading, which would go towards paying the salary of a grader, one would be appointed, and a trial given to their suggestion. The deputation seemed quite satisfied, and they represented Mr. McGowan whole of those engaged in the industry in the Wellington Province. On the strength of that, applications were invited for the position of grader, and one was employed ; but advantage had been taken of his services to a limited extent only. He had instructed his department to send out notices to the flaxmillers that if they did not take advantage of the grader's services, as was arranged when his appointment was advocated, the system would be discontinued, and that the grader would be paid off. Mr. FIELD. - It was the merchants who would not take advantage of it. Mr. DUNCAN. - It was the millers that pressed for the appointment of a grader. Mr. FIELD. - Make it compulsory. Mr. DUNCAN said he was not in favour of compulsion. If it was a good thing, they would take advantage of it without being compelled to do so. Nothing definite had yet been done in the matter, and it would depend entirely upon the replies that he received from the flaxmillers how it would end. He was not prepared to continue paying the salary of a grader if those interested were not prepared to take advantage of his services.

GLADSTONE ASSOCIATION. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will place a sufficient sum on the estimates for the purpose of refunding to the people who had intended to become settlers in the Gladstone Association the money which was paid as survey-fees? He asked the question at the request of a gentleman in his district, who was one of the intending settlers referred to in the question, and who had written to him in the following terms :- "I hear that most of the members of the association that could not wait for an indefinite period have had their survey-money returned. If the Government had the survey completed anything near the time promised I would have been glad to have got the land for settlement, but as the time went by I had to seek work in

other localities." That is what the gentleman stated, and if correct, as he believed it was, then he thought he had a grievance, and that the Government should return the money. Mr. DUNCAN said the Gladstone Association was formed many years ago, and the members of that association were required to deposit the estimated cost of the survey. When the ballot was drawn, certain members of that association withdrew, being either dissatisfied with the lands which fell to them, or for other reasons. Their deposit, which amounted to half the estimated cost of the survey, was used to make part of the survey of the block, and it was understood that if the land was selected by any one else, they would get back the amount so deposited. The land was open for many years and was never selected : and lately the Land Board decided to make the sections a forest reserve. It would, therefore, be impossible for the members to get their deposits from any incoming tenant, hence their application to the

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however, that such a refund should not be made, as they had an opportunity of taking up the land, and the Government was at considerable cost in surveying the sections, a good deal more than the amount deposited, and, therefore, the members, having failed to carry out their agreement, must suffer the loss. That was the department's version of the matter. If the land was surveyed in time for the members to take it up, and they refused, then the Government should not be made to bear the loss over the matter, when the land had to be turned to some other purpose. Mr. MASSEY .- The man was anxious to go on to the land, but could not wait for the completion of the survey. Mr. DUNCAN said that if the special case alluded to by Mr. Massey was one of special hardship, then he should petition the House for a refund, and it could be dealt with in that way. LIME FOR THE WEST COAST. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) asked the Minister of Lands, If he will take steps to acquire and work a lime-kiln somewhere near the Manawatu Gorge, so that farmers on the West Coast may be placed in a like position to the Otago farmers in obtaining agricultural lime at a reasonable cost ? He understood that the Government had a lime-kiln which they worked, somewhere in the South Island, and that the settlers in Otago and Southland could obtain lime at something like 12s. a ton. On the west coast of this Island they had to pay something like £1 8s. a ton ; and any one who knew anything about the matter could understand how expensive this made it for farmers who wished to use lime when they had to pay that price for it. There was a limestone deposit somewhere near the Manawatu Gorge, and if the Minister could see his way to send some one to look for a good lime supply near the railway, he thought he would be able to meet the requirements of the settlers. Mr. O'MEARA .- Mangatainoka. Mr. LETHBRIDGE said he thought there was a lot of good limestone at Mangatainoka ; and he hoped that something would be done in the direction indicated. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said the honourable member in asking this question had referred to some lime-kilns in the South. Well, the working of these kilns was not far enough advanced yet for him to be able to say exactly the price which they would be able to deliver lime. They expected to be able to deliver it for about 12s. 6d. Mr. LETHBRIDGE .- They are getting it from private individuals for about that, down South, I believe. Mr. DUNCAN thought the cheapest was about 18s. An Hon. MEMBER. - 15s. to 16s. Mr. DUNCAN expected, when the scheme was complete, they would be able to supply it at about 12s. 6d. But they had been trying improved kilns, and it was a very difficult thing factory commencement in the first instance, but he thought himself it was well worth while to make improvements, and put it in working order. He thought it would be better to await the result of the present operations before going in for fresh works. He might say there was a reserve near Woodville containing 73} acres, situated near the Gorge Bridge. It was offered for lease by auction in 1898, for working the limestone. Opinions differed as to the quality of the stone, and probably that accounted for no one caring to undertake converting it. It was again offered in 1899, but still no tender was received for it. The department would be glad to receive any reasonable offer for working the stone, and making it available for farmers on the West Coast or

elsewhere. PAIKAKARIKI ROAD. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will have a survey made of a new route for portion of the Main West Coast (North Island) Road which will avoid the present steep climb over the Paikakariki Hill? The Main West Coast Road of the North Island was rapidly approaching completion, thanks to the generous treatment the local bodies had received at the hands of the present Govern- ment ; but the one blemish in that road was the Paikakariki Hill. It was an historic place and a most picturesque spot, but for the pur- pose of a road it was far too steep. He only asked now that a survey should be made with a view of ultimately doing away with that steep gradient, not, of course, anticipating that a new road could be formed at once. He under- stood there were several alternative routes, each better than the present one, and if a survey were made now there would be some hope in the future of getting a more suitable route. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) .- Does the road go through Crown lands ? Mr. FIELD .- In one case it does in part. In another case it is sea-coast. Mr. DUNCAN said this road, when opened, would be entirely under the control of the County Council, the Government considering that they had done with it. As to the ques- tion of making a survey to see if a better route could be found, he would consider the matter, because he himself believed the present route was not the best that could be obtained. He could not, however, hold out much hope of any large sum of money being spent in that direction for some time to come, as there were a good many places further back in the bush that were absolutely without roads. It had also to be remembered that the railway-line ran alongside this road, so that the people in that locality, he thought, might do with the present road fairly well for a year or two. The Govern- ment were, however, prepared to assist the County Council in ascertaining whether a better line of route existed. RUAPEKAPEKA PA. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) asked the Minister of Lands, If he will take the neces-

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the Natives, in order that the graves of those soldiers who fell in the engagement at that place may be protected ? For several years past the residents in this locality had been anxious that this historic spot should be ac- He held in his quired by the Government. hand a letter which he had received from the Chairman of the School Committee, stating that he had written to the School Commis- sioners in Auckland some time ago asking them to take steps to acquire the pa for an education reserve. They indorsed the opinions expressed by the Chairman, stating that the correspondence would be forwarded to the Go- vernment, with a request that steps might be taken in the matter. Nothing, however, had since .been done. This historic spot was now simply a waste, and overgrown with fern, and he thought it would be to the credit of the colony if the twenty - one acres contained in this pa and its surroundings were acquired from the Natives. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said the Ruapekapeka Pa was situated on a subdivision of the Ruapekapeka Native Block, and was held under Native Land Court title. The legislation of the past few years prevented the Government from negotiating with the owners for the purchase of this piece of ground. Possibly when the Native Council was in full operation it might consider whether this his- torical place should not be reserved and main- tained, so far as it could be, in its present state. Mr. HOUSTON asked, If he handed the letter he had received from the Chairman of the Com- mittee to the Minister, would a reply be sent in writing? Mr. DUNCAN .- Yes. # TAX ON STALLIONS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister for Agriculture, Whether he does not consider that the imposition of a tax on stallions would not do more to improve the breed of horses in the colony than the importation of high-class stallions from England ; and whether the Go- vernment will take steps to impose such tax ? He understood this question had appeared on the Order Paper more than once. There was a very strong feeling among the farming com- munity that the imposition of a tax on stallions would tend very largely to improve the breed of horses. The number of poor "scrubbers " in the country at the present time was, it was believed, to a large extent due to the fact that there was a breed of stallions going round the country

whose services could be obtained at a very cheap rate, and were in consequence largely used, and such a tax would have the effect of weeding out the poorer class of animals. This had been put to him by the farmers in a very forcible manner, and he trusted the Minister would be able to give him a favourable reply. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture) said a Bill dealing with this matter was in course of Mr. Houston tax should be levied, and that the proceeds of that tax should go to the agricultural associations to be distributed in prizes for the best breeds of horses at the shows. This would be in the direction of improving the breed of horses in the colony. # DAIRY SCHOOL AT LEVIN. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister for Agriculture, Whether it has been finally decided to establish a dairy school on the Government experimental station at Levin ; and, if so, when it is likely that such dairy school will be in operation ? Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture) said it was his intention to have a dairy school on the Levin State Farm ; it was a very suitable place, and with the water-supply that had been brought in should prove a success. The scheme, however, had not yet been definitely decided upon. ## REVALUATION AT HOKIANGA AND KAIHU. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) asked the Minister of Lands, If he will cause a revaluation of the high lands between Hokianga and Kaihu ? For some considerable time the settlers had been agitating to have their rents lowered, and he had a letter from a Mr. Hawkings, residing there, who was the last of thirty-five who had taken up land there ; all the others had been obliged to leave through bad burns, bad roads, and high rents. They were satisfied with their sections, but owing to the high nature of the land it was difficult to get a good burn, and that, taken into consideration with bad roads and high rents, made it impossible for them to make a living. Then, in addition to this, their sections were loaded with a charge of 4s. an acre for roading purposes, and very little had been done ; and the settlers had to pay this heavy loading for a period of 999 years. He hoped the Minister would visit the district for himself, and see the state of things there. It was difficult, also, for settlers to get advances from the Advances to Settlers Office. One settler had cleared three hundred acres and put up five or six miles of sheep-fencing, and his improvements ran into £600 or \$700; and yet when he applied to the Advances to Settlers Office for an advance of \$100 he was told by the Chief Valuer at Auckland that, even if his improvements amounted to £1,000 he could not get the advances. These were the kind of difficulties the northern settlers met with, and he felt sure the Minister would see that they got redress. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said the answer to the question as supplied to him was as follows : --- " All the Crown lands between Hokianga and Kaihu, as well as in all the other districts, are carefully valued before they are put in the market. The price at which some of these lands are now in the market varies from 5s. to #1 10s. per acre. No Crown lands can be

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capital value." He could see there was something not quite right in regard to the Advances to Settlers Department. He knew the office was very careful, and would make sure in every way before advancing money. It was a hardship for these people that when they went on to bush land and improved it they did not receive more consideration ; and he was of opinion that if they got assistance from the office they would stay on the land and improve it, instead of running away from it. He did not think the Board was always judicious, although they erred on the right side in being careful. At present he did not see how anything could be done in the way of revaluation without throwing the sections open again, as it would not be fair to those occupying adjoining sections. He would, however, make inquiries into the matter. LIME-BURNING, ALBURY ESTATE. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) asked the Minister of Lands, Whether anything has been done in the matter of establishing a plant for the purpose of burning lime on the Albury Estate for the use of the settlers and Government tenants in that district ; and, if not, will he obtain a report on the question at an early date ? This question was very easy to answer, because it would take very little to accomplish what he wanted. On the last occasion he put the question the Minister said the

Government kilns were about to be opened near Palmerston South, and after the returns had been got from them he would see what could be done. There was no analogy between the two cases ; the one cost thousands, and the other could be done for less than hundreds. It was necessary that the settlers should have lime on some parts of this estate, and the question ought to be gone into at once. The settlers would reap great benefit as well as the Government, who owned the estate. He did not wish to cast any reflection, but it had come to his knowledge that, while lime was carried free on the railways, in some instances the lime-burners had raised the price to the consumer, and it was therefore necessary that the kilns should be opened for the settlers' benefit. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said no further arrangements had been made for burning lime on the Albury Estate. An offer was made by Mr. Thompson to establish a kiln, but his terms could not be accepted. He would make inquiries and see what terms had been offered, and if they were at all reasonable he would be inclined to give him the opportunity to see what he could do. He did not think the Government should go further into the matter of lime-burning than they were doing at present. They had a new style of burning under trial, and expected to be able to burn it much more cheaply ; but it was necessary to find out whether they were right or wrong before advancing any further. If Mr. Thompson's scheme was at all reasonable, he would give him, at any rate, a lease for a time to give him a fair trial. Mr. E. G. ALLEN (Waikouaiti) asked the Minister for Agriculture, What has been done towards giving effect to the promise of the previous Minister-the late Sir John McKenzie- to make experiments to discover the most effective means of destroying small birds, that are so injurious to the agricultural farmers' interests? He had brought this question before Ministers on two or three previous occasions. Last session the Minister brought in a Small-birds Nuisance Bill, but it was not considered. He hoped the honourable gentleman would deal with it this year. But that Bill did not go as far as he should like. The object of the Bill was to compel people to endeavour to destroy the birds ; but the object of his question was to inform the farmer how to destroy them. He believed the officers of the Stock Department. would do good service to the country if they made experiments to ascertain the most effective kind of poison to be used in destroying small birds, and also the kind of seed that the birds took most readily. The County Councils were spending a lot of money in trying to keep down the small-bird nuisance, and they distributed poisoned grain to the settlers, but it was not effective. The sparrows especially were very clever with their bills. They shelled off the husks and only eat the kernel of the poisoned grain, and, of course, the poison was on the outside. They wanted to have experiments made with some kind of shelled seeds, such as shelled oats, pearl-barley, or sago, or something of that sort, poisoned either with phosphorus or strychnine, or some poison which the department could ascertain would be the most suitable. There was no doubt these birds were a very great curse to this colony, especially in the South Island, where there were blue-gum and other plantations near the cornfields. Acres of crop were destroyed ; as soon as the seed was sown the birds attacked it, and they kept on feeding on it nearly the whole time until it was finally threshed. It would confer a great boon on the settlers if the department discovered some way whereby these small birds could be destroyed effectively. He thought, in connection with the Bill, which he hoped the Minister would reintroduce, that some information of the kind he had indicated should be given, and also a description of the poison to be used, so that there could be a systematic process of poisoning at the same season of the year. He believed if the matter was taken in hand in this way we could practically get rid of the small-bird nuisance. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture) said it was perfectly well known that poisoning would effectually deal with these birds, but the trouble was that farmers always neglected the opportunity at the proper season of the year. Generally in the winter time, when feed was scarce, the birds would take poison greedily, and the nuisance could then easily be dealt with. But then the birds were not doing any harm ; and the farmers forgot about their troubles, and the birds were not molested. One man would take the trouble to poison, but two or three of his

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that if we had a compulsory clause in the Bill, and if strychnine was used in the way he had seen it used, there would not be much difficulty in keeping these birds within bounds. We should never get rid of them-they were like the rabbits-they would always be with us; but he thought, at the same time, that they could be reduced to such a state that their effect would scarcely be felt. He intended to introduce the Bill again, and, if possible, get it carried. # MASTERTON COURTHOUSE. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) asked the Minister of Justice, If he will make provision this year for the erection of a new Courthouse in Masterton ? The people of Masterton had been looking forward to the erection of a new Courthouse for a number of years. He thought the Minister was acquainted with the present structure. It was a building of wood, which had been erected a considerable time ago. No doubt it had answered very well its purpose in the past, but the business had materially increased. They had now a District Court at Masterton, and improved accommodation was required. The present building might be advantageously converted into a police-station, but he thought it desirable that a Courthouse should be provided of a better character, and something more in keeping with the other Government buildings now in Masterton. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) said he was not aware that this building was in such a dilapidated state as the honourable member led the House to believe. He was quite sure the honourable gentleman was anxious to see that progressive town looking as well as possible by means of the Government buildings erected there. He would be very pleased to take an opportunity of visiting the district, and seeing for himself the necessity for a new Courthouse. LEVIN AND WERAROA TOWNSHIPS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Government, Whether, with a view to the probability of electric power being required at some future time to light the Townships of Levin and Weraroa, and Government institutions in these districts, with electricity, and for the purpose of providing a high-pressure water-supply for the same townships and institutions, a reserve of sufficient area will be set apart on the Ohau River or Makahaka Stream for the purpose of constructing a dam and other necessary works for the above purposes? A reserve might be set apart by the Government, either in the Ohau River or the Makahaka Stream, for the purpose of the erection of a dam, and other necessary works for the purpose of supplying electric - lighting power and high- pressure water-supply to the Townships of Levin and Weraroa, and the Government institutions in that district, when the proper time came. He would point out to the Minister that the district was growing very rapidly, and apparently there was going to be quite a crop Mr. Duncan electric - lighting and water - power would be required. The danger was that the whole of the Crown lands there might be disposed of without this matter being attended to, and he called the Minister's attention to the fact in order to obviate that. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said the upper waters of the Ohau River and the Makahaka Stream were Native or freehold lands. Possibly a reserve with a sufficient elevation could be obtained within the Horowhenua No. 6 Block to provide a high-pressure water- supply, and this could be attended to, he thought, when a further subdivision of that block was made ; but this was not likely, as the river left the Crown lands before it attained a sufficient elevation. The supposition was that there were no Crown lands at a sufficient elevation to be of It was all Native any service for this purpose. or freehold land. Mr. FIELD .- Will you see about taking some of that ? Mr. DUNCAN said he would have a report made to see whether there was any site that would be of service. If there was it would be reserved. # PATENT RIGHTS. Mr. LAWRY (Parnell) asked the Government, If they will take effective steps to protect patent rights against spurious imitations ? The question of patent rights was supposed to be protected by law, but there were spurious imitations by the introduction of a screw or the changing of a crank, or something of that kind, for which a patent was issued as though it were a new invention, but which to all intents and purposes was nothing but a spurious imitation. He hoped the Hon. the Minister would see his way to protect inventors in such cases. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) said the honourable gentleman's

question put him in a very difficult position, and he was afraid he would be unable to give the answer the honourable member would like. Provision was made by which patentees were able to protect themselves, but the suggestion in the question was that the Government should undertake the responsibility of protecting patentees. He did not think that was a position the Government could take up, unless the fees charged for patents were very much higher. It could hardly be expected that the Government, having granted a patent, and the patentee having the right in the country for which it was granted, should follow that up and protect the patentee when he had the means of protecting himself by the law of the land.

WASTE LANDS BOARDS. Mr. LAWRY (Parnell) asked the Minister of Lands, If he will this session introduce a Bill to make Waste Lands Boards elective ? Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said that Land Boards had under the statute law very considerable powers, and he thought it would be difficult for the Government to keep an

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bability was that the Board would be very frequently in conflict with the Chairman, who was Commissioner of Crown Lands and a Government official, and that members would misconstrue what their powers were. At the present time members of the House who were members of Land Boards did not always act in the interests of settlers, but sometimes in accordance with their own political ideas regarding land administration rather than in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Land Act. Mr. HERRIES .- Is it the department that says this ? Mr. DUNCAN said, That was what the department said. They did not understand the Land Act, and he thought it would be rather worse with elected Boards. Then, if the members were elected they would require to be elected on the same platform as members of the House. Men who had no land would require to be represented on the Land Boards, just the same as those who had land, and what would be needed was a general election. This would necessitate rules and regulations being laid down, and heavy penalties would need to be imposed upon the members of the Board if they transgressed the law, or else there would be trouble. Mr. MASSEY. - We want men who know something about land. Mr. DUNCAN said that was the principal thing that was wanted, and he did not know that they would be more likely to get such men under the elective principle than in the present way. However, he did not think it would be wise to start a new system just at the present time, or until they had made further advancement.

WELLINGTON CITY ABATTOIR. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister for Agriculture, Whether he has been officially notified of the selection of a site at Ngahauranga for the Wellington City abattoir ; and whether the Government will, before approving of any site, take the opinion of the small butchers of the Wellington District on the subject ? The question referred to the proposed site of the Wellington City Council abattoir. The Minister would fully realise that it was one of great importance ; and, further, that the district about Wellington was of such a nature that it would be a very hard thing indeed to select the site that would be most convenient to all the parties concerned. He understood a site had been provisionally selected at Ngahauranga, close to the Meat Company's works, but that this selection met with a large amount of opposition, particularly on the part of small butchers. The small butchers, he submitted, deserved every consideration in this matter. He noticed from a Wellington paper that there was a proposal from the Makara district to ask the Government to erect an abattoir there. This seemed to him a little out of the way for the present, though it had large advantages ; but he thought that every site suggested should receive the attention of the Minister. He was fully VOL. CXVII .- 21. select the site, but it was for him to say whether he approved or not of any site suggested by the City Council, and he trusted the Minister would express disapproval of every site until he was thoroughly satisfied that the best site had been chosen. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture) said this was a very difficult matter, and he had gone to some trouble over it already. With a deputation of the City Council and of butchers he had examined three sites. Any one of the three would suit him perfectly well,

because the only stipulation that came within his jurisdiction was that he should be satisfied that on the site suggested all the appliances requisite to the carrying on of an abattoir in a proper manner were obtainable. Any one of the sites he had seen would do that. They were well supplied with clean water, or water that could easily be made clean, and all were reasonably convenient. He thought, if the small butchers would fall in with the proposal to establish an abattoir on the upper site of Ngahauranga, that would be most suitable, and they could utilise the ground at the other place as paddock-accommodation, as it would not be far away. By having the site on the Ngahauranga Flat they would have a good water-supply, could easily have the railway-siding run to the site, and would be saved a lot of town road-carriage. As he had said, he had no objection to any site the City Council had selected. If they requested to be allowed to carry on an abattoir on a site on which it could be carried on in a proper way, it was his duty to give them a permit to erect an abattoir on that site. He had done all he could to get the small butchers and the Corporation to come to some amicable arrangement, because he held it was for the benefit of the town as well as of the small butchers that the latter should be kept going ; and it was also for the benefit of the country, because if the butchering got into a ring, which it might do -- An Hon. MEMBER .- It has done. Mr. DUNCAN. Well, it was drifting that way. Of course, they knew what that would mean. It would mean dear meat, and that was not a good thing for the community. Not only that, it would mean low prices for the small farmers. He would like to see the small butchers still able to carry on their legitimate work, and hoped the local authorities would also see the advantage of this, and would fall into a scheme that would be suitable for all parties. # WORKMEN'S HOMES. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Government, Whether any further progress has been made in the purchase of land at Porirua for workmen's homes ? This question ought probably to have been addressed to the Right Hon. the Premier, inasmuch as he attended to that portion of the administration of the Land for Settlements Department so far as concerned the purchase of lands. Some time last year a request had been made by him that the Government should

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such land, and there were institutions there that employed a considerable number of hands-particularly the Lunatic Asylum ; and it was impossible for them to purchase from the settlers a single acre of freehold at a reasonable rate for the purpose of making homes. For various reasons, he understood, it had been difficult for the Government to acquire land in the locality, and mainly because the Land for Settlements Act had not been in a workable condition. Now that was being changed, and he trusted the Minister of Lands would lose no time in seeing that this want was supplied. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) might state in answer that the Land Purchase Board had selected a property, part of which was suitable for the above purpose. Negotiations were in progress to obtain that part, but it might be necessary to purchase the whole, as the owner was at present unwilling to sell the part, although willing to sell the whole. # IMPORTED STUD STOCK. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) asked the Minister for Agriculture, If he has yet made arrangements for the distribution of the recently imported stud stock ? This was a matter of considerable interest to the farming community, and naturally they all had a certain amount of curiosity as to what the Minister of Lands intended to do with these animals If they were all they were said to be, he thought they would all like to see one or more of them in their own particular districts. He was led to put this question to the Minister of Lands because he was not sure whether the Premier was in earnest in the statement he made in Christchurch when he was approached on this matter some few months ago. On that occasion he (Mr. Rhodes) had the honour of introducing a deputation from Lincoln College, by whom representations were made that one of the recently imported draught horses should be sent to the College. In reply, the Premier answered that private enterprise had already done sufficient for Canterbury, and their agricultural shows proved that they already had as good

stock in Canterbury as were to be found in any part of New Zealand, and that therefore his idea was that they ought to send these animals to the back blocks. Now, he (Mr. Rhodes) did not suppose the Government would go to the expense of importing these valuable animals and then send them out to the back blocks, where they could only serve scrubby underbred mares. He was quite sure the Minister for Agriculture would not agree to this. He would suggest that they should be sent to such districts as Canterbury, where there were good mares ; and they could afterwards send the progeny of these animals to the back blocks. As regards cattle, he did not think they could send pedigree bulls to a better place than Lincoln College. They had an excellent herd of shorthorns there, and he did not think the Minister could do better than send one of the bulls there, retaining the right of taking, on i carry out the working of the wharf in a suit- Mr. Field Mr. DUNCAN (Minister for Agriculture), in answering this question, might state that he had arranged that one of the Shire horses should be reserved for each Island. It would be sent to some central place easily accessible by rail, and a few approved mares of each district could be sent to this central place by train. The idea was that each district should be allowed to send a few selected mares to that horse at a very reasonable figure. There would be three of the horses for remounts for each Island, and they would be divided in such a way that the various districts of each Island would be fairly treated. He had no doubt that one would be placed somewhere in the neighbourhood of Christchurch - one perhaps about the centre of the Island, and one perhaps further South. As for the bulls, he believed it would be a good idea to place one of them, at any rate, some- where near Lincoln, so that it could be used for a few choice cows. Seeing that the public ought to get as much consideration as possible, he would keep this in mind, so that it might not be forgotten. CATTLE - LANDING IN AUCKLAND HARBOUR. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) asked the Government, If they will put a sum on the estimates to assist in providing a cattle-landing for the accommodation of the East Coast and northern settlers in some suitable place in the Auckland Harbour? He might say the diffi- culty at present was that the Auckland Har- bour Board had not within their jurisdiction any site that was suitable for the erection of a cattle-landing wharf. But there was situated some distance down the harbour - Okahu Point, he believed-some Native land that would admirably answer the purpose. Unfor- tunately, the Harbour Board had no jurisdic- tion over the property there, so that it was impossible for them to take the land ; and it was therefore for the Government, in the interest of the East Coast farmers and of the northern settlers, whom they desired to benefit and make prosperous, to see that a cattle-landing was provided there. If that were done, there was not the slightest doubt the Auckland Harbour Board would erect the wharf. If, therefore, the Minister of Lands could see his way clear to inquire into the matter, he he- lieved the honourable gentleman would find a very good landing could be provided ; and, as there was so much talk about improving the position of the farmers' products, he might be permitted to say that charity begins at home, and ask the Government to do something for the farmers of the East Coast and the far North. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) might state at once that the Government would look into the matter of this site, and if it was possible to get it and convey it to the Auckland Harbour Board they would be very pleased to do so. He had no doubt the Board would

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sent up to report on the whole matter, and he hoped they would be able very soon to hand over a site to the Board. # MAKURI-PONGAROA ROAD. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) asked the Minister of Lands, If he will cause inquiries to be at once made into the quality of metal placed on the Makuri-Pongaroa Road, as it is alleged that mud and useless material is being used ? He had no desire whatever to cast any reflection on the gentleman who was in charge of the Roads and Bridges Construction Department, who was undoubtedly a capable man. But at the same time he thought it was his duty, as representing an important electorate, to enter his protest against the way in which money was being absolutely

squandered in the construction of roads in his electorate, more especially in connection with the Makuri-Pongaroa Road. In this particular portion of that electorate they had an Inspector. Settlers had come down and waited on the Minister, and had protested against the rubbish which they were placing on this road. He might say the Minister, immediately his notice of question was placed on the Order Paper, took steps to have it stopped, as they were simply taking mullock out of the ditch and placing it on the centre of the road, and terming it "metalling." Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said that inquiry was being made, as suggested by the honourable member, but his remarks were supposed to refer to a species of sandy papa which had had to be used sometimes in that district, owing to the difficulty of obtaining hard metal at a reasonable cost. In some portions of the district; this sandy papa, or whatever they might call it, was of some value if it were put in the right place so that the sun got at it; but if they put it on the dark sides, where the sun did not reach it, it was of no value at all. He had seen, in travelling through the country, portions of road between Stratford and Whangamomona where sandy papa had been used for making an excellent road; but then care was taken to place it on the sunny side, where it had every opportunity to dry. Had it been placed on the lee side, and away from the sun, it would, of course, have been useless; and he believed this must be so in similar cases elsewhere. In the case referred to by the honourable member, they had either put the wrong material on the road or else they put it on in the wrong way. He must say, with reference to this district, that the man he had selected to look after its roads, Mr. Robinson, was taken away for other important work. It was to see about those lime-kilns, as he was an expert in that way, and he did not get to work there until the beginning of this winter. But he was now in the district, and he hoped that the honourable member and the settlers generally would feel that they had an officer in charge that would do ample credit to the Roads Department, and he was hopeful himself that #

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City). - Although this question has been debated at considerable length, and from various points of view, I feel it would be unfair to let the matter go to the vote without saying a few words upon it. We have at different times various questions placed before this House, that are dealt with from a theoretical point of view by certain members, who, it appears to me, look at all questions from one side only. It is necessary that every member should strive to look at all sides of this question, and to weigh it well before they come to a conclusion as to whether it is well to place it upon the statute-book or not. Many questions seem correct in theory, but in practice they do not apply they do not work out; and yet a person who speaks against some of those questions, or dares to vote against them, is considered by some members unprogressive, or perhaps to have leanings towards Conservatism. An Hon. MEMBER. - Hear, hear. Mr. ARNOLD. - The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) says "Hear, hear." Of course, he knows that I allude especially to him and to one or two others in this House; and, Sir, I mention especially the question of the elective Executive, the question of the single-tax, and other questions that are mentioned at different times. Mr. ELL. - I am not a single-taxer. Mr. ARNOLD. - I presume if the honourable member for Christchurch City is not a single-taxer he will be considered by some as leaning towards Conservatism, as he considers I am, because I find it impossible to support this measure and some others that he looks at and sees from one standpoint only. But, Sir, on this question we have had a great deal said that does not seem to be in any way related to the subject before the House. For instance, since the commencement of this debate we have had various members of the House quoting the poor working-man. The poor working-man is brought in on almost every question before this House. Now, it is true that the working-man has very much to complain of. It is true that the working-man has certain rights, and has to ask and protest until he receives them. But, Sir, we realise this: that the majority of those who upon questions such as this are continually speaking about the poor working-man are those who do not support the measures likely to benefit him when they come before this House; and numbers of those who have spoken so much about the poor working-man during the last

four or five sitting-days of this House, when questions arise shortly that affect him, will be voting in the "Noes" lobby. Then, we have been told a great deal about the property-tax. We have been told that those who vote against this Bill are practically voting in favour of the old property-tax. Why, Sir, there is no relation between the property-tax and the Bill now before the House. There may

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taxation upon values and the property tax, but there is none between the Bill now before the House and the property tax as we know it a few years ago. Sir, we have also been told in this debate a great deal about what is termed "the fat man." Well, we know that in some parts of the world there are those who have been spoken about- and, perhaps, rightly so -- as "the fat man"; and if a time should ever come when we have large zoological gardens in connection with New Zealand, I think we might well look round and see if we cannot come across such a creature as "the fat man," as others know him, and have him placed in the reserve, so that we may look on him and realise what he is like. At the present time, however, New Zealand knows very little of "the fat man," and as long as the present party remain in power, as long as we are able to pass legislation such as we have passed- An Hon. MEMBER .- The Premier is "the fat man." Mr. SEDDON .- He is still getting fatter. Mr. ARNOLD .- The person I am alluding to will not be known, I trust, in New Zealand. Of course, everybody knows that the honourable gentleman who was laughed at a few moments ago is received with cheers throughout New Zealand, and that he is received kindly wherever he goes. It is not necessary that we should seek for him to place him in the position I referred to just now; but, joking apart, Sir, it seems to me there are two sides to this question. You not only come to the question of rating on the unimproved value as it appears on the surface: you not only have to consider the question of that which is fair as between benefits received by one section of land and another; but you must also take into consideration the question of ability to pay. Members have used various illustrations in their speeches in this debate. Let me follow their example. We have, in the constituency represented by the honourable member for the Taieri, a large number of small settlers --- men who have a small cottage and five or six acres of land; there are a large number with even smaller sections; and right in the middle of this township there is a large factory that occupies a few acres of land-a factory that is the property of a large company. Now, I think there is no doubt that while it may be contended that it is right that the settler who has five or six acres, and perhaps a cow and some other stock, should pay as much as the company, for the reason that he has the same amount of : Christchurch City (Mr. Ell), and the member land, nevertheless there is the fact that the for Lyttelton, and one or two other member mill-owners are the people who are most able to Members will understand this question better than pay; and you must consider that question also.; they do at the present time. What is the Then you come into the small boroughs. On one side of the road you will find a small house. I have a case in my mind's eye at the present time. The small house is the property of a widow, an old lady, who is struggling to bring up one or two children. Right opposite there is a large house on about the same area of land as the widow occupies: the large house belongs to a gentleman who has a business in the city. Mr. Arnold times greater than that of the widow. Now, according to the arguments of the honourable member for Invercargill the other night, because the parties have each the same amount of frontage the widow must pay the same amount of taxation as the man who has the large house, and who is able to pay rates much better than she is. Mr. SYMES .- Quite right too. Mr. ARNOLD .- I am told, "Quite right too;" and I have no doubt it is so from that point of view, because only one side of the question is seen. But if you view the whole matter, and look at it fairly, you will find it is not so. Why, Sir, in the constituency of the honourable member for Lyttelton- a gentleman who advocates this proposal there is a very large tannery, which is the property of people who do not reside in the constituency, but the return from the output of that tannery is very considerable indeed. The buildings are continually being increased. The

value of the buildings upon that property shows that the tannery is paying : and not only the buildings but the machinery that is being placed in them show that. But we are told that under this system it is right that a person owning the same area of land, with hardly any improvements upon it, should pay precisely the same amount of taxation as those people who own this very valuable property. Then, you come to the case of a large city. Why, Sir, you have a large property in the city- perhaps some large insurance building, bank, or warehouse and you go out into the suburbs, perhaps not very far away, and there you find some little building upon the same amount of land these important buildings stand on. We know there is not the same amount of traffic on the road in front of the small building. We know that the Municipal Council does not expend the same amount in the upkeep of the roads, channels, and foot paths in the two cases. It is always the centre of a city which is the best looked after. Yet under this system those residing outside the city, and who do not receive the same amount of benefit, have to pay precisely the same amount of taxation as those in the centre of the city. An Hon. MEMBER. - NO. Mr. ARNOLD. - I say. Yes. An Hon. MEMBER. What about the difference in the value of the land ? Mr. ARNOLD. - I can only say that I hope. by the time this debate closes, the member for unimproved value ? Is land in a main street the same value as land in another street perhaps only 100 yards away ? Certainly not. The unimproved value of land is the prairie value ; yet in those two cases the owners would pay precisely the same taxation. But I do not wish to be misunderstood. I simply want to point out that there are two sides to the question. I do not say that the unimproved value is a wrong

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munities, boroughs, or country or town districts; but I say the people in those districts are the best able to judge whether it should apply to their district or not. In certain districts it may be a good system of taxation, but I say the Act we have at the present time is sufficient, inasmuch as it permits each district to decide whether it will adopt the system or not. Since this discussion commenced it has been shown that, in the opinion of some members, they have just rejected, and which they do not believe, it is not applicable to all constituencies. The honourable member for Avon has given notice to move in Committee that those who have leases shall be exempt. Then, there is another amendment which says that all agricultural show-grounds, racecourses, football-grounds, cricket-grounds, cycle-tracks, bowling- greens, reserves or other lands used solely for purposes of public recreation shall be exempt from this mode of taxation. An Hon. MEMBER. - Why ? Mr. ARNOLD. - Why I cannot tell. Simply, I presume, because this mode of taxation is not fair in all cases ; and if it is not fair in all cases, then, Sir, I contend that it should be left in the hands of the people to decide whether they will have it or not. But now we come to a larger question, and let us see what we purpose doing. We have in New Zealand 101 boroughs, 35 town districts, 87 counties, 231 road districts, 35 river districts, and 15 drainage districts, making a total of 504 districts in all, and out of this number there is something like thirty-three that have decided that they will adopt this system of taxation ; and because thirty-three districts have thought it wise to adopt this system of taxation. we are told that almost five hundred other districts should be compelled, perhaps against their will, to accept it also. The Premier says that when this Bill goes into Committee they may not be compelled to accept it, because a clause will be placed in the Bill which will enable them to vote themselves out of it. Why, Sir, it seems to me that such a clause as that is most absurd. At the present time any constituency who desire to go to the expenditure of having a poll upon this question can do so. But what are we proposing now? We propose, Sir, to compel about five hundred districts to take a poll, to go to the expense-and in some cases a very large expense -of taking a poll before they can be exempt from this taxation if they so wish to be; and I consider that is a most unfair thing. Then, Sir, take the example which has been given us during the past week: If there is one live organization in the City of Auckland it is the organization known as the Single-tax League. It is not only a live organization now, but

it has been for very many years. It was in 1894, and I believe it was previously. It certainly has been so ever since that date ; and, though this organization is so thoroughly alive, the poll which was taken there last week was defeated, and we may take it for granted that the result of it shows the feeling of the people - as far as those who voted in favour of the proposal are concerned, at any rate. And yet, after all the work, after all the publications, we find that only 753 persons voted in favour of the measure, and that there were 1,697 against it, or a majority of 944 against-more than two to one. Not only so, but the proposal was rejected in every ward in the city. Why, Sir, in the face of that, I say that we cannot in fairness pass a measure here which will compel the people of Auckland to accept that which think it wise should be brought into operation in their city. I thoroughly agree with the honourable member for Masterton, where, in the course of his speech last week, he said, speaking of taxation, that if it had to be altered ! it should be altered by slow degrees. Now, Sir, at the present time what have you ? You have an Act upon the statute-book which compels any borough, by a certain proportion getting up a petition and presenting it to the Council, to take a poll of those upon the roll as to whether they will adopt this mode of taxation in that borough or not. They are compelled to take that poll, and, Sir, when the poll is taken it is carried by a bare majority. I say, can we have anything more fair than that ? We talk about "government by the people and for the people"-why, Sir, this matter is in the hands of the people already. Why not leave it there, and not strive to take it out of their hands, as we are attempting to do by this Bill? There was a time, perhaps, when it might have been said that the workers had no vote in connection with these matters ; [but, thanks to the legislation of last session especially, the franchise has been so enlarged in connection with municipal polls that we have now almost all got this. I should like to see the franchise still broader, although at the present time the great majority have a vote on questions such as this. In my opinion, the present law is quite sufficient the people have the matter in their own hands, where I think it should be left. I think that when we have that which is good it is well that we should leave well alone. Mr. FOWLER (Auckland City). - Sir, I ought to know something about this subject. It is a subject to which I have given some considerable study, and during a recent visit to Auckland I had the benefit of nightly instruction from the men who consider themselves to be the wisest men in that community. The result is, I have come back to this House more convinced than ever that the only just and equitable method of levying local taxation is by levying it on the unimproved value of land. When speaking on the Address in Reply, at the beginning of the session, I intimated that I believed in the principle of local option, and I still believe in that principle. I am therefore glad that the Premier, in introducing this Bill, expressed his willingness to insert a local option clause in it. Hon. MEMBERS .- You have got that already. Mr. FOWLER .- Honourable members say that we have got that already. Yes, we have it the wrong way about. Some forty-five polls

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and only in three or four cases has a majority been recorded against the principle of rating on unimproved values. Every one of these polls costs a considerable sum of money, and in many cases the local authorities are deterred from taking a poll simply because of the cost. I say the Government would be wanting in their duty if they failed to make the Bill such that the great majority of places could adopt it without being put to the trouble and expense of a poll, leaving the minority to vote themselves out if they so desired. I would suggest to the Right Hon. the Premier, when the Bill gets into Committee, that a clause be inserted providing that in places where a poll has recently been taken it shall not come into force until three years from the time the poll was taken. This would prevent the possibility of any place being put to the expense of taking another poll in less than the stipulated three years, and, in the case of Auckland, would remove any reasonable objection that the result of the recent poll was upset by the Act. They will be having another poll in three years in any case, unless, of course, there should be a rapid

mortality amongst those 753 people who voted for the principle a week ago. I have read with some surprise, and I might say with some degree of pain, the speeches that have been made on this Bill by some honourable members. The speech of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Arnold) has surprised and pained me. The honourable member for Riccarton, who I notice is not at present in his place, made a remarkable speech ; but I will not say I was surprised at it, because he makes so many remarkable speeches. Some honourable members even say they do not always harmonize with one another ; but his namesake, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, we do expect consistency from. I believe he spoke very strongly against this Bill a night or two ago, and it will be a surprise to some to learn that the honourable gentleman was in favour of it-and in a compulsory form too - as far back as 1876. In 1876, when the Rating Act was being discussed in this House in Committee, an amendment was proposed to sub-section (5) of clause 2 to omit all the words after the words "rateable value," for the purpose of inserting the following words in lieu thereof : " of any land means 5 per cent. on the amount for which such land without any improvements thereon or thereto would sell in the market at the time of the valuation thereof." That was proposed by Mr. Button ; and on the question being put, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause," the Committee divided, and amongst those who voted "No"-that is, that the words do not stand part of the clause-is the name of Captain Russell. There are also some other honoured names in that list, amongst them the name of Sir George Grey, the name of Sir Robert Stout, and the name of, I presume, our old friend Mr. Thomson; so I expect to see him voting for this Bill now. Also the Mr. Fowlds any of the others are still members of this House. When I read some of the speeches that have been delivered on this Bill, coming from members whose interest in the cause of labour is beyond all doubt, it grieved me a good deal, because their speeches showed conclusively that those honourable gentlemen have not given the question the study which its importance demands - especially its importance in the interests of labour. Of course, I do not join with those who believe that labour requires any special privileges. I believe that what the workers in any country need is justice; and therefore, in considering this question and its effect upon labour, or upon any other section of the community, the first question to be asked is. Is it just ? And to demonstrate the justice of this, the truth of the principle that all rating should be upon the unimproved value of the land, is like starting to demonstrate the mathematical proposition that two and two is four. In fact, the justice of it, when put in its proper light, seems to me to be not a matter of opinion, but a matter capable of mathematical demonstration. It surely must be just to collect taxes from that which alone derives value from the services which have been produced by the expenditure of the taxes. That all municipal services the result of municipal expenditure reflect themselves in land value alone, and not in the value of buildings or improvements, is not a question of opinion, but is capable of mathematical demonstration. Every service, whether it be the making of a street, the cleaning of a street, or the lighting of a street, reflects itself wholly and solely in the value of the site whereon the house stands, and not one single penny in the way of increasing the value of the house itself. The same thing applies equally to the service of a municipal fire-brigade, a water-supply, or a drainage system. In fact, if the Municipality went further, and decided to supply the whole of the inhabitants with free gas, and a free tramway service, the result would be identically the same - in all cases the value of those services would be expressed in the land and not one penny in the building. This is capable of demonstration in this way : Take any property in a given locality, and the value of it before and after a municipal improvement is undertaken ; suppose it increases the amount of the value or rent 25 per cent., burn or take down the house : and the value remains in the site where the house stood. You can never increase the value of a house by one penny from any service the Municipality renders, because it can never be of greater value than it would cost to reproduce it. That is the test. The whole value of every service is inevitably expressed in the land-value. The position, therefore, is this : If you collect from the owners of houses the cost, or part of the cost, of

municipal services you inevitably give the owners of site values something for which they have not paid ; and you do it by making the owners of house property pay for something they do not receive.

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"The Equities of Taxation." Mr. FOWLDS .- My friend has read all the books of ancient and modern history, and is the walking encyclopædia of knowledge in this House : but he has not yet got hold of the fundamental principles of economic law. To go on from the point I was at -- if you give to any one a service without getting him to pay for it, it is only at the cost of those who are paying for it and not getting it : The question as to how this thing will affect different classes in the community is only of interest after you have settled the law of justice in the matter. But it is surprising how the old arguments keep repeating themselves after they have been completely exploded, and when you have explained one lot you find they come back afresh. For example, take that story about this system of taxation letting off the owners of big buildings in towns and cities and compelling the workers in the suburbs to pay more. That was stated very frequently in the case of Auckland, and was denied by those who had made a study of the question and knew how it would operate. But they kept on repeating it till slips were issued to each ratepayer showing how the thing would work out in each individual case. The result was surprising. It came out that in two wards, where large buildings existed that were thought would escape, they would have been compelled to pay \$5,000 a year more under the new system than under the present ; and, taking Queen Street itself, which is the centre of large buildings, only two properties in Queen Street would pay less under the new system than at the present time, and one is a new one well up the street, where land-values are not so high as at the bottom of the street. But when this fact was made known, the opponents said, " Look at these people : see how they are appealing to the cupidity of the smaller holders." They wanted every one to be informed as to how the new tax would affect them; and then when it was done, at a considerable cost of time and money to many of those interested, it was brought against them as an instance of their appealing to the cupidity of the worker. Then, it has been said against this system that it means when you put a tax upon the unimproved value you take all the value out of the land. Now, it is quite true that to put this tax upon the unimproved value will tend to lower land-values-I say tend. I never say it will lower them, because, coincident with the tendency of this tax to lower the value, there is the tendency to increased industrial activity and prosperity by the building of better houses to take the place of slum properties, and wherever you have this industrial activity and prosperity you have rapidly rising land-values ; so that, taking these two tendencies side by side, the latter will predominate, and land-values will continue still to increase. But we are told that the rate you put on the first year will so lower the land-values that the following year you will have to double it, and in four or five years the whole value will disappear; and in recently with reference to Brisbane, where this system of taxation has been in operation for some ten or eleven years; but the reduction there is due to droughts, and not to the system of taxation. I happened to pay a visit to Brisbane last January, and I went a good deal for the purpose of studying this particular question. And I will say here, and now, that, while I failed to see as many palatial residences in Brisbane as there are in cities like Sydney and Melbourne-and I believe that is accounted for principally owing to the climatic conditions of the place, as the wealthy people prefer living in a more temperate climate to living in Brisbane - I saw more of a better class of workers' homes than I saw in any of these other cities ; and I saw absolutely none of the slum streets that are to be found in these other centres. But we have experience in this country as to the effect on land-values-whether they fall to the extent that is professed by some. I was personally interested as a trustee in a vacant allotment in Palmerston North, which place had the honour of being the first in the colony to adopt this system. That allotment was valued, since the system was in operation, by the Valuation Department at \$70, and only a few months ago it was sold for £140-showing conclusively, I

think, that the system does not kill out land- values in the way some people assert that it would do. Now, with reference to the way that it operates on workers and their homes : Of course, as I said before, I do not hold that that is an argument either for or against-the justice of the proposition should be the main determining factor. But wherever you get workers' homes you do not find them in the centres of cities where land-values are \$40, €50, and \$100 per foot. You find, in the majority of cases, that the land is not more than one-quarter of the total value of the workers' homes-the land may be worth \$50 or \$60, and the building \$150 or €200, and in most of the large cities it works out at just about double the present rate on land alone, exempt- ing the buildings ; so that the result works out in Auckland,-and the law operates pretty generally all round,-that about three out of every four of the ratepayers, and these owners of workers' cottages principally, pay less than they pay under the present system. But some people talk as if this question was purely a question for the ratepayers, and that now it was entirely in the hands of the people, and the people most concerned. But, as a matter of fact, there is a large proportion of people in every community who are as vitally interested in this system of taxation-in any system of taxation-as those who are nominally rate- payers, and yet who have no votes on the question at present. English Judges have decided that whoever pays rent pays rates ; and that ought to be the law also in this country ; and if the franchise was extended in the way the honourable member for Dun- edin City seemed to think it was-for voting on this question-then the necessity for any change would not be so apparent. But, as a

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who come within the definition of "rate- payers," by actually paying rates, and people having leases. Well, I say the great mass of the people who are rent-payers are as vitally concerned in the method by which taxation is raised as are the ratepayers, because the pre- sent system means increasing the amount of rent they have got to pay. It is exactly the same with houses as it is with hats, coats, or boots. If you tax hats, coats, or boots, or any other article of use, you make them scarce and dear ; and if you tax houses you make them scarce, and the result is that the landless rent- pavers in every community have to pay more for the privilege of living in that particular locality. Now, I say, while I quite agree that in the interests of smooth ruuning it is de- sirable that the l ill as arranged by the Pre- mier should have the local option clause pro- vided- An Hon. MEMBER .- When did he arrange it ? Mr. FOWLDS .- When he introduced the Bill. Mr. HUTCHESON .- He arranged with you before; and you know how he slipped you up. Mr. FOWLDS .- It will be time enough for those who think the Bill should be passed in a permissive form to vote against it if the local option clause is not inserted, as I certainly should vote against it; but I say, at the same time, it will be necessary for the House to con- sider the interests of the rent pavers as well as of the ratepayers. I do not think my voice will carry me much further, but I think it well the House should consider this matter ; and I do hope those who specially stand in the interests of labour will give a wider study to the question of the incidence of taxation, and how it affects humanity. It has been said that the Treasury is the heart of a nation, and if the heart is not supplied with pure blood there cannot be healthy life ; if certain portions of the body have too much blood they become congested ; if too little they become anæmie : so the system of taxation, whether it be national or local, is of very great importance to the well-being of the people, and I hope it will receive the considera- tion its importance demands. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City). - I have only a few words to say on this ques- tion, principally to state my reasons for ob- jecting to the Bill. The last speaker, Mr. Fowlds, commands the attention and the con- sideration of every member of this House by his sincerity and moderation in all the causes that he advocates. He certainly is justified, in my opinion, in stating that he had given con- siderable study to this question. I also believe, with him, that the most just and equitable system of taxation is to levy taxation on un- improved values. That it will create apparent discrepancies and anomalies at the beginning goes without saying. But, taking the colony throughout, and being guided by the principle of the greatest good

for the greatest number, I believe in the truth of the statement which he makes. But I also believe in freedom, and I Mr. Fowlds mouth that sentiment and act otherwise. Now, we are asked to pass a Bill to secure voluntary compulsion. That is the position that the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) has just advocated : voluntary compulsion. That is, we are invited to come outside and get licked ; but we need not come out if we can resist it and stay in. Now, I believe this City of Wellington will at a very early date adopt this system of taxation. I believe our City Fathers look upon the prospective change with the greatest equanimity. I believe they have already made the necessary calculations to enable them to adopt this particular new system at a moment's notice. I believe in voluntarily adopting such a system of taxation. Wellington will have a large advantage over every other city in the colony. It will attract population, it will cause an increase in business, and it will give a very material advantage to the people, provided the other cities of the colony do not soon follow suit. But all this can be done under the voluntary system. When the Bill was first introduced it was compulsory and drastic from start to finish. But the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) has assured us that an arrangement has been come to insert a clause setting forth that any local body may take a poll that the law will not come into operation - that is, the new system of taxation will not come into operation. That is shifting the onus of proof to the objectors. Now, I say, where a change is considered necessary and wise, the onus of proving it should lie on the shoulders of those advocating the change. Now, consider the peculiar attitude of the very enthusiastic and sincere member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell). If that honourable gentleman is anything at all he is a sincere and enthusiastic believer in local option on the licensing question ; but in this case I ask the honourable member how it is that he refuses to believe in local option. Or, to put it in another way, by a scientific adjustment of the Premier we are asked to adopt compulsory option or voluntary compulsion, whichever way it is. But I would recall to the recollection of the honourable member for Auckland City another Bill of a kindred nature that was passed last year, in respect of which the Premier gave him the assurance that he would permit the honourable gentleman and his colleague at the time-Mr. Collins-to move a certain amendment which they desired. They agreed, and were duped by the Premier into believing that he agreed with and would support the motion they were about to make. Not so; they had to learn a good deal about the wiles of the Premier. He moved the amendment it is true, but he whipped up and headed the rest of his party to vote in opposition to the very motion that he himself proposed. And yet there are people in this House who are credulous enough to believe that the Premier is always sincere when he has made a promise. Let me also recall the fact that the Premier has made no such promise as that referred to by the honourable member for Auckland City

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rumour. An Hon. MEMBER. - It was said in reply to an interjection, by the Premier. Mr. HUTCHESON. - But he would have just as little trouble in denying such a thing as in asserting any other thing. The Premier always tells us to trust the people, and in trusting the people, according to the showing of the honourable member for Auckland City, out of forty-five polls only three rejected the proposals for the new system of taxation. I again appeal to the judgment of the honourable member, and ask him if it is not as true as it ever was that one volunteer is worth ten pressed men. And if this system is gaining its way throughout the local bodies of the colony, as I believe it is gaining its way, why, then, seek to raise all that is antagonistic and hostile in the nature of man by making it compulsory? If there is one local body convinced of its own judgment of the rectitude of this change, that local body immediately sends out a whole army of proselytisers throughout the colony to advocate the doctrine, instead of brooding at home and nourishing a sense of resentment, as the Auckland ratepayers did on a recent occasion. Now, the Auckland ratepayers were not well advised, in my opinion, in rejecting this proposal put before them, but they did it, I believe, out of a strong sense of resentment ; and here is one sufficient cause for just resent-

ment. I have here an envelope that I am assured was issued from the body taking the most prominent part in the agitation in favour of rating on unimproved values in Auckland -- the Single-tax League. Mr. FOWLDS. - No. Mr. HUTCHESON. - Well, those who may have been in another capacity advocating taxation on unimproved values; and I say that great reforms can only be got by pure means, and the very greatest reform in the world can only be brought about by straightforward and fair agencies. Now, this envelope purports to have been issued with the official imprimatur of the Auckland City Council. It has on the left-hand top corner, in large type, the word "Important," and underneath, in glaring red letters, "Poll Tuesday, 6th August." Then there is the address of the man to whom it is sent, and at the bottom it says, "If not claimed within ten days, return to the Rate Collector's Office, City Council." The City Council had absolutely nothing to do with the business. Mr. FOWLDS. - That is not true. They filled-in every slip that was sent out with those envelopes. the name of the ratepayer, the address of the property, and the amount of the rates paid by the person. Mr. HUTCHESON. - Only at the instance of an interested body of the ratepayers. But it had the desired effect, and it was regarded by those to whom it was sent as being an official document and emanating from the City Council, and conveying to the person to whom it was sent the idea that it received the approval, the official approval, of the local governing body. | I think this is essentially a land question, and I The result was disastrous to what might otherwise : consider that we should not waste the time of improved values. But the mistake that was made, I believe, lay largely in the fault of those over-zealous people who, believing that this was a just and equitable movement, adopted questionable means to influence their fellows. I have only to say that no charge of inconsistency in this House has any dread for me. I am not one of those members who delve into Hausanis to find how they voted on a similar question five or six years ago. I have no care to turn resurrectionist in order to see how I voted on some other occasion years ago on the same question. If I vote apparently at variance with my former views, it only shows that I have modified or altered my views as a result of the larger experience I have gained in the meanwhile ; and I say now that I do thoroughly believe from conviction that the rating on unimproved values, as far as my experience of city life goes, will advantage the City of Wellington in many ways, and in other ways cause some little disadvantage. Taking it all in all, I believe it would be mainly for the advantage of the city as a whole. Therefore, while supporting the principle, I will do all I can as a citizen to induce my fellow citizens to see the propriety of voting for the proposed new system of taxation. But immediately I am subjected to compulsion by Act of this House I am like the proverbial mule : I will kick as hard as I can, and I will vote against the Bill, because it is compulsory, and no amendment moved by the Premier can, in my opinion, make it anything more than a grotesque fiasco. To say it is not compulsory", because you leave me and those who may object the right to test our strength of resistance against the power of the law is a paradox. Sir, I will oppose the Bill and for that one and only reason -- that it is to be compulsory ; whereas at present the system is working its way sweetly and convincingly from one end of the colony to the other. I believe that, in the interests of the principle of rating on the unimproved values, the House would do well to reject the present Bill. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) .- Sir, previous to the adjournment of the debate last Wednesday, I intimated to the Government that it was not my intention to support this Bill. Since then the constituency I represent has taken a poll, and my esteemed colleague Mr. Fowlds went north to give them a hand. My colleague, I may say, is the greatest champion of the single-tax in the colony. The result, then, of the poll was that there was a majority of nine hundred against it. Therefore, after receiving from the Mayor of Auckland the result of the poll in Auckland, I do not feel that I can change my sentiments even if I wished to. I am not going to allow my constituents to be unrepresented while I am in Parliament, and when the majority of my people desire me to carry out a measure which I think is right I will do so ; but if I think it is detrimental to the interests of the colony I will not support it. Sir,

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able system. I think that what we ought to do more than anything else is to give a rateable value to the Crown and Native lands of the North Island, and, greatly as I admire the Premier, the Minister of Lands, and the other members of the Government, I must say I do not think they are doing their duty in regard to the waste lands of the North Island. Mr. DUNCAN .- Yes, they are. Mr. WITHEFORD .- Well, I believe they are going to, now the honourable gentleman is Minister of Lands, but they have not done it hitherto. In the North Island we have land enough to accommodate the whole of the British army in South Africa-200,000 men. Sir, we all know that those who take up land are the wealth-producers of the colony. They are, of course, the pets of the labour Government that we have in New Zealand. Then, why not open up the land we have in the North Island and bring into the colony 200,000 men from different parts of the world to take it up and work it? You would then create a rateable value on the land -- a value that does not now exist - and at the same time you would bring in a profit to the country. Would it not be better to take such action as that, than to waste time here in talking about the single-tax and other questions that will do no good to any one ? Last session many a night was wasted. We sat for thirty hours at one sitting, and passed measures that we have to remedy this year. It seems to me, Sir, the system we have dropped into is most absurd, and instead of pursuing it further we should go to work, and in a practical manner do something that would benefit the people of the colony as a whole. In the first place, we might take up the land for settlement question. Instead of going to the South Island, where a great quantity of the land has been bought by Government from private people, let us draw the attention of the young men to the virgin lands of the North Island. Let these young men take up this land as their fathers did in the old days ; let them improve it, as their fathers did in the South ; let them take up large runs, and in the next quarter of a century they will be able to sell their land as improved land-round about the cities created by the construction of railways, or the making of roads for the settlement of the interior of the North Island. Why, we are pursuing at the present time a policy of stagnation. So much so, that when a few hundred men come back from the war in Africa they cannot find employment, and as our boys leave school you see them walking about the towns unable to get employment. There is no sadder sight than to see a youth come back daily to his home and tell his father that he cannot get work. I say that the whole of the returned contingents-some two thousand men- might be put on survey-work, or road-construction, or prospecting for gold in the country between the Waihi Mine and Wellington, where there is one of the richest auriferous belts in the whole world. We have got more unimproved land in the North Island than they have in i encourage all the different industries, and then Mr. Witheford waste land in the Province of Auckland than there is in the Province of Wellington. It is necessary that I should point these things out, or I can hardly expect to receive the approval of my constituents. I may here say that the speech of the Hon. the Minister of Lands -- Mr. Duncan-on the resolution of condolence with the relatives of the late Sir John Mckenzie, was, I think, the finest speech made on that occasion. I trust the honourable gentleman will rise in his strength, and declare that he is going to pursue a policy of land-settlement and progress; that he is going to lift New Zealand out of any possibility of stagnation or shortness of money, or anything of that kind. If he does that the people of the North Island will in the future be as grateful to the Hon. Mr. Duncan as the people in the South have been grateful to the late Sir John Mckenzie. The Hon. Mr. Duncan has visited the different districts of the North Island, and he knows the magnificent resources of the country. The Minister for Public Works has visited the interior of the North Island, and has admitted that he there saw the best land in the colony. Why should not the young men of the South Island have an opportunity of settling upon that land ? I say the young men of the South Island ought to have the same advantages as the old men in the South Island have had-such grand men as they were too. I say that the young men should have just the same opportunity to acquire the waste lands and the virgin lands as the old settlers had ; and, in regard to this matter, I fear that the present Government are standing in the way

of settlement. I say that they are not giving the sons of the colony a good " show." They should take up all this magnificent land and throw it open for settle- ment, and, if the young colonials do not want it, invite people to come from all parts of the world with their money to settle here and spend their money here. I believe the title of this Bill is "The Rating on Unimproved Value Bill "-in other words, the single-tax. For many years I have endeavoured to solve this question of the single-tax. I have been in Aus- tralia amongst the single-taxers, with very en- thusiastic single-taxers-men who are amongst the staunchest of the members of that party- and I have been unable to follow their argu- ments or to understand their line of reasoning. And, in regard to this question. although my colleague Mr. Fowlds is a gentleman I esteem very much, I regret that on certain main points I have to differ from him. I do not think that in the present condition of things the single-tax is what we want, and therefore I think it is only a waste of time to discuss the matter at all. We have passed enough legislation to last us for many years, and I trust this House will \- not waste further time by dealing with experi- mental legislation. My sympathies go out to the young men, and, seeing the grand Premier we have got, I would like to see him do some- thing practical to enable the young men to | make homes for themselves, to find work. to

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place on earth for the English-speaking races to inhabit. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) .- Sir, I do not intend to follow the example of my worthy friend who has just sat down-traverse the whole of the land policy of the colony on the second reading of this Bill. Sir, I think that this Bill, to begin with, is going in a practical manner. Now. I can speak with some authority of a district which has carried the rating on the unim- proved value, and I say that we have more work than people there to do it. We could give labour to a number of people, but we cannot get them when wanted. The honourable mem- ber for Auckland City deplored the fact that the Government was not finding work for the young men who have returned from South Africa ; and I think that their first duty should have been to have seen that the young men who have done so well should get away back to their old employment, and not loaf about the towns. It would be much more to their in- terest and to the advantage of the country. Mr. WITHEFORD .- Many had not got em- ployment to go to. Mr. SYMES .-- Some of them had, and could have gone back to it had they liked. I look on this so-called rating on the unimproved value system as a misnomer. There is no such thing as an unimproved value. Since the day that Captain Cook landed from his ship on the shore of this colony there has been an improved value in the colony. At any rate, since the first shipload of people landed in this colony there has been an unimproved value placed on every acre of land in the colony. But it is wrong to say there is an unimproved value. Call it a " prairie " value, and you get the right thing. Some people have very strange ideas on the subject of the single-tax. We have seen single- taxers -- theoretical single-taxers -- practical. Now, I am a single-taxer, and I own land, and I am quite as staunch a single-taxer as my honour- able friend the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds), but the single-tax is in the dim and distant future ; but it will come in the end. This is not the time nor the place to discuss the single-tax. The Bill that we have before us is for rating on unimproved value. I think the member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) tried very hard just now to put a wrong con- struction upon an envelope, or circular, as show- ing that some one had tried to "pull the legs " of the electors of Auckland, and he "fell into the soup." That is really what he is trying to get at, whereas nothing of the sort had occurred. Now, Sir, like Mr. Hutcheson, I never look inside Hansard, for I get enough of its contents in the House. I do not care a scrap about ancient history-I do not care how a man voted last year or the year before. He may alter his opinion ten times a year for all I care. We know that the honourable member for Welling- ton City (Mr. Hutcheson) had not been long in this House before he found occasion to alter his opinion. The question of rating as at present amounts to this : Is it just and fair that a man should have a tax placed upon his thrift and to rate on unimproved or prairie value ? I say, Yes, it is; no man should be taxed for

putting improvements on his land. One honourable gentleman said the other night, " But a man might put up a stable with a marble floor." I say, more power to him. He has been taxed for the improvement, then why tax him again? And we have heard of "the fat man " who builds a mansion. I will give another case of "the fat man " -- the man who owns thousands of acres of land, on which he has only a whare. He may run nothing but cattle on it, or thousands of sheep, which he takes to his neighbour to be shorn. He pays the lowest rate possible, and does his level best to get his neighbours to be taxed to make roads for him. I will give a particular instance from my own district. A gentleman from Christchurch bought a section of land near to my own property, for which he paid £1 an acre. He never did a stroke of work upon it, and did not even put a fence around it. After he had kept it some four or five years I worked out the interest and rates he paid on it, and found they amounted to about 15s. or 16s. When a purchaser offered to buy it he refused \$4 an acre. We made gravel roads for him, and were taxed on £4 and £5 an acre, and some higher even than that, while he was paying at the rate of #1 only. A small portion of land was wanted in that locality for a cemetery, and it was thought that a portion of this man's land could be got for the purpose. The local body was thinking of taking it under the Public Works Act ; but before doing so he was written to. His reply was that he would sell five acres, but that he would want 420 an acre. That is how the present system of taxation works out. I will show honourable members how the poll for rating on the unimproved value was rejected in Stratford on the first occasion. At the time we had two large holders of land on the County Council, who made it their business to go round the district advising people to stay away from voting in order that the poll should be lost. But it is quite immaterial, so far as I am personally concerned, whether this Bill is carried or not, because we have carried the rating on unimproved value. But it is a question of whether it is just or unjust, and I say rating on the prairie value is the only just and equitable mode of taxation. I hate taxes myself, and if there is any man who says he likes taxes- well, I have my own opinion as to his truthfulness or otherwise. But, if we must have taxes, the only fair thing we can tax is that which none of us have produced. That is the land. The men who build mansions are the men we want in this country, because they employ every description of labour under the sun. Then, why should they be taxed for ever on that employment ? They are taxed heavily enough in the first instance when they build the mansions. I say the taxing of a man's improvements on his land is legalised robbery. That is my opinion. Now, it has been asked by some honourable members, "What is the use of building more houses in the cities when

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houses." Go round this city and see if there are plenty of houses. What are they ? Why, some of the so-called houses are hardly fit for stables. Sir, the very fact of passing this Bill will be the means of giving many of the poor people represented by Mr. Arnold -who is opposing this Bill-houses fit to live in, instead of houses fit merely for cattle. But as to many of the houses one sees here- well, it is wrong to say I should like to see a fire ; but, at any rate, they ought to be swept off the face of the earth. I say the small farmer knows how to vote when it comes to a question of rating on unimproved or improved values. In one portion of the County of Stratford there were over a hundred votes cast in favour of rating on unimproved value and not one against it, and all those who voted were small farmers. A small farmer owning, say, a hundred acres of land, and who has a wife and family, has to erect a house and other buildings to house his family comfortably and respectably and to enable him to carry on his business. He has to improve his land a great deal more than has the man with a thousand acres. He proceeds to log and stump his land at once, while the man with a thousand acres waits for the fires to do it. Then, again, the man with a thousand acres puts up exactly the same amount of building; and how much per acre does he add, as against the man with a hundred acres ? I say, every time, rating on the unimproved value is in favour of the small man, and I hope ; the time is not far distant, when the whole colony, from end to

end, will have adopted this system of rating as the most just and equitable system of taxation ever thought out, and one that should be approved by every right-thinking man in the colony. For myself, I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, not that I think it necessary, because, as I say, the ratepayers can, if they wish, carry it. We have tried it twice in my district, and have succeeded at last ; so, in my electorate, I do not care whether the Bill is passed or not. At any rate, I shall vote for its second reading, which I hope will be carried ; and when in Committee it can be amended to meet all requirements. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City). -- I wish to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman said that all those who have returned from the war can go back to their employment. I wish to point out that is not correct. One man came to me—a blacksmith—willing to take work of any description, and he has taken work as a pick-and-shovel man on the Main Trunk Railway rather than it should be said he was seeking work and praying not to get it. If my honourable friend is willing to give work to these men, I will send him two hundred if he will undertake to find them work. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) .- Sir, I should like to say at once that I am not an opponent of the principle of rating on unimproved value. At the same time, I am not going to vote for the second reading of this Bill, because I think it does exactly what we said in the original Act of 1894 should not be done, : any measure which I thought was introduced. Mr. Symes people themselves, and it was for them to say whether or not the principle should be put into I have listened to some of the operation. speeches to-night with a very great deal of pleasure, and to one or two with some little amusement. We have had two speeches from two members for Auckland. I listened to the speech of the junior member, and I did my level best to follow him through the intricate mazes through which he led us ; but, endeavouring with all my power to be on the alert, I failed absolutely to see the slightest connection between his speech and the subject. It is true he indulged, as under discussion. he always does, and as he is quite justified in doing, in a high eulogium on the part of New Zealand from which he comes; and the House was not at all surprised, I dare say, to hear him indulge in an almost equally high eulogium of the Ministers on the Treasury benches. I listened to his remarks in regard to the Premier, and followed him with amused interest when he came to speak in glowing terms of the possible future of the present Minister of Lands ; and when he suggested a possible time when the honourable gentleman should be Sir Thomas Duncan I almost expected him to conclude his remarks with "And now, gentlemen, charge your glasses." Mr. WITHEFORD .- The wish was father to the thought. Mr. COLLINS .- The honourable gentleman's shaft, though well meant, misses its mark. He knows I am one of those unfortunate people who cannot partake of his hospitality, being a total abstainer; so the honourable gentleman will have to try again. Now, Sir, of all the speeches delivered to-night, I followed with great interest the speech of my friend the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds). We have been reminded that quite recently this subject has been brought into special prominence by virtue of a vote taken in the city represented by the honourable member referred to, and that vote was very largely cast against the principle embodied in this Bill—rating on the unimproved value. I believe it will be generally admitted, Sir, that the hostile vote was not so much against the principle of rating on the unimproved value as against the principle of the single-tax. But, Sir, what I want to point out is this : that the most enthusiastic supporters of this Bill as it now stands are determined single-taxers, and I am sure it will be quite impossible either for the House or the country to disassociate the fact that this Bill in its present compulsory form is an endeavour to drive the principle of single-tax one little bit further home. I do not think the single-taxers themselves in the House will deny this. Now, Sir, while I am in favour of and would support the rating on the unimproved value, I am not prepared to go so far as to commit myself to the principle of the single-tax; and I should resist, and resist as strenuously as I possibly could,

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Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) told us that after he had listened to the speeches delivered he was more

convinced than ever that the only just principle of taxation was taxation on the unimproved values of land ; and I would ask him, and I would ask honourable members, if they are convinced that this is the only just principle on which taxation should be levied, are they not prepared to submit the justice of that principle to the people? Will not the people themselves perceive that justice? I have never known the people so stupid and blind in their own interests that it was necessary you should thrust justice upon them ; and I think the people in this matter, as in other matters, are to be trusted to discern the justice of it for themselves. The honourable gentleman said, when reminded at the time, that he recognised that the people had permissive power to put the system into operation ; but he said the permission was the wrong way about. The people now have the right to say whether or not they will adjust their taxation on the unimproved value of lands ; and that is a direct vote of the people on an affirmative principle, and the honourable gentleman would submit the vote on a negative proposition. Who ever heard of the people being asked to vote on a negative proposition ? We ought to consider the people in this matter, and we ought not to expect them to vote against this thing unless it is put before them as an affirmative principle. They now have the right to vote against an affirmative principle, but surely they have no right to be expected to vote on a merely negative proposition. Now, Sir, we have been told over and over again to-night that out of some 500 rateable districts in New Zealand only thirty-five had put the principle into operation. I do not regard that as telling against the principle of rating on the unimproved value, because I believe that number will grow steadily and steadily, and I am quite sure that, growing in that way, it will give rise to much less friction and much less dissatisfaction than it would be likely to if imposed on the people by statutory law. But, Sir, what surprised me most was to hear the honourable member for Auckland City- and he will pardon me if I say that he seemed to treat honourable members who oppose this Bill, while not opposed to the principle of rating on the unimproved value, in a somewhat cavalier manner. Although we were led to understand that the honourable gentleman was suffering from a somewhat severe cold, I really thought-my honourable friend will pardon me for referring to him as the leading apostle of single-tax in New Zealand -we should have had a flood of light thrown on this Bill that would have been absolutely and overwhelmingly convincing ; but, Sir, we did not get it. And, although the honourable gentleman was surprised at the speeches of 9.4. those who represent labour, I must confess I was equally surprised at the speech of the honourable gentleman who represents the single-tax. He said that he believed in I say, that being so, are not the people themselves the best judges of what is just in principle for them ? They have the right to vote now. An Hon. MEMBER .-. Not the people. Mr. COLLINS .- Yes, the people ; the same people who will be affected when this Bill becomes law-exactly the same people. Then the honourable gentleman went a little further. He said taxation should be on everything which derives value from the expenditure of the taxation ; and I agree with him. He then went on to declare that property in no way is benefited from the expenditure of taxation. Now, Sir, while there is some truth in what the honourable gentleman says, it is not all truth ; for, while it may be perfectly true that the actual value of a building depreciates-that the actual value of a factory as a building, or, if you like, a tannery as a building, and so on, will depreciate - year by year, nevertheless the factory or building that is utilised for a particular kind of work is increased in value through the expenditure of public money. Not only has the land increased in value, but the building has a factory value, quite apart from the value of the site upon which it stands, and which is given to it by the very roads which the taxes have made ; and the tannery or factory would be absolutely useless were the roads allowed to fall into such disrepair that it would be impossible to get the raw material to or the manufactured goods away from it. The honourable gentleman must see that he cannot dissociate the expenditure of public money from the increased value of a factory as a wealth-producing concern. Then, the honourable gentleman said he would like to show how this Bill would affect workmen's homes. Now, I know the difficulty of attempting to prove any position by merely quoting isolated examples. It is possible to quote any number of statistics

both in favour of and against this proposition ; but I want to point out this : that were we starting de uovo, were we founding an entirely new community, a community which should grow up under the operation of this Bill, I could understand fully the justice of what the honourable gentleman says. But the question is now one of applying this principle to districts where already serious anomalies exist which this Bill would not remove, but, in many cases, would intensify : I mean the matter of compelling the people to carry out this principle of rating on the unimproved value. Take, for instance, the immediate surroundings of one of the centres of population. The matter has been referred to before, and I have no intention of wearing the House. You will find in the immediate suburbs, and within the boundaries of a city like Christchurch, a quarter-acre section held by a working-man, who has built a house upon it costing, say, 2200 or \$250. He has taken the quarter-acre section because he wishes to grow upon it the vegetables required by his family. The very next quarter-acre section will be occupied by, probably, a much wealthier individual, who has

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beds. Now, both these individuals are to be rated upon exactly the same rateable value. Now, I want an answer to this question : How are they going to adjust that with the principle we have all along contended for-the "equality of sacrifice"? Where is the equality of sacrifice to the man who has taken the quarter-acre section because it will enable him to supplement a low wage to maintain his growing family? And if we want growing families you will have to give facilities for keeping them. There is no doubt whatever about that. I ask, How are they to adjust this with the accepted principle of equality of sacrifice when you compare the case of a man using his full quarter-acre for the benefit of his family, with the case of his next-door neighbour, who allows his quarter-acre to be laid out in lawns and flower-beds ? If it is said, as it probably is, and will be again, that the man who builds a \$600-house employs labour and spends money, then, Sir, I say again that in many cases the money is merely spent for gain. It is spent to obtain a return. Men do not build larger houses philanthropically. They are not built for the purpose of employing labour and keeping working-men going. They are built because they are a good investment, because they bring in good returns ; there is no doubt whatever about that. And I want to know why any man with a quarter of an acre that he uses for growing cabbages and other produce should be charged at as high a rate as the man who builds a house for \$600 and draws \$80 rental from it. I say, again, that while in the main I agree with the principle of the unimproved value, and while I personally would vote for it in my own locality, I again say that it will not remove all anomalies. If that be so, and there will still continue to be anomalies, then I think it will be infinitely better to leave it for each district to say for itself whether it shall or shall not put this principle into operation. These are my only reasons for opposing the Bill. The people already have the power to put the principle into operation if they so desire, and I think that is a better way of dealing with a measure which will not remove the anomalies that already exist. Mr.

GUINNESS (Grey) .- There is one phase of this question which I do not think has been brought with sufficient prominence under the notice of the House, and, through this debate, the country ; and that is this : I hold it is a proper principle that all taxation should be uniform, and should be levied upon a uniform basis. One great question that was decided by this House when the present Liberal party came into power was that the property-tax should be abolished, and we laid down the principle that the unimproved value only should be taxed for the purpose of getting a revenue for the colony. Then, we laid down the principle that it should be followed in all branches of taxation for the purpose of getting revenue. A mistake, I think, was made at that time in not providing that all rates should Mr. Collins on the unimproved value of the land by local bodies was adopted by this House, and the original idea was, no doubt, to pass an Act that should make it compulsory ; but it was thought that such a measure would not be adopted by the other branch of the Legislature. Hence it was not made compulsory when the land-tax was passed ; it

was passed for general Government revenue purposes. A certain number of members who are opposed to the principle of rating on the unimproved values are using all sorts of arguments against this Bill being passed. Another set of members who profess to be supporters of the principle- whether they are sincere or not in that support I doubt-say they are not going to vote for this Bill because it takes away power from the people; yet these are the honourable members who wish to trust the people. The answer to their argument, I maintain, is this : that if you are going to trust the people let the people have the right to vote on that question. The people are not now allowed to vote on this question. It is only those who pay rates who are entitled to vote, and you are still making the tenant, the lodger, and the boarder pay higher rates for his weekly rental, and for his weekly lodging, and weekly board ; because you are maintaining this old system of taxation, which was shown to be so wrong when we repealed the property-tax and placed the land-tax upon the statute-book-you are maintaining this old system, which caused the rents of buildings in different parts of the colony to be at an excessive rate. An Hon. MEMBER .- This Bill will not extend the franchise. Mr. GUINNESS. - No, this Bill does not apply to that question ; and honourable members must remember this fact : that all those who have said that the effect of this Bill will not be to decrease rents must be making a mistake, because the examples quoted, particularly by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) and the honourable member for Lyttelton, all go to prove that if this Act passed, and we had nothing but rating on the unimproved values, we would find that the rates of those who hold small buildings - particularly those who live in cottages-would be decreased by 50 and 75 per cent. Now, if the rates are decreased on these cottages, we have a right to ask that the rents should also be decreased. This is another way of looking at the question of reducing the rents. Is it not a fact in large centres, where there is a difficulty in getting cottages, that people frequently let hovels and collect high rents, because tenants are forced to occupy such places on account of suitable buildings being so hard to get? But if there were numerous buildings of a substantial kind, and the people could get them at less rents than they are paying for these hovels, then we would find that the rents would go down. What encouragement is there for people to erect substantial and decent buildings ? The rates on every building that is put up on a

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because the buildings and improvements are rated. It is the property-tax over again. I ask, why maintain the system of property-tax for local general rates and abolish it for General Government revenue? As for those who say we should trust the people: Do we go to the people and ask them what kind of taxation this Parliament shall impose on them ? If you are going to apply the principle of going to the people as to local rating, you should also apply it to colonial taxation. One of the principal arguments in favour of this Bill is that you have differential systems of levying rates all over the country. Is that wise, is that politic ? Is it wise that you should have on one side of a road one system of levying taxation, and on the opposite side of the same road another system ? You have in thirty-three or thirty-four local bodies of the country unimproved-value taxation levied ; and in all the others you have the old property-tax system of rates being levied. Is it right that you should have those different kinds of rating ? I think not. Then, again, there is the difference between the local and the General Government system of rating lands. I contend that this should be done away with, and I hope the Government are determined to try and place this measure on the statute-book. I believe that the Premier is even giving way too much to those who are opposed to the principle of rating on unimproved values. He has even offered to agree that any locality which likes to have this Act suspended from operation may do so by taking a vote of the ratepayers. There are a number of localities where the majority of the people are in favour of the unimproved value system of taxation; but these localities of local bodies would not go to the expense, and would not go to the trouble of voting to bring the Act into operation because of that expense and that trouble. Therefore it is the

duty of this Parliament, I take it, to lay down one system of taxation, and one only ; and to concede the offer the Premier made, in answer to the member for Franklin, is, I think, conceding more than should be conceded. There is another important provision that I fail to see in this measure, and I hope, when the Bill gets into Committee, the Premier will be prepared to bring down a clause so as to amend "The Rating on Unimproved Value Act, 1896," by making the whole of the rates collectable under this system, and not to have the general rates collected under this system and the separate rates under the old system of the property-tax. I shall not take up further time, but I shall cordially support the measure, and trust it will be placed on the statute-book. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) .- Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains in the main two provisions, both included in clause 2, subclause (1) of that clause, making rating on the unimproved value compulsory. That is the main clause of the Bill. Then, subclause (2) of clause 2 renders it optional on the part of a local body to have its water-rates, gas-rates, charitable-aid rates, and levied on the unimproved value. Now, Sir, I may say straight out that I agree with the principle of rating on the unimproved value, and I disagree entirely with the senior member for Wellington City and others who have spoken in the attitude they have taken up on this matter. They admit the principle of rating on unimproved values, but they are not prepared to admit that the Rating on Unimproved Value Act of 1896 is placed the wrong way on. I think, if we admit the principle, we should be logical, and say that rating on the unimproved value shall be the law; and that if any local body, for reasons affecting the district under its control, desires to exempt itself from that law it may do so by a vote of the rate-payers under a special section of the Bill. That is what I understand the Premier proposes to do, and it is on that understanding that I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill. If I studied my district only, and not the colony as a whole, I believe there is no member of the House who would have better reason for voting against the Bill than I have ; but taking the view that I do, that a tax on industry and thrift, speaking generally, is an undesirable one and therefore to be avoided, I conceive it to be my duty to support the measure, with the amendment which the Premier has promised. And on that principle I shall support the second reading of the Bill. It seems to me the Premier should have gone further in subclause (2) of section 2, and placed these charitable-aid rates, water-rates, and other rates on the same level as the ordinary general rate. I can see no good reason for discriminating between them. A number of attempts have been made to lay down some general rule as to whether the rating on unimproved values system, if it becomes law, will benefit the large owner or the small owner. Now, I believe no such general rule can be laid down. If we are to discover what effect the Bill will have on any particular district we must look at the circumstances of that district, and we will find that what will be the result in one district will not be the result in another. The effect the system will have depends entirely on the relative values of the unimproved and the improved value in each particular district. I have taken out a few simple figures to illustrate what I have just said. Let us take, for example, districts containing property with a rateable value of \$600,000, and the rate at present paid on the capital value is 1d. in the pound. That means an income of \$2,500 for the local body. We will assume that the same sum is desired to be the income derived under the rating on the unimproved value. We will take two districts. The improved value in one of the two districts is, say, \$400,000 : the unimproved value, therefore, is \$200,000-that is, the ratio of the improved to the unimproved value is as two to one. It necessarily follows that if that district were to obtain the same amount of revenue it must levy on the unimproved value three times what is levied on the

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worth \$200, and is built on land worth \$100, in that case the same sum in rates will be paid by the ratepayer under the unimproved value as under the old system-that is to say, a penny rate in the \$300 capital value is the same as a threepenny rate on the \$100 unimproved value. Now, assume, in the second of our districts, the improved value is €300,000, and the unimproved is the same sum-that is, that

the two values are equal : in that case it is plain a twopenny rate on the unimproved value will realise the same income as a penny rate on the capital value. So that in the case of this district the man with the two-hundred-pound house on the one hundred pounds' worth of unimproved land will pay two-thirds the amount he was paying under the old system. Again, take a man with a house worth \$500 on land worth \$100 : in the first district he would pay one-half what he did under the old system, and in the second district a third. Further, take a man with a house worth \$800, built on land worth \$800: in the first district he would pay half as much again as he did before ; in the second district he would pay exactly the same amount as he did before. Those three properties afford fair samples of the usual class of holdings. As a final example, take the speculator who holds a large area of practically unimproved land, waiting for the unearned increment. Suppose he holds a hundred acres of valuable land the improvements on which are worth \$1,000, and the unimproved value of which is 9/100 per acre—that is £10,000 : in the first district he would be paying 130 for every £11 he paid before, and in the second district he would be paying \$20 for every #11 he had paid before. These illustrations show at once that we cannot lay down any guiding rule to govern all districts as to what the effect of this Bill will be. We must look at the particular circumstances of each district in order to discover what the effect will be therein. I said just now that if any honourable member had reason to vote against this Bill on the ground that it will affect his district prejudicially, that member is myself ; and I will give my chief reasons for saying so. In the Hutt portion of my electorate there is a large quantity of vacant land held for speculative purposes. It is very unfortunate that it should be so, and that it is so furnishes the principal reason why the Hutt district has been kept back. As to this land. the Bill would be all right if it levied the unimproved-value tax, or the portion of it in excess of the old rates, on the owner of the property ; but unfortunately a large portion of this land is leased, and the tenants have to pay the rates. If this Bill passes, therefore, the leaseholders will have to pay increased rates to the extent of two or three times their present rates. That, of course, would be an injustice to the leaseholders. But there is a still more awkward case in my district. The local bodies through whose districts the Manawatu Railway Company passes receive from that company a large sum—I believe, something Mr. Field pays a small fraction—say, about a sixth, or less -- of what it is paying at present in rates. That will be very unjust to the local bodies and other ratepayers, particularly as there are cases where loans have been raised for public works largely on the strength of rates the Manawatu Railway Company is paying ; and the result must be that the other settlers will have to make up the amount by having their rates increased. There is another awkward feature from the Government point of view, and that is that the moment this Bill passes. the property of the Manawatu Railway Company will be worth something like £1,500 a year more than it is at the present time ; and if the Government is going to buy it by private contract the company may ask —and why should they not ask ?— for an increase of price based on an annuity of #1,500 a year. From the Government point of view, it is a matter for their consideration whether, if they intend to buy this line by private contract, it will pay them to pass this Bill into law as it at present stands. With regard to the argument of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, we younger members always listen to the honourable gentleman with a large amount of interest and respect ; but it does seem to me that on this question the contention of the honourable gentleman as to the difficulty of fixing the unimproved value being an obstacle to this Bill coming into law was no argument at all. I am fully aware that in many instances it is very difficult indeed to fix on the unimproved value of land ; but that is no argument against the Bill, and if a competent valuer goes about his work properly most of the difficulties in the way of ascertaining the unimproved value will soon disappear. The honourable gentleman cited the case of a man who felled his bush, spent money in burning, grassing, and fencing the section, and after all the improvements were completed the land was worth less than it cost him to improve. That is a case I can well understand, and that result might easily happen even if the man might not have been extravagant in his expenditure. It is beyond doubt the case that the unimproved

value of some of our back-woods country is a minus quantity-that is to say, that a man deserves to be paid for taking it up and improving it. and that for a period of years in some cases a man ought to be exempt from rates altogether on this class of property ; but, of course. as it becomes more accessible by the construction of roads and bridges, the increase of population, and other causes, the unimproved value will grow into something. But at the present time one can readily understand that there are cases where the unimproved value of the land is really a minus quantity. Then, the honour- able gentleman cited a case where the lands had been drained, where the drainage had be- Well, I come an exhausted improvement. think that a competent valuer ought not to have any difficulty at all in ascertaining the unimproved value under such circumstances.

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He must take into consideration the fact that that land was reduced from a swamp to a pasture, and he must allow something as im- provements for the drainage. And so on with respect to plantations of willows for river-pro- tection, and so forth. It seems to me that if the Government had incorporated in this Bill some directions to valuers as guiding lines for ascertaining the unimproved value it would have been a good thing to do; and if the services of the Valuer-General had been brought into requisition I am sure he could have drafted some guiding lines which would have simpli- fied and rendered uniform throughout the colony the work of the valuers in regard to ascertaining the unimproved value, and satisfy practically all needs. The honourable mem- ber for Hawke's Bay cannot credit that the present system works unfairly in the country districts. Now, I have a case in my own dis- trict, which is very like the following: In a remote part of the district, while the land is all in bush, a loan is raised in order to make a road or bridge. There are two principal owners who are being benefited by this work, and, as usual, a rate is imposed in order to provide the interest and sinking fund on this loan. The value placed upon the two properties is 10s. an acre-that is to say, the two landowners will begin by paying an equal amount by way of rates annually towards the sinking fund and interest on the loan. Later on, however, one man begins to improve his place, while the other does nothing in this direction at all. The result is that in a few years the one pro- perty is highly improved, and the other is in its original bush state. The former is valued at £6 an acre, and the latter still at 10s. ; so that, far from the one paying exactly the same amount per annum as the other, as at the outset, we find that the man who has im- proved his property has to pay twelve times as much as his neighbour. But, for every £1 the one pays, the other only pays 1s. 8d. I would ask the honourable member for Hawke's Bay if that is a fair state of things. I do not wish to take up the time of the House in dis- cussing this question any longer, but before concluding I would like to mention the case of Brisbane. In reference to that, I can bear out the statement of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) that in the City of Brisbane a very noticeable feature is the absence of slums. At the time I was there, some six months ago, I did not know that the system of rating on unimproved value had been adopted. If one of the effects of the system is to abolish slums, I say let us have it, and the sooner the better. I should say, Sir, speaking generally, it is the small man who will be benefited by the passing of this measure, and it is the small man who in every case asks for it. In the speeches of honourable members it has been said over and over again that the increase would afford encouragement to men to build a better class of houses. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay compared the case of two bush settlers-the one who improved his place by building a good dwellinghouse, stables, sheds, VOL. CXVII -22. et cetera; and the other, his next-door neigh- bour, who simply carved his way into the bush, and was content to live in a hut. I say, Sir, if that man could not build anything better for his wife and family than a hut, then he was taking up something that was too big for him to handle. It was beyond his means, and that sort of settlement ought not to be encouraged. No better encouragement could be given to our colonists to improve their homes and their buildings generally than the passing of this measure into law,

but with the provision that. the ratepayers of any district could at any time, by taking a poll, revert to the old system if they found it suited them better. Mr. McGUIRE (Hawera) .- I would like to say a few words before the question is put to the vote. I do not care for the Bill, because it is too drastic. It is also compulsory, and I do not like compulsion. I may here say, Sir, that I do not object to rating on unimproved value, which I believe is bound to come. We want first, however, uniformity in our system. Before we force this measure upon the people we should trust the people ; and before passing a Bill of this kind the Valuation Department requires to be reorganized. No department has, I think, caused so much dissatisfaction and irritation as that department. The valuations have not been on a fair basis ; they are not even, there are inequalities in every direction ; and there is nothing more annoying than that feeling which arises from a sense of injustice, and to pass a Bill like this before we have mastered the first principles would, I think, be very hurtful, more especially as its provisions are compulsory. We have the Act of 1896, under which any local body can adopt rating on the unimproved value. Surely, Sir, that should be sufficient. Why force the people by a drastic measure like this, and at the same time pretend that we trust them? If we pass this Bill we will clearly demonstrate that we trust the people only when it suits us to do so. I am satisfied that this Bill is not required ; and if the compulsory clause is to be excised, as I understood the Premier to say it would be, then what object was there in introducing the Bill at all ? because we have sufficient legislation already on the statute-book in the Act of 1896. If the compulsory clause is to be retained, I can understand why the Bill has been introduced ; but I am strongly opposed to compulsion, especially when there is no necessity for it. I believe that the great majority of the people are anxious to see valuations put on a fair and equitable basis. In the district I have the honour to represent the values are far too high. Because industries have sprung up, and the district is populated by a class of industrious settlers-men holding small areas of highly improved land. We are heavily rated because of the energy and perseverance of our settlers, who work early and late in order to bring their land into a high state of cultivation. The improvements on the land, it is alleged by the settlers, are not sufficiently taken into account. In fact, the Land-tax Department, following the Land Assessment Act, takes -

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improvements, and that I consider most unjust. What is wanted in our present system is equality of sacrifice-and anything that has the appearance of violating that principle is undesirable. The land should be valued irrespective of boom in any particular branch of business. Due consideration should be given to the cost of improvements. For example, large sums are borrowed under the Loans to Local Bodies Act, and are expended in the construction of roads and bridges, which add to the capital value of land ; but the increased value caused by the expenditure of these loans is not taken into account in fixing the unimproved value, but is added to the taxable value, notwithstanding that the loans to local bodies are a first mortgage on the land. Although £100,000 may be spent in a particular district, and the value of the land in that locality is raised £2 or \$3 an acre, which brings more money to the Treasury, no consideration whatever is given for the money that is lent, and upon which interest has to be paid, and that seems to me to be very unjust. Now, I think I have given good reasons why we should hesitate before we pass an Act of this kind. The Land Assessment Act requires amending, and the Valuation Department requires to be thoroughly re-organized. Local bodies should be given power to appoint a valuer in each district in conjunction with the Government valuer, and, when they have fixed a maximum and a minimum valuation in each district, the Government valuer could go to work, and between the two bases arrive at a fair valuation, with the result that irritation, dissatisfaction, and inequalities would disappear. But as it is at the present time the Government valuer is sent along, and in many instances the valuations made are most uneven. If a compulsory Bill like this is passed, what will be its effect on our Crown tenants?

Honourable members must know that many of those people are not in a position to make improvements. The man who has standing bush that he has not the means to cut down will be taxed equally with those who are living in splendid mansions and have cattle grazing on land that is all cleared, fenced, and subdivided. Surely nothing can be more unjust than that. The Government are endeavouring to settle people on the land, and the settlers have in most cases many obstacles to surmount and hardships and difficulties to endure : but if we pass a Bill like this we shall add to their difficulties. I do not wish to go further into this subject, as I know the Premier is anxious to reply. All I can say is that I am against compulsion ; I have no objection to rating on the unimproved value should the people so desire, and I believe the time will come when that principle will be adopted throughout the country. In conclusion, I would ask the Government to amend the Land Assessment Act. Loans to local bodies should be classed as improvements, or deducted from the capital value, as other improvements are, or treated as a first mortgage on the land. Legislation in the direction indicated by Mr. McGuire have already stated, I am against compulsion, and for that reason I shall vote against the Bill. Mr. J. W. THOMSON (Clutha) .- I did not happen to be in the House at the time the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) commenced his speech. When I came in he was addressing the House, and I was told that the honourable member had said that many years ago I voted in favour of rating on the unimproved value of land, and that therefore he expected I would vote with him on this occasion. He referred to a division that took place so long ago as July, 1876-upwards of twenty-five years ago. Many things happen in twenty-five years. Just think of finding fault with a man for a vote he gave twenty-five years ago! There are very few men to whom the test could be applied. It is rather a severe test, for we all change our minds. I believe I could stand a test of this kind as well as any man in the House. I have no occasion to be ashamed of any vote I ever gave, and I think it will be found I have been exceedingly consistent. But in this particular case there is nothing in it at all. The honourable gentleman is entirely mistaken. The Rating Bill was in Committee, and Mr. Seymour moved that certain words be struck out. Mr. FOWLDS .- That is not what I quoted ; it was an amendment by Mr. Button. Mr. J. W. THOMSON. - I am very doubtful whether the term "rating on unimproved value " had been invented at that time. I confess I did not know anything about it, and I do not think it was a subject of discussion at all twenty-five years ago. Mr. FOWLDS .- Read the motion moved by Mr. Button. If that is not rating on unimproved value I do not know what is. Mr. J. W. THOMSON .- I shall look it up at my leisure. But I have no doubt I shall come out of that all right, as I have come out of many things ; and, as I have said, there are very few men to whom this test of consistency for twenty-five years could be applied. I find that, of the forty-one members who voted "Aye " on the occasion referred to, there is not a single member now in the House ; and, with regard to those who voted " No," the only two members now in the House are Captain Russell and myself. This was several years before even the Premier was in the House. I find that Mr. Ballance voted, not in the way I did, but in the opposite direction-the way that the Government would be expected to vote now. I mention these things just to show that the test which the member for Auckland City wishes to apply to me is one that very few men can pass through unscathed. We all change our minds with time. The chief feature in the Liberal party is progress. I believe I have progressed just about as much as most men. I may say I have listened to this debate from beginning to end. It appears to me that all the arguments in favour of this Bill may be reduced to two. The one is that it would encourage people to put up buildings. I do not see that this is a

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very great thing to encourage. We may depend upon it that people will put up buildings just as there is a demand for them, and it is much better to trust to that principle than to put up buildings that may not be required. The second argument is that this Bill would tend to prevent speculation in land. People figure to themselves two properties, the one inhabited by a rich man, or a " fat man "-that is the classical term

nowadays-and the other a poor man, or a "lean man," as he may be called. This "fat man," it is said, seeing beside him a small property on which there are no improvements, buys it and waits until it becomes valuable. This Bill, it is said, would prevent such a thing. But it appears to me that it will to some extent encourage speculation. One effect of this Bill will be to deteriorate the value of property. The poor man with a small unimproved property may not be able to pay the rates on it. His rich neighbour will buy it at a reduced price, and wait till it increases in value. Is not this speculation? It also appears to me that this proposal is scarcely a fair one. Just let us walk through the City of Wellington in almost any direction, and we shall find very fine houses alongside very poor houses. These poor houses may have been put up in the early days; but they are quite sufficient for the people that they belong to, and I do not see that we should interfere with them. The effect of the Bill will be to make the "fat man" pay less and the "lean man" pay more. We hear a good deal about justice, but it does not appear to me that there is much justice in that. And then there are the lessees of property. These lessees have almost invariably come under obligations to pay the rates. The rates may be so heavy that some tenants may not be able to pay them, but having as tenants come under obligations to pay rates as well as rents they will be forced to do so. I could go on and give other arguments, but as I rose specially to refer to the remark made upon me I shall say no more at present. Mr. SEDDON (Premier). - Sir, I think, notwithstanding the protracted nature of the debate, that good will result therefrom. It has been to some extent educational, although I do not think that this was the opportunity for going into the question as to whether the rating on unimproved value was the correct method of raising local revenue. That has been decided by Parliament years ago. If the question before the House had been to repeal that law, with a view of introducing the old property-tax, or to insist that there should be only one system-namely, that of rating on the capital value-then I could have understood a good deal of what has been said in the speeches made by honourable members. But, Sir, right along the line-there have been but few exceptions - members, one after another, who oppose this Bill stand up in their places and say, "I am in favour of rating on the unimproved value; I believe it is the correct system of rating; but I am opposed to this Bill." Then, I say, if they are sincere in their statement that they believe in rating on the unimproved value as the correct and proper way of raising local revenue, why do they oppose a Bill having for its object the carrying-out of that which they say they are in favour of? To me, this position is unintelligible. Either they have not the strength of mind to carry out their own convictions, or they are afraid of the consequences. It is one of those two things. For my own part, time after time I have decided that whenever you endeavour to make progress you must risk unpopularity, and leave time to decide whether or not what you propose is for good. If you are satisfied that that which you propose will prove beneficial, you must not hesitate because of the immediate consequences. I ask, Sir, what answer can honourable members give who insist upon the general taxation being levied by means of a land-tax on unimproved values? And, in this House, I take it, if members vote as they have spoken-though we were somewhat evenly divided for a time-if an attempt were now made to bring back for general taxation purposes the property-tax, or the taxing of land on its capital value, there are not ten members who would vote for it. I cannot understand, therefore, the inconsistency of those members who stand upon the platform, and stand up in this House, and say they are in favour of general taxation being levied on the unimproved value of land, and then fear to adopt the same principle of raising rates for local purposes. It is to me incomprehensible. However, Sir, members have taken that view. I am astonished most, I may say, at the attitude of many honourable members in respect to this Bill. I say, then, there are some members who are glaringly inconsistent. I first come to the professed Radical member who represents Riccarton. I am sorry to see he is not here, and therefore probably I shall not say as much as I had otherwise intended. But it will be found, on reference to Hansard for 1895, Volume 90, page 146, that the honourable gentleman spoke on the second reading, and notified his intention of voting therefor. I am alluding to the Rating Bill, maintaining the unimproved

condition. In 1895, Volume 90, page 158, I find he voted for the second reading of that Bill. In Hansard for 1896, Volume 92, page 636-that is, the following year-he voted for the second reading of the Bill. In Hansard for 1896, Volume 93, page 139, he voted for the third reading of the Bill. In Hansard for 1900, Volume 112, page 454, he voted for Mr. Fowlds's amendment. Therefore, as I have said, when listening to the speech delivered by the honourable gentleman the other night, I was astonished to find that he was entirely opposed to rating on the unimproved value. He gave, according to his lights, good and sufficient ground for the repeal altogether of such a law. Then, I want to know how it came about that, holding these views, he could have voted for the second and the third reading of those Bills which subsequently became law, and in those Bills was contained this very principle to which he now so strongly objects. I say it is glaringly inconsistent. care not what measure was passed making

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it optional or mandatory. If there is a condition or a clause in the Bill, or a principle involved, which is contrary to the public weal and contrary to my conviction. I am in duty bound to oppose that measure, and do my best to prevent it becoming law. I therefore cannot understand the vote of the honourable member for Riccarton and others, and I cannot understand the vote of those who voted for the second and third reading of a Bill to give the power of rating on the unimproved value, and who to-day are afraid to pass the Bill now before us. And, to show a further inconsistency, 10.0. the honourable member for Riccarton voted for Mr. Fowlds's amendment ; and what was it ? "Mr. Fowlds (Auckland City) moved the addition of the following new clause :- "Section twenty of ' The Rating on Unimproved Value Act, 1896,' is hereby repealed." The member for Riccarton objects altogether to rating on unimproved value, he says, and yet he votes for this amendment which repealed section 20 of "The Rating on Unimproved Value Act, 1896," and which made every rate leviable by the local body subject to the optional provisions of the rating on unimproved value. I say I do not, in the whole of my parliamentary career, know of anything so glaringly inconsistent. Then, Sir, I have always maintained this : that if taxation is to be fair there must be equality of sacrifice-the taxation should be put on the shoulders of those most able to bear it. I shall prove before I sit down-I will take any of the large cities of the colony you like, any of the country districts you like, and I will show you that in the rating on unimproved value you have equality of sacrifice, and you place the burdens on the shoulders of those most able to bear them. But, Sir, what has kept the world back ; what is it that is keeping New Zealand to some extent behind now? It is the fear of the invisible. There are those persons who are ever hesitating, afraid to go forward, afraid to make a change, because they fear the consequences. I say there should be no fear at all in respect to this principle of rating on the unimproved value. I say that what has caused objection to this measure has been the fear of the single-tax, because there are gentlemen in this House who support this Bill, and they are also single-taxers. For that one reason many other members, and many people outside this House, fear the passing of this Bill. I cannot understand it. I am not a single-taxer. My belief of what is reasonable and not extreme prevents me going that length, and if the single-taxers in the House had opposed this Bill, I believe the larger number of those who have opposed it would have been found supporting the Bill. Honourable members doubtless are consistent, and consequently could not very well, I suppose, have refrained from expressing their opinions ; but, taking the debate right through, taking the arguments for and against, I say that the weight is in favour of rating on the unimproved value, although, as far as this Bill is concerned, it is only a measure to make it general instead of optional. Then, we are told that the result of a poll Mr. Seddon at Auckland should cause members and the Premier to pause in respect to this measure. I am one of those men who believe in being progressive. Mr. Fowlds put forward a very proper suggestion : that where a poll had just been taken, and where under the existing law three years must elapse before the poll can be renewed, that that three years should elapse- that provision be made

in the Bill that that time should elapse before they are brought under the operation of the measure. I think myself, that that suggestion is a fair one. and. as far as I am concerned, I do not want to deprive the citizens of Auckland of the result of the poll for the time now allowed by law. There is not the slightest attempt being made to force it on them. But why should so much be made of the case of Auckland? There have been thirty-five or thirty-six polls taken in the colony on the same matter, and thirty-three of them have been in favour of rating on the unimproved value. The result in Auckland is that only one-sixth of the total number in the district have declared against rating on the unimproved value. Why, then, should so much be said of this single case, as against thirty on the other side, and why should that one case be brought forward as a guide for Parliament? It is ridiculous to suggest that it should be a guide. I consider that, beyond taking it as the opinion of the Auckland burgesses, we should take no further notice of the poll. But let there be, as there ought to be, the same vote-the vote of the people-on this question, as on other questions. in lieu of the vote of the interested parties, with the great power they wield - power which has not been for the good of the people in the cities; let the vote be the vote of those who reside in the cities, and then we would see what the result of a poll in Auckland would be. I would have no fear of the result of a poll under such conditions. Mr. LAWRY .- You have not changed the franchise. Mr. SEDDON .- The franchise will be extended-there will be the lodger franchise -- and there will be only one roll on which men will be returned to represent their fellow-men. That, I say, is coming, and the sooner it comes the better. Those who pay rents pay rates. Those who inhabit the houses are those who pay, and it is nonsense to say that only those who have an interest in property shall be represented. It is uneven: it is unequal; it is wrong. Then, I am twitted with having departed from the principle of the Bill when I stated, in answer to the member for Franklin, that if the Bill were passed I would be prepared to make provision to allow those to come from under it who expressed a wish, by a majority of their number, to do so. I say there is no departure from the principle whatever. Take the thirty-three local bodies that have adopted the principle, take the general feeling of the people throughout the colony. and I say that there you have the test; and if you were to have a referendum on the question to-morrow the answer would be in favour of rating on the unimproved value.

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and make it general in its application, and then, if there are special circumstances, let them come from under that law. That is local option in the proper sense. Now, I will take one or two of the arguments that have been used. Here is one specious argument: that if the proposal is adopted a greater rent will have to be paid by the racecourses, by the "sports," and by the recreation trustees, and also by those who hold lands for recreation purposes. Sir, there is too much racecourse in this colony. There is too much sport in New Zealand. I say that one of the dangers which besets this young country is that there is too much sport, too much pleasure, and consequently many people are not looking to the reality of life: they are not, in my opinion, going on the right track, and there should not be encouragement given to that which exists at the present time. But there are private people who can afford to have sports grounds from which they are making huge profits. If you can have racecourses within the boundary of a borough or city; if you have, as I say, grounds of this kind-well, knowing the profit even that racing-clubs make -- knowing the profits made from these sports grounds An Hon. MEMBER .- What about the Canterbury Trotting Club? Mr. SEDDON .- Why, the honourable member does not know what he is talking about. Discussing the matter with one of the vice-presidents of that club, and considering the amount spent upon the ground and the value of the improvements, and considering the increased value given to the land, I think it can very well afford to pay an increased rate. So that the honourable member was very unfortunate in referring to that. An Hon. MEMBER .- I referred to the Athletic Club. Mr. SEDDON .- I know athletic grounds belonging to private persons that are bringing in huge profits. The honourable member for

Hawke's Bay trotted out the farmers in the back blocks. He said to rate them on this principle would be pernicious. They go back almost beyond civilisation, and they improve the land ; they go to the forest, they hew down the trees, they suffer great hardships ; and under this Bill, he said, they would be unjustly treated. Why, if you take one of these back- block settlers, every farmer on each of these sections is an improving farmer, and his thrift and energy will be exempted under this Bill. Therefore I say that the back-block settler -the thrifty and improving settler - will get relief. But I will give cases to the honourable member where men have taken up this timber country, and have never put an axe in it, and have allowed the timber to stand ; whilst the farmer who has improved his land has from year to year had to pay- say his land is worth \$5 an acre-with his improvements he has had to pay upon £8 an acre. The man who has made no improve- ments and has allowed the timber to stand is the better off, because with the royalty on the is of greater value than that of the man who has effected the improvements. I would make the man who has left timber on the land and who has made no improvements pay the same rates as the improving farmer. Under the existing conditions of rating on the capital value, the timber has proved to be the best crop, with the royalty, and with the increased value given to the land by the labour and thrift of his neighbour ; and yet that neighbour is being penalised all the time, and the unim- proved-land owner comes in and sweeps up the full profits and all the benefits. I there- fore say that in this respect it is time there was an improvement and an alteration for the benefit of the back-block farmer. Then, we were told that the reason of this measure- the idea of increasing the graduated land-tax -came from Mr. Earnshaw. That was one of the arguments used by honourable members. What on earth Mr. Earnshaw's speech suggest- ing the increase of the graduated land-tax can possibly have to do with this measure I cannot for a moment imagine. All I can say is this : that if an increase in the graduated land-tax is required by the necessities of the country we should not hesitate; and I have never altered my views from the first passing of the Act- namely, that we were too moderate, and that with the increased population, and with the large spending that we are going in for weekly and yearly, I cannot understand how it has been allowed to stop as it is. But it looks to me that if concessions are going to be given in one way we must have something by which we can recoup ourselves in another direction, and I am very glad to find the matter noticed on this occasion, because it strengthens my views, and will prepare the way for what is coming, and that before long. Then, I call honourable members' attention to the Chinamen's gardens in the centres of the large cities of this colony. In Auckland and Wellington you will find Chinamen's gardens- An Hon.

MEMBER. - Not in Auckland. Mr. SEDDON .-- Yes ; in Auckland, in one of the suburbs ; and if the fact does not point a moral to honourable members I do not know anything that will. I take it that the fact of a Chinaman being able to grow vegetables on land at a profit in the centre of the City of Wellington means that the owner of that land is probably getting at the rate, as I have been told, of £10 per acre per annum. It means that the owner is quietly lying back while the China- man is paying him a good interest on the money, and he is looking forward to the great profit he will get later on when he will cut up that land for building sections. But, in the meantime, the same remark applies to those shops and cottages of bygone days which you will find here in your City of Wellington, because in that re- spect I believe Wellington stands in the worst position of any city in this colony- Mr. HUTCHESON .- That is on the Church reserve that you are talking about. Mr. SEDDON .- I am not talking about a Church reserve. I am talking about what I

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in the City of Wellington is one of the largest | and be replaced with buildings suitable to the landowners, and the owner of property in Molesworth Street. One of these gentlemen during the plague scare owned a building which was occupied by Chinamen, and was declared . to be insanitary, and was ordered to be pulled down. He is not alone in that respect ; and here in the City of Wellington we have an ob- Annual

Value. Wellington. 20 Cottage Home in Cardall Street, Newtown 241 13 4 . New Bank of New Zealand 2,000 .. Sir Walter Buller's residence 210 Eight shops, Willis Street, in one 905 112 block (belonging to one owner) 240 Shop in Willis St. (Hume & Son) Duke of Edinburgh Hotel 500 The following are cases in the Waimate and Linwood districts :- under Un-' improved under Rates Letting Value. Rates Waimate. 8. d. d. s. House, with 2} acres 1 0 1 5 1 House, with } acre 14 0 0 0 5 20 acres, unimproved 2 15 0 15 5 .. Vacant section, & acre 0 10 0 3 3 .. Linwood. Vacant section, } acre 1 10 5 4 7 acre, with house 3 10 2 10 9 & acre, with house 0 19 8 1 16 4 2 acres worth £1,400, with 4 16 8 0 house worth £560 7 19 Time will not permit me to give more cases than those I have already given, because, before concluding, I desire to deal with the statement made by the honourable member for Marsden. Before I do that, however, I will go to the country districts. A man with a hundred acres of land has improvements amounting to \$300. He takes the land at \$5 an acre. With \$300 for improvements, he pays local rates upon £8 an acre ; while his neighbour, although the land has the same unimproved value of \$5 an acre, has improvements amounting to only \$100, and he pays upon £6, as against the other's £8. Mr. SPEAKER .- Time is up. Mr. SEDDON .- I hope, Sir, the Bill will be read a second time. The House divided. AYES, 27. Allen, E. G. Hornsby Seddon Carroll Stevens Houston Laurensen Duncan Stewart Ell Lawry Tanner Field McGowan Ward Fisher McGuire Willis. Flatman Mills Tellers. O'Meara Guinness Fowlds Hall-Jones Parata Symes. Hogg Mr. Seddon requirements of the city; but you will never have that done as long as you allow them to remain under existing conditions. Now, we have heard a good deal about the " fat man," and I will give you some figures I have had taken out, and they are not cases just simply pre- pared for the occasion. They are as follows :- Unimproved Present New Section Area. System. Value. System. £ 8. d. 8. d. £ 2 9 7 9 6 32' 9" x 103' 9" 115 1 102' 3' x 80" 288 1 8 22,462 47' 6" x 110' 10" i 5 0 73 82' x 217' 16 1,600 20 10 152 9 7 11,889 5 3 . . 53'6 x O', 68' x 101 6,315 29 15 0 80 19 10 60 35' 75" x 74' 134 13 4 8 4 10,500 NOES, 23. Russell, W. R. Atkinson Herries Bennet Smith, G. J. Lang Value. Bollard Lethbridge Thompson, R. Collins Thomson, J. W. Massey Fraser, A. L. D. McNab Witheford. Graham Millar Tellers. Hardy Monk Hutcheson 3 Rhodes Haselden Pirani. 5 PAIRS. 3 For. Against. 9 Fraser, W. Barclay Kaihau. Colvin. 6 Majority for, 4. Mr. McGUIRE .- I wish to explain that I was paired with the honourable member for Taranaki, and I voted as he would have voted if he had been here. Bill read a second time. Mr. SEDDON .- I wish to announce that it. is my intention to have a return placed on the table of the House showing, in detail, in every city and borough and county in the colony. what the result would be if they were rated on the unimproved value; and when we have that return members will see what they are doing. The House adjourned at half-past ten o'clock p.m.