

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Thursday, 18th July, 1901. First Readings-Coroners' Inquests-Young Persons Protection Bill-School Attendance Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock.

PRAYERS. FIRST READINGS. Cyanide Process Extension Bill, Public Health Bill, Chinese Immigrants Bill, Accidents Compensation Bill. CORONERS' INQUESTS. On the motion of the Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table of the Council a return showing the number of Coroners' inquests held during the two years immediately prior to the passing of " The Pay- ment of Jurors Act, 1899," by the Coroners for Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dun- edin ; also the costs incurred in respect of such inquests held by such Coroners, and showing : he number and cost of inquests held since the pass- ing of the above Act, including the amounts paid to jurors upon such inquests. YOUNG PERSONS PROTECTION BIJ.I .. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I see this Bill is described in a paper circulating in this town as an old friend. Well, I trust it will not be any the less acceptable because it is an old friend. It is a friend that we like to see, and we believe that it will do a great deal of good to our boys and girls if legislation of this kind is passed. The Bill is pretty well the same as the Bill passed through this Council on a previous occasion. The Bill was submitted the session before last to the ordeal of a Select Committee, which took evidence, and brought it within a reasonable amount of distance of the different views which exist as to the parti- ticular difficulty with which this Bill is sup- posed to cope. The Bill is intended to cope with the difficulty that many of our boys and girls have too much liberty and are allowed to go wild on the streets, and that from going wild on the streets they go to worse things. It has been charged against the Bill that it proposed to make a criminal class and brand them as such. Now, I contend that is not the intention of the Bill, and, if properly administered, it will not be the effect of the Bill. The intention of the Bill is to prevent a child being contaminated in such a way as, I am sorry to say, they are contaminated now. The effect of the Bill will be to put it in the hands of proper persons to take charge of these young people when they begin to transgress, and to put them on the safe road to an honest and

clean life. They will prevent them from ever becoming contaminated with either the criminal class or the vicious class, and that is, of course, the main object of the Bill, and for that reason I think I can claim that this is a Bill which deserves every consideration at the hands of the Council. The

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Bill, as I said before, has been before a Select Committee, which took evidence and reported in favour of the Bill with certain amendments. These amendments last year were incorporated in the Bill, endeavouring to tone down and soften down any part of the machinery of the Bill which unnecessarily would be likely to brand these young people prematurely with anything they could be saved from. That machinery still exists in the Bill that we have now before the Council, and I therefore ask the Council to pass it as they passed it before, and to hope that the other Chamber will have time to consider it and pass it into law. I feel quite certain the Bill is one which, if not as flagrantly wanted as a few years ago, still is one we ought to carry, because there is a good deal of juvenile laxity as regards discipline and attachment to home. The Bill lays a certain amount of responsibility on the parents, for if the parents do not do their duty to their children they have to face the consequences, because not only will the child be brought up before the Magistrate, but the parents. I cannot in any way admit the charge that was made against the Bill last year and previously—that it was a Bill likely to create a criminal class, and that we were endeavouring to put a brand of infamy on any of our children. Its object is to prevent any of our children from reaching such lengths of depravity that they might come to belong to a criminal or vicious class. The Bill, I feel quite certain, if properly handled and if its administration is put into proper hands, will prevent our children from ever falling into such ways as would lead them into trouble. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .-- Sir, I do not think there are many who hold different opinions about the protection of young children from getting into ways of error, but the question is, What process shall we take for that purpose ? Is the Bill wanted, or is it not likely to create another large staff of people without being, in one's opinion, necessary ? Or is it a Bill just to be put on the statute-book and no more notice taken of it, as was the case with the Inebriates' Homes Bill, which was passed years ago—a much more important Bill than this—and no further notice was taken of it, and nothing was done towards putting it into force ? Then, Sir, we have back in this Bill the "discreet woman." Hon. MEMBERS .- NO. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .-- Where is she ? The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- She is back here again, clothed and in her right mind ; you will find her in clause 4. Then, there is another thing in regard to this Bill : If it is a good Bill, why should it not apply all over the colony ? Why is it a permissive Bill, and why should it only apply to certain districts ? Now, with regard to the Bill, the great objection one had to it before is still there. I would ask any one, supposing a child is taken home—a young girl or boy—to his or her people by a policeman or a "discreet woman," how will that child be looked upon in the future ? Will it not be regarded as one of the criminal classes ? To my mind, that would be the case, notwithstanding what the honourable gentleman said—that the Bill would not create a criminal class. There is a feasible way of dealing with this matter. I was a member of the Committee. I do not wish to refer to the evidence, because members usually wish to quote only portions of the evidence, reading them their own way, leaving out certain bits as it suits them. We had a great deal of evidence before the Committee in connection with the Act—which did good work while it was in force, namely, the Contagious Diseases Act and I venture to say that if this Act were brought into force again it would clear the streets much better and more effectually. We have taken pre- than this class of Bill. cautions against certain diseases throughout the colony, but we have diseases here affecting the stamina of the young people of New Zealand, and which will continue to affect it, running rampant, and no

steps are taken to prevent that. In my opinion, it would be better if the Government had simply brought in a Bill of three clauses, saying that the Contagious Diseases Act should be brought into force throughout New Zealand; that would be a benefit to the population of the colony, and we should be able to bring up a stalwart and well-grown people, instead of having their health sapped as at present, and the result descending for generations. You have only to look at the cases in the Court to see how it is circulated. If there were any chance of carrying it I would propose an amendment to the Bill, to the effect that the Contagious Diseases Act be brought into force. I do not think that the young people of New Zealand are so bad as people imagine them to be. I am quite satisfied that in New Zealand we have a well-behaved class of young people. Of course, I do not mean to say that we have none of the criminal classes among them, and that they are all well-behaved—there is nothing like that in any country; but I say, if you compare them with any other colony or any other place, they will compare most favourably in every way with any country in the world. With this class of Bill, providing for all these billets for people. We shall have in New Zealand, I think, a billet for every second person in it before we are much older. I believe in giving a great deal of encouragement to those homes that are established now. We should endeavour to help them in their good work, because they are doing a great deal of good work; and when you come to put this Bill into force you will be taking away from the good work they are now doing. It would be more in our interests to encourage this voluntary work than to pass a law like this, which will never be put into force. I do not care to take up the time of the Council any further in debating the Bill; it has been debated every year, and I do not know that any good will be done by debating it. If there is a majority to pass it, we had better get it over and out of the road, though I should like to see it thrown out altogether. I shall vote against it. The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I shall support this Bill, as I supported it when it came before

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us in a previous session; but I cannot agree with the honourable gentleman who has introduced it when he said that it did not attach any stigma or brand to the young person. Why, look at the 4th subsection of clause 5, which their children says,—"If both the Protection Officer and the person in charge of the shelter concur as to the expediency of the course, the young person may either be detained there until he can be brought into about the streets at night and getting into before a Magistrate, as hereinafter provided," et cetera. Well, what does that mean? It means that the child brought before a Magistrate will, Nobody can go about town late at night with—nine times out of ten, have his or her name have no business there, and it will be a mercifully appearing in the public papers. It all depends on the reporter who happens to be present in. We need not discuss again the details of the Court taking down the proceedings; and I think it would be a very good thing to introduce into I will certainly support it in its main provision—the Bill a proviso that no reporter present shall give the name of any child brought before the Magistrate, and now only wish to protest against Magistrate under this Bill. As far as one city the suggestion which has been made more than once in this Council, that the Bill is to make is concerned, with which I am more particularly criminals, whereas its object is to prevent acquainted—namely, Auckland—I say it is imperative that this Bill should become law. I children from becoming criminals. am not in the habit of walking about the streets against this Bill on previous occasions, and I of Wellington at night, so I cannot say whether intend to speak and vote against it again. I have it is required here or not, or in Christchurch, or not seen any reason, although I have walked Dunedin; but, as far as Auckland is concerned, about the various Cities of Wellington, Auckland, I am certain it is required, and I am certain also that any decent person in that city would warrant, in my opinion, such a Bill as this be only too glad to see the Bill passed into law. being placed on the statute-book. That there The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Sir, as a new arrival in Auckland, residing there but a few are evils existing I admit, but you cannot remove them by an Act of Parliament. I can months, I cannot indorse the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Scotland. I cannot say I

have only stigmatize this Bill as a sort of hysterical production, and such as that which emanated seen these things going on that the honourable gentleman has referred to. The honourable from Stead in regard to that indictment which gentleman is living in a country district out- he made in London when he published that side Auckland, and I do not think he comes disgusting pamphlet "The Maiden Tribute." What does this Bill mean in effect ? That any much into contact with the people of that child, in the opinion of some of these officers city. Therefore, as a citizen of Auckland, I think it is only right to express my opinion who are now so common about our colony, may be taken charge of by what you call a "dis- that there does not exist in Auckland anything creet woman." and thereby a brand would be put so bad as my honourable friend refers to. In on that child which can never be removed. Let this Bill there is a very drastic clause which I me ask my honourable friend Mr. Bowen think should be altered. Clause 11 states that what about those unfortunate boys who are put any boy arrested by a member of the Police into Burnham School ? The fact of a boy being Force is to be kept in gaol until brought be- put into that school causes him to be stigma- fore the Magistrate. It does not even allow him to get bail. That is, in my opinion, a tized as an unfit, and his prospects in life may very arbitrary method of procedure. The boy be injured by his being sent to such institution. might belong to a very decent family ; and why should he he kept in gaol without an without it ? opportunity of getting bail ? The Bill requires moral agencies are still strong enough in this amendment in this respect, and I hope when it colony to protect these children ; and I know goes into Committee some alteration will be that in one particular part of the colony where made in that direction. The Hon. Mr. BOWEN .- Without discussing I have been residing lately good people, people with manliness and womanliness in them, are the details of this Bill, which were dealt with in freely doing the work which this Bill is sup- this Council last session, and while admitting posed to do with the aid of paid officials. I that there is room for necessary amendments, say that it is not a good thing at all to give I must say that I disagree, as I did last that authority to the so called "discreet " year, with my honourable friend Mr. McLean women or other Inspectors to take any child as to the character and merits of the proposed into their power in this way; and I do legislation. Some such measure is necessary, as hope that, even if this Bill is passed, it will there is too often in this colony, as elsewhere, be so amended in Committee that it will be very grave neglect of children on the part of parents. Notice has been drawn to this dan- considerably shorn of its powers. gerous neglect over and over again, but nothing has been done to remedy an evil which cannot be denied. There is no doubt that parents are too lax in this colony in regard to the control of The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS. - Punish the parents. The Hon. Mr. BOWEN .- Ah, "punish the parents"; but I do not want to punish the children. I want to prevent them from loiter- bad company. If parents will not, we must try to prevent children being led into bad habits. out seeing young children in the streets who ful law which insists on their being sent home. Bill, which can be dealt with in Committee. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- I have spoken Christchurch, and other parts of the colony, to The Hon. Mr. BOWEN .-- What would he be The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- I say that the

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The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- With the general objects of this Bill I quite agree, but I very much disagree with its method of pro- cedure, which was what I pointed out last session, in common with other honourable members. I consider the means to. be adopted are far too severe, and that there ought to be a probationary period to those children who are found on the streets. By clause 5, subsec- tion (2), the Protection Officer or the police- man might, if he finds a young person in the streets, take him home, and thereby cast a slur on his character. This, I think, is a very improper power to put in the hands of any one. What should be done is that, if a boy is found habitually loitering in the streets away from his home, his name should be taken down by the Protection Officer or the policeman, and par- ticulars of the complaint should be sent to his parents, so as to give them an opportunity of cor- recting the boy or girl themselves.

After a certain period, if the child is again found there, then the child might be dealt with in the manner which this Bill provides. Clauses 5 and 11, in my view, are liable to bring about what my honourable friend Mr. McLean has mentioned -that is, to brand a certain class of boys as almost criminals. What is wanted is to give the parents an opportunity of doing their duty, and which, I believe, if brought before them in the manner in which I have pointed out, will induce them to exercise proper care over their children. I shall support the Bill in Committee, and right through, if provision is made whereby the protection which I have alluded to can be given to the children and also to the parents ; but otherwise I will not, if the Bill passes the Committee in its present form. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I cannot understand, Sir, how any honourable gentleman who has been reading the newspapers and reports of the Supreme Court and other Courts for the last six months can vote against this Bill. It is quite evident that there is abroad a class of people who are too ready to take advantage of these children if they find them loitering in the streets at night. It appears to me that it is most desirable that some effort should be made to make them stay at home. It is all due to parental laxity-parents are careless, children are allowed to roam abroad and get into bad habits. Now, with regard to the stain that will be on the child's character if taken in charge by either a " discreet woman " or a policeman, I ask honourable gentlemen what may the consequence be to a child who is not taken in charge ? That is the point. If a child is taken in charge and taken home it is a warning to the child and a warning to the parents ; and if a child knows and the parents know that he is liable to be arrested, or anything of that kind, he will not be allowed out, and there will be no necessity for his arrest. That will be the effect of it. The Hon. Mr. McLean and my honourable friend Mr. Jennings both spoke to us of the moral agencies that were at work, and of the good people who are doing these gentlemen who are opposed to this Bill that there is a necessity for it, for if there were no necessity for it these good people of whom they speak would have had nothing to do, and they would not be doing all that the honourable gentlemen tell us they are doing. No . , with regard to the severity of the Bill, I do not know but that the Hon. Mr. Lee Smith is perhaps right. According to what I see in this Bill the He officer is not allowed sufficient discretion. is to take the child home. There is no necessity to take the child home. If he warns the child to go home and the child refuses, then he may take the child ; but there is no reason why a warning should not be given before any arrest or any hand is laid on the person of the child. But you will understand that police- men and other officers who are intrusted with the administration of the law never carry it to the extreme extent. They administer it in a judicious way, and I believe that this law would also be administered most judiciously. It would be necessary to administer this Act judiciously, and consequently, if administered judiciously, I am certain that no child which possessed a character would be injured. But there are other people contemplated to be arrested under this Bill-young persons found in gambling-houses and other undesirable places which I need not mention. Now, if a Protection Officer finds a little girl under fourteen years of age in such a place, what can he do ? What ought to be done ? Take her out of it and look after her, and save her from the terrible doom which is before her if she remains there. Very well, Sir, under such circumstances there is nothing severe in taking the child to a shelter and bringing her before the Magistrate. I do not see that this is an open Court, and I would like to ask the Hon. the Minister if it is an open Court. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- It does not follow. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- It should not be an open Court, in my opinion. I think these cases might be well considered in private, and not open to the public; but I do not think that it is at all wrong to give public officers the power to enter these houses where young boys may be gambling, and laying the foundation of a terrible career, or where young girls may be laying the foundation of a life of misery and infamy. I do not think there is any severity in arresting under these conditions and bringing them before the Magistrate. For my own part, Sir, I think, in the absence of the Contagious Diseases Act, it is absolutely necessary that this power should be given. I have had it from several policemen that, when the Contagious Diseases Act was in existence, under it the police possessed sufficient powers to do that which is

contemplated by this Bill. The police exercised that power in those days, and it had good effect. Now they have not that power, and consequently this Bill has become a necessity. That is what I have had from policemen, and I have no doubt that the Hon. Mr. Bowen, who has had a large experiences as a Magistrate, will be able to bear me out in that

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respect. Consequently, I think that the Bill is very necessary. Remember that the child is under fourteen years of age, though, for my own part, I would make it sixteen, to come even with the age of consent. But, remember, it is only a little child of fourteen that will ever be interfered with. An Hon. MEMBER. - The age is seventeen in clause 11, which refers to gambling. . The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- Under this Bill a young person means a boy or girl not over the age of fourteen years. Clause 11 refers to boys gambling, and that is not so serious a matter as the question affecting girls. I do not think that the liberty of the subject is at all involved in this Bill, and I think it is very desirable the Bill should pass. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON .- My honour- able friend has told us that this is an old friend come back. Well, I am an old opponent of the Bill. and I intend to continue to oppose it, for reasons I have already given. I do not intend to speak at any length on the Bill ; nearly all the arguments that have been used to-day have been used before, and I do not see that there is much good in repeating them. But I wish to say that I regret very much that the Govern- ment see the necessity of advertising to the world that our towns are so immoral that young persons are not to be trusted in the streets after nine o'clock at night. I have not seen that immorality myself, although I have had occa- sion in more than one town in the colony to be out as late as most, and I have never yet met with it. You meet fallen women, of course, in all large towns in every part of the world : but to say that our young people are terribly immoral, or that our old people are so terribly immoral that young children should not be trusted out after nine o'clock, is to tell me something that I refuse to believe. There is another point : it may be a Committee objection, but I should like to refer to it. We have heard a good deal about the Protection Officers-policemen in petticoats, the "discreet woman," and all that sort of thing ; but in sub- section (21 of clause 5, if a detective officer sees the necessity of taking into custody a young woman it may be he questions her, and if the answers to the questions are satisfactory he may take her home. If the answers are satisfactory, why should she be interfered with, and not be allowed to go her own way ? It may be that she is very likely sent on some message by her pa- rents or employer ; she may have met a friend and she might stand for a few minutes convers- ing - that may have happened more than once, and the policeman or "discreet woman " may have seen it and may put their own interpreta- tion on it and say that she is loitering. The Hon. Mr. BOWEN .- " Habitually loiter- ing." The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON .- There is no- thing to show what "habitually loitering " is ; it is left to the discretion of the petticoated policeman. Well, if the answers are satis- factory she should not be interfered with. them over to their parents and guardians, which Surely we are not so horribly wicked that any conditions? We have been told by the Hon. Mr. Twomey that the police do their work very well. But not all of them. Some make mistakes. I think I have mentioned before a case where a policeman made a mis- take and "ran in " a young woman for being drunk. In less than ten minutes after she was locked up she saw the Inspector, and asked him if she was drunk, and he said "No," and sent her away. Of course, she appeared at the Court in the morning, and the Magistrate refused to convict. The policeman saw the young woman drunk, as he said, but the reverse was the case - it was the policeman who was drunk. An Hon. MEMBER .- Perhaps the Inspector made a mistake. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON .- No; he gave evidence in the Court. The policeman, on being asked if he thought it possible a person could be drunk and become sober in ten minutes, said he had seen many such cases. I do not know where he did ; I never saw one. I regret the Bill has been brought forward, and, in my opinion, there is no such crime existing as to warrant it. The only good thing about it is that it is to be permissive, and if it gets on the

statute-book it will never be enforced-the people will not have it. It will be like another Act-the Inebriates' Homes Act-which found its way to the statute-book only to become a dead-letter. That is the best thing that could happen in this case. I presume it will pass this Council as it did last year, but I hope in another place they will have enough sense to drop it again. I shall oppose the Bill. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I am only sorry there are no new arguments to reply to. I think, not forgetting the "discreet woman," we have had all our old friends trotted out before us-the same old bogeys about disturbing these young people and bringing them before a Magistrate, and all the rest of it. The Bill is intended to prevent anything of the sort taking place. It endeavours to prevent young people from getting into such a path of life as to be brought up before a Magistrate if they will only take warning. Any one who is familiar with our ways of life must be aware that our young people all live to a certain extent in the open air, and so have become used to habitually loitering in certain places, and they get into little gangs and get into mischief. A Protection Officer, who may or may not be a policeman, gets to know these children, and has under this Bill the opportunity of giving them a warning, and, if he knows they are habitual loiterers, he can take action. It is not to be supposed that if he knows they are simply playing football he will interfere with them ; but if he knows that they are getting into mischief, and he knows the company they are drifting into, he will, if he is wise, interfere to save these children from what may be before them. If he then feels satisfied that the children mean no mischief, and can be depended upon to take the hint, he need not go any further ; but if he thinks fit he can take them home and hand

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dians that the children are not being looked after as they should be, and are therefore getting into mischief. But this does not brand the children at all. I would point out that almost the last thing the Magistrate can do is to proceed against the parent or guardian, and I am not quite sure that something should not be done against them earlier. I am sure this is the most considerate course of procedure that we can adopt if put into the hands of proper officers, and that it will be the means of saving a great many children from troublous ways ; and therefore we need have no hesitation in passing the Bill. I beg to move the second reading. The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read the second time." AYES, 20. Taiaroa Arkwright Jones Baillie Tomoana Pitt Barnicoat Scotland Twomey Smith, A. L. Walker, L. Bolt Smith, W. C. Whitmore Bowen Harris Williams. Stevens Jenkinson Swanson NOES. 6. Pinkerton Kelly, W. Feldwick Shrimski. Jennings Kerr Majority for, 14. Bill read the second time. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- This is a Bill of considerable importance, because every one must recognise that it is of the utmost importance that our children should take the advantage of the school-teaching which is provided for them. There is too much laxity in some quarters as regards the obligation of parents to send their children to school. The Bill of which I have the honour to propose the second reading does not vary much from the existing law, except in one or two particulars. In the first place, as regards the age of attendance, we propose that, instead of it being from seven to thirteen, it shall be from the age of seven to fourteen, because we find, especially in country places, that it is quite fourteen before the children get through their standards. Also that, in regard to attendance during the week, instead of being six a week, as it is in the present Act, we propose to make it seven times out of any consecutive ten times that the school is open, which, of course, means three days and a half out of five. I am not sure whether it is quite enough, but, at all events, it is asking more than is asked now from them, and I trust it will have some effect. Of course, the parents and children are protected in the same way as they are now under the Act by exemptions. In reference to exemptions, in clause 4 there is an alteration. The present Act says (section 3) :- "This section shall not apply to any child whose place of residence is more than two miles from the nearest public school, the distance being measured by the shortest road, or who cannot conveniently reach a public school by railway." In the Bill we put it- "That the

total distance that the child would be required to walk from his place of residence to the school, or from his place of residence to the railway or other public conveyance and from the railway or other public conveyance to the school, is more than two miles in the case of a child under ten years of age, or three miles in any other case, the distance being estimated by the nearest road." So that in the case of children over ten years' of age we increase the former distance from two miles to three, which I do not think can be said to be too much. At all events, I know that in my young days in the Old Country there were children who went to school a distance of more than three miles, and were very glad to do it. The same powers of appeal are preserved in the Bill as are in the principal Act with regard to exemptions from the Committees to the Board ; and generally, excepting in one or two particulars, the present law is not very much altered. In the matter of penalties on parents for the irregular attendance of children. clause 6 says, - " Where any child required by this Act to attend a public school has been enrolled in the register of a public school, and, being in good health, does not attend at least seven times out of any consecutive ten times that the school is open, the parent of such child shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten shillings and not less than two shillings for every such week in which such child failed to attend school as required by this Act." In the Act now in force it makes a parent liable to a penalty not exceeding 2s. This Bill proposes to have that penalty increased to 10s. if the Magistrate so thinks fit, but it cannot be less than 2s. I trust that the Council will pass this Bill. I think it is very moderate, but it is going in the direction which I am quite certain we all wish our young people to walk in. The Hon. Captain BAILLIE. - I think this is a very desirable Bill. Anybody who is acquainted with our free school education must be aware of the difficulties which teachers have to contend with, and how the Education Boards are often heavily laden to find teachers for the schools, because there is not enough attendance to keep up a good school. I have noticed in many parts of this town for many years past that if you go about the streets you will see lots of children, ranging from about eight to ten to twelve years of age, doing nothing but playing with marbles and tops. Perhaps some of the mothers keep the elder girls at home to nurse the babies, and the Truant Officer has to 2) round to hunt up these children. I am aware that the parents understand, perhaps, that their children must have so many days' attendance during the year ; but what do they do ? They send their children to school in the morning and they are marked in the register, but they are so knowing that they keep them at home in the afternoon. The children have to have two-thirds attendance at the school during the year, and that is the way they do it. But I see by this Bill they must attend school four hours during

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the day, or they must have some reasonable excuse, or the master must give them an excuse attending to in regard to the verbiage. I will that it is necessary for them to catch a train, or defy any Judge or lawyer to read and interpret that there should be some other desirable object. the clause differently from the way I do. I do So far as the Truant Officer is concerned, I think not want to raise any opposition in regard to the Bill at all, but there is no doubt that the the difficulty could be met if the police could be utilised in some respects, especially in the parents of a Roman Catholic child would have country districts, where very often he has very to apply annually to the School Committee for little to do. I had some little time ago read to a certificate of exemption, and, under the promise an article out of the May number of the visions of this Bill, the Committee could refuse Win sor, describing truant institutions which . to give it. I only wish to draw the honourable have been established in various parts of Eng- gentleman's attention to it, and I have no doubt land ; there the young vagrants, if they do not he will take the matter into consideration and see that the verbiage is altered. However, I go to school, are sent to this reformatory, and they keep them there for three months presume that this Bill, being an amendment of I think in the and teach them useful arts. the Education Act, will go to the Joint

Statutes Revision Committee. morning they are kept at school for so- many hours, and some of them are employed in useful occupations, and they really not think so. learn trades. But, of course, that could not be done in this country. However, I think this ought to. Bill is very desirable, and I trust the Hon. the in regard to the objection raised by the last Minister will carry it through, and that it will have a good effect. There is one thing I might speaker, that clause 4 is pretty well the same point out to my honourable friend, and I trust as the present law in regard to this matter. he will make a note of it, and that is the difficulty in regard to the master producing the register of absence. Where the Education Board may apply for and receive a certificate from the to which I belong have summoned people for School Committee of the district in which such child resides exempting such child from attendance in the absence of their children, a difficulty was experienced sometimes to get the master to produce the register in whole or in part at school, upon produce the register. I think some clause should satisfying the School Committee of the existence be introduced into this Bill to provide that the existence of any one of the following grounds, master should produce a register of absence. namely :- The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK .- I would like to be clear as to the wording of clause 4 in this Bill. It states,- "The parent of any child may apply for and either in the Act or this Bill to run counter to receive from the School Committee of the district any person's convictions or persuasion. This is strict in which such child resides a certificate simply to assure the State that every child is getting efficient instruction ; the moment that under the hand of the Chairman or Secretary is assured I am certain there is no Committee exempting such child from attendance." That means to say that the parents of in the colony that would place any obstacle Roman Catholic children, if you read through in the way of Catholic children attending any school, provided they are satisfied that the the Act, have to apply annually for an exemption children are getting good instruction there -- as a condition. It is not made a ground of defence in the case of an action. It appears to me that, if the School Committee choose to refuse to in the imaginary case raised by the honourable gentleman. I trust the Bill will be received give such exemption, a Roman Catholic child would be forced to go to a public school, with an honest endeavour not to widen the law in a sense which may be disagreeable to whether the parents liked it or not. How any one, but simply to strengthen it where it would this do? I think the verbiage of the has been found wanting, in the interests of all. clause wants to be looked carefully into. Why should a person require to go annually, cap in hand, and ask for an exemption ? It is quite obvious, too, that the School Committee might refuse to issue a certificate. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Read the present law, and you will find it is exactly the same. The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK .--- I have not a HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. copy of the Education Act within reach, but, if that is so, it is a dead-letter, because, so long as the Truant Inspector is satisfied that the children are going to a proper school, the parents have not to go through the humiliation of applying for an exemption certificate every year. We have got too much of these certificates at present in all kinds of directions-certificates and The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- No, I do The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK .- Well, I think it The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I may say, " Provided also that the parent of any child "(1.) That the child is under efficient and regular instruction elsewhere." I would point out that there is no intention they generally do. I therefore see no hardship Bill read the second time. The Council adjourned at five minutes to four o'clock p.m. Thursday, 18th July, 1901. First Reading-Bill discharged -- Wellington Harbour Board Bill - Woodville County Bill - Invercargill Reserves Leasing Bill . Cycle Boards Bill - Statutes Compilation Bill-Edlars and Hawkers Bill-State-school Children Compulsory Drill Bill-Eight Hours Bill.

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Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Land for Settlements Bill. BILL DISCHARGED. District Courts Bill. WELLINGTON HARBOUR BOARD BILL. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) .- Sir, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which has been reported to the

House without amendment by the Local Bills Committee. The Wellington Harbour Board is constituted under "The Wellington Harbour Board Act, 1899," and there are ten members, of whom two represent country districts, the County of Hutt and the adjoining Counties of Wairarapa and Wairarapa South. In 1879 there were no direct means of communication between Wellington and Manawatu; but since that date the Manawatu Railway had been established, with the result that the Manawatu district is now in close communication with Wellington, and it is desired to allow representation on the Harbour Board by these people, who were directly interested in its welfare and operations. In 1879 there were no suburban townships near Wellington, and the member for the Hutt County represented the interests then existing; but since then the Boroughs of Petone, Karori, Hua. Onslow, and others have been formed, and the result is that direct representation on the Board has been withdrawn from the inhabitants of these townships, and the member for the Hutt County is now elected only by the representatives of the country districts, leaving out the populous townships. Since 1879 the Wairarapa North County has been subdivided, and the new Counties of Pahiatua, Akitio, Eketahuna, Mauriceville, and Castlepoint have been formed. It is proposed in the Bill to give representation to these counties, to provide for any further subdivision that may be made, and to give representation to the various boroughs in the country districts. I may say that Mr. J. G. Wilson, who has been acting as Chairman of one of the County Councils up the line, was present during the passing of a resolution adverse to the Bill, believing that the Harbour Board would have the power to rate his locality. Mr. Wilson, who has been taking some interest against the measure on that account, met the secretary of the Harbour Board this morning, and has withdrawn his opposition to the Bill, as has also Mr. John Stevens, who represents part of the Manawatu district. The Bill only proposes to do two things. It introduces no new change at all, it only extends the power of representation. There is also a general desire to alter the date of the annual meeting. At present, in common with all other Harbour Boards in New Zealand, the financial year of the Wellington Harbour Board closes on the 31st December. Section 55 of the Harbour Board Act of 1878 provides for the annual meeting being held on the third Monday of January each year to receive the audit of accounts, which, under section 181, have to be in print seven days prior to that date. There is provision, however, in "The Local Bodies' Audit Act, 1858," to enable the meeting to be held on a later date if the accounts are not ready. In the case of the Wellington Harbour Board, the election of chairman is held on the first Tuesday after the 20th February, and it has never yet happened that the accounts have been audited and printed in time for the chairman to deal with the accounts of the year before vacating office. I trust that this Bill will receive the support of honourable members. The fact that it has been reported to the House from the Local Bills Committee without amendment is a guarantee that it is in order. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City). - I second the motion for the second reading of this Bill. The Bill has the unanimous approval of the members of the Wellington Harbour Board, and, as the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs explains, the opposition entertained by the country members affected by the Bill has been removed by the fact that the objections are imaginary, and not real. The Bill, as I understand, now meets with the approval of those who thought it objectionable. It has been carefully drawn, and carefully considered by the Wellington Harbour Board, and I was very pleased to hear the member for Wellington Suburbs say that the country members concerned have withdrawn their opposition. The Bill therefore stands in the unique position of carrying with it the approval of every person in any way affected by it. Mr. STEVENS (Manawatu). - It was my intention to have opposed this Bill if it contained a provision enabling the Wellington Harbour Board to collect further rates from the country districts, but, having the assurance of the mover of the Bill to the contrary, I intend to withdraw any opposition I might have had to it, because I am led to suppose and I believe, rightly, that this Bill merely extends to country districts greater representation on the Harbour Board without in any way increasing their rating liability. The Bill gives an advantage to country districts, and, that being the case, I hope the measure will pass into law. Mr. PIRANI

(Palmerston) .-- I am not easily satisfied as the honourable member for Manawatu. The local bodies in my district who are brought under this Bill not only want an assurance that no rating is contained in the measure, because, as a matter of fact, they knew there is no rating -- they have read the Bill, and they know the law on the subject -but they want an assurance, and the mover will probably have no objection to give such an assurance, so far as he knows, that there is no intention on the part of the Board in the future, so far as they can tell, to increase the powers of the Board so that they will be able to rate these districts. Of course, they have no rating powers now. It is nonsense for any member who pretends to be following the legislation in this House to say that there is any rating

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[HOUSE.] Woodville 1901.] considerable sum of money. The population of power : but what is wanted by the local bodies in my district is an assurance as to the future. That is one point. Then, there is another point in regard to the bodies who are to take part in the representation of the country districts. At the present time, as a matter of procedure, there is no such thing as the County of Oroua-the Counties Act is not in force in that district. There is one Road Board -- the Manchester Road District, with a valuation of \$930,654; whereas the Pohangina County has only a valuation of \$397,194. Then, there is the Manawatu Road District, with a valuation of \$631,234; the Fitzherbert Road District, with a valuation of \$325,024; and the Halcombe Town District, with a valuation of \$21,426: or a total of \$1,908,338. So that as against the representation given to Pohangina there is a valuation of nearly two millions as against a valuation of \$397,194 for the latter. I do not think it would in any way affect this measure detrimentally, instead of including the County of Oroua, the measure named the Manchester Road District, the Manawatu Road District, and the Fitzherbert Road District. In other respects there is no objection to the measure; indeed, it is likely to popularise the Board and give country districts a share in the work of local government. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs). In answer to the member for Palmerston, I can assure him that the Wellington Harbour Board have no intention whatever of rating these districts which will have representation in the way prescribed in the Bill. The Wellington Harbour Board is in a really good financial position. It would require another Act to be passed before any rating could take place. With regard to what the honourable member said as to the change in the bodies to be represented, I might state that, roughly speaking, the West Coast has 28,831 inhabitants; Manawatu County, 2,954; Foxton, 1,212; Oroua County, 6,756; Feilding Borough, 2,298; Palmerston North Borough, 6,514; Horowhenua County, 4,661; Pohangina County, 1,534; KIWITEA County, 2,842. I think there is something in what the honourable member has said, but as this Bill is simply drawn upon a population basis I trust the honourable member will see his way not to make any opposition to the Bill in its present form. Bill read a second time. WOODVILLE COUNTY BILL. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) .- I hope honourable members will unanimously agree to the second reading of this Bill. The present seat of administration is sixty miles from Woodville. The promoters of this Bill have gone through the whole district; they have convened public meetings, addressed the people interested, and the suggestions made by the promoters have been universally approved of. The Bill will merge four local bodies which are in existence at the present time - that is, the Kumeroa, Maunga-tua, Woodville, and Maharahara Road Boards. This Bill will reduce the cost of administration. 467 the new county will be, roughly speaking, about four thousand; the area will be 110,000 acres; and the capital value of the land is \$570,000, the unimproved value £230,000. and the rate-payers number approximately about 560. The whole of this county is closely settled, and, as I have stated, the settlers have universally demanded the measure. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Mr G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) .-- There is one point which I wish to draw attention to in connection with this Bill, and it is this: at the present time there is before the House a Bill introduced by the Government dealing with the whole matter of county government. Now, it appears to me a rather

extraordinary thing that at this juncture, the Government having introduced such a Bill, they do not indicate to the House what lead they propose to give with regard to the further splitting-up of counties. I think the House is entitled to have from the Government a statement as to what position they intend to take up in connection with the further splitting-up of local bodies, in view of their own Bill now before Parliament, and which is to be referred to a Committee of the House. Mr. TANNER (Avon). -- I have no wish whatever to oppose the progress of this Bill, but I would emphasize the remarks which have just been made by the last speaker. For years past we have been promised a reform in our system of local government, in order to place matters in a more satisfactory position than they are in at the present time. In the Counties Act of 1886 the most elaborate provisions were introduced for the purpose of encouraging the union and fusion of counties, but nothing whatever has been done under all the machinery there provided. On the contrary, the whole current has gone in a totally opposite direction, and session after session we pass Bills splitting up existing counties into such small local governing areas as to excite ridicule when one contemplates the result. It is very little use asking the Government to give the House a lead in this matter. The Government have affected for years past an anxiety to rearrange our local-governing bodies and areas on a more simple, effective, and intelligible basis : and five years ago, in a speech in this House, the Premier indicated roughly the leading points of the policy to be pursued for the purpose. But nothing followed. and the subdivision of existing counties into a multitude of smaller ones has steadily progressed, and all the time 30. the Government has sat indifferently looking on while Bill after Bill for this purpose has been passed through the House. Last session this House, without a word of demur -- indeed, without a single inquiry -- assented to the formation of two new counties, Masterton and Castlepoint, and the latter when the census was taken three months ago had a population of 40 persons. How can the farce of local government go further than that? It is not to be assumed that in a population of 430 persons there can be room for any selection of men

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cil. Sir, I have time after time protested against the Government allowing matters to drift in this manner, but all protests seem ineffective, and probably the best course to adopt is simply to drop the question of local government altogether, and allow things to go. No line of policy has been laid down. I consider the Government alone responsible for that, for with the exception of printing a cumbrous Bill year after year, and laying it before the House, not the slightest effort has been made to pass it into law. I do not profess to be acquainted with the particular circumstances dealt with in this Bill. I have no opposition to offer to it in fact, I am inclined the other way -- but I do wish to impress on the Government the necessity of either doing something in regard to local governing matters, or assuring the House that they intend to drop the question indefinitely. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) .- Sir, no doubt the subject of local government is one in which members from all parts of the colony take a deep interest, but I think I may say without giving offence that city members, who have every convenience in the way of local administration in their towns, Municipalities, Drainage Boards, and other local bodies, might allow a country member who introduces a Bill, and who is familiar with the effect the proposed legislation will have on his district, to, at any rate, take the sense of the House on the measure he introduces. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Neither of us is a city member. Sir J. G. WARD .- I think the honourable member lives in the City of Christchurch, and his 'constituency is next door to it, and I am sure he would not deny to the people of the country equal rights in the matter of self-government with the cities. He cannot blame them for coming to the House and asking such a request as is contained in this measure. Mr. TANNER .- My district is more rural than urban. Sir J. G. WARD,-Well, that may be so; but, at any rate, it is an advanced district in regard to every-day conveniences. It seems to me that the question raised by the member for Riccarton, as to whether or not the introduction of this Bill will affect the larger proposals of the Counties

Bill, is a matter that is quite beside the question. If the Counties Bill, which is now before the Conference for consideration and deliberation, is carried into operation, there is no reason why such a proposal as is contained in the honourable member for Pahiatua's Bill should not be made to reduce the area of the existing county in that part of the colony. The provisions of the main Act could still be applied to the new-created county, as it would be to any of the older counties. I may say that Road Boards which cover smaller areas than County Councils have in many places done as good work as many of the County Councils, and when a progressive district, such as that represented by the honourable member for Pahiatua, proposes to have a reduction of a large county, with a view to having smaller districts to control its roads and bridges and other matters. I consider that those who make such a proposal, possessing as they do local knowledge of the district concerned, should at least be credited with desiring to work in the best interests of their district, and it seems to me that to grant such a request as is contained in the measure now before us would not be against the provisions of the larger Bill. Unless the necessity existed the representative of the district would not ask for the Bill. and, as far as the Government is concerned, we shall give him every assistance, as we would give any other member of the House who asked for legislation that is regarded to be for the benefit of people in any particular part of the colony. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) .-- Sir, I should like to make a few remarks in reply to the honourable member for Avon and the honourable member for Riccarton. It is remarkable what an interest these two gentlemen take in measures that are introduced by a country representative affecting the interest of country districts. As a matter of fact, I have already told the honourable gentlemen that there is in this proposed new county an area of 110,000 acres. I should like to see either of those two honourable members travel over that area in the winter-time. If they did so, I feel sure that when they came back to the House they would say there was a necessity for the local body proposed in the The necessities of the district demand it. The people have unanimously asked that it should be provided. Mr. TANNER .-- We have not opposed it. Mr. O'MEARA .- No ; but you are trying to kill it with kindness, like a mother bear that hugs her offspring to suffocation. As far as the district is concerned, there are at present four Road Boards in it. These Boards would be completely wiped out, and the object of wiping them out is simply to save the money of the taxpayers in this part of the colony-the money they now pay to keep those institutions going. I have no more to say, except that I hope the House will see its way to pass the Bill unanimously. Bill read a second time. INVERCARGILL RESERVES LEASING BILL. Mr. HANAN (Invercargill) .- Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I may say it is very simple in its nature. The object of the measure is to confer power on the Invercargill Borough Council to lease the land referred to and described in the schedule. In 18-3 this property was vested by Order in Council in the Invercargill Borough Council in trust for a site for a pound. The land has not been used for a pound, and is now not required for that purpose, but being vested in the Council for a specific purpose-that is to say, for a pound -- it cannot be used for any other purpose. The Council consequently now ask for power & lease the land and to collect the rents and profits arising from such lease, which revenue shall form part of the district funds of the borough.

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I may say the Bill provides that the Council may lease the land for a term of years not exceeding fourteen years, subject to such terms and conditions as the Council may think fit. Power is also given to the Corporation to agree in such lease to grant renewals from time to time for a period not exceeding fourteen years for each renewal, but at a rent to be fixed by valuation or by arbitration. The powers referred to are such as are given, in respect to some of their reserves, to Councils under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1900. Sir, I do not know that there is any contentious matter in the proposed Bill. As I have pointed out before, the land is now lying useless, and the Council is unable to make use of it so as

to obtain some rent or profit from it. I hope there will be no obstruction placed in the way of the Bill. It is a simple measure which does not alter or extend the law in respect to present municipal powers now obtaining in any way. It simply enables the Council to take alternative action in the direction of leasing the land now locked up, lying idle, and secure a revenue to supplement borough funds. Sir, it is with pleasure and confidence that I move the second reading of the Bill. Bill read a second time. CYCLE BOARDS BILL. Mr. FOWLDS (Auckland City) .- Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to detain the House with any lengthy explanation of this Bill. I introduced it into the House last session, so late in the session that it never had an opportunity of being read a second time. Numerous petitions, signed by thousands of cyclists and others in different parts of the colony, were sent in asking the Government to take it up as a Government Bill. To this the Government assented, and had it introduced into another place, but owing to the nearness of the end of the session the Bill was there laid aside. I have taken the earliest opportunity of bringing it before the House this session. I feel certain no serious objection will be raised by any member to the provisions of the Bill. It is of a permissive character : it can only be brought into operation on a requisition signed by a large number of the cyclists in any particular district. The purpose of the Bill is to enable cyclists to tax themselves for the purpose of making and maintaining (cle-tracks. In clause 4 of the Bill it will be seen that, after a petition is well advertised and presented to the Governor asking for the adoption of the Act in any eyele district, another petition, signed by half the number on the first petition, may be presented to the Governor against the Bill being made operative in their district, then it shall not come into operation. This clause will leave it entirely to the will of the large majority of the cyclists in any district whether the Bill becomes operative or not. Clauses 5 to 26 are merely machinery clauses for the purpose of electing Cycle Boards and for the proper conduct of the affairs of the Boards. Clause 27 provides that a registration fre of 5s. or less be paid by all the owners of cycles within the district where the Act has been adopted, and the money thus raised will go toward the making and maintenance of cycle-tracks, with the consent of the local authorities, so that any work that is done by a Cycle Board in this direction must be in full harmony and co-operation with the local authority having control in that district. Clauses 40 and 41 deal with the rule of the road, and that is a subject that has never been very definitely fixed by legislation in this or any other country. The First Schedule of the Bill divides the colony into Cycle Board districts, and these necessarily must be somewhat extensive, because the whole idea of the present Bill is to provide cycle-tracks in country districts, so that the people can get about and view the beauties of our wonderful country on the wheel. The advantages that may be expected to flow from the adoption of this measure are very numerous indeed. It will provide, in the first place, decent tracks, which will be available for the settlers in the country districts as footpaths in the winter-time, when the roads are so bad as to be almost impassable. The bulk of the cyclists are living in the towns and cities, where roads are fairly good, and the money they will contribute will mostly be spent in providing cycle- I believe that tracks in the outlying districts. the adoption of this Bill, and the operation of the Boards, will be the beginning of better roads throughout the country. The movement, wherever it has been adopted, has always tended in that direction. The advice offered by a body that takes a special interest in the maintenance of good roads will be of great value to the local authorities; and I am satisfied that when once this Bill is in operation a few years, and the tracks are made throughout the country, we shall wonder that we have been able to live so long without a measure of this kind. Similar provisions to those contained in the Bill have been in operation in a good many of the States of America, and also on the Continent of Europe. In Great Britain the strength of the cyclist movement has been so great that they have been largely instrumental in securing that all the roads throughout the country are put in a condition that renders them fit for cycling on, and I believe the tendency will be to get the same conditions in this country as time goes on. I might say that cyclists in all parts of the colony have sent in requisitions and petitions to the Government in favour of this Bill, and I have heard of no opposition on the part of any, nor

have I heard of any serious objections raised to the provisions of the Bill as it has been drafted. I might say the Bill itself has received very great attention from cyclists, and those capable of drafting Bills, in different parts of New Zealand ; and from all parts of Australia requests have been sent over to have copies of this Bill supplied : and I have no doubt if it is adopted by this House it will very soon be adopted by some of the neighbouring colonies. I want simply, in moving the second reading of the Bill, to impress on the House that, being of a permissive nature, it can only be brought into operation in a district

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where there is practical unanimity on the part of the cyclists concerned. The evelists will then tax themselves for the making of cycle- tracks ; that they can only proceed to the making and maintaining of these tracks by acting in harmony and concord with the local authority having jurisdiction over the roads. am sure the Bill has been drafted to secure the maximum of efficiency in the way of cycle- tracks with the minimum of friction with either cyclists or local authorities. I have therefore much pleasure in moving, That the Bill be now read a second time. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) .- I compliment the honourable member upon having introduced a Bill which, if it passes into law, even though it may be in some form amended in Committee, will do an incalculable amount of good to a large number of people in the country. A few years ago, at the request of Mr. T. G. Russell, of Christchurch, a gentleman who took a very deep interest in the matter of providing some better means for the use of roads for cyclists, I introduced a Bill very similar to the one now before the House. which was intended to be in the interests of eyelists throughout the colony. I am sorry to say that at that time the object of the Bill was not properly understood among eyelists themselves : they erroneously believed it was inimical to their interests that legislation was proposed under which a small tax was to be expended in the making of cycle roads and tracks, and as a result of the opposition of the cyclists to the Bill i did not attempt to get it beyond its second reading in the House. But public opinion in the interval has favourably changed, and the objects of the Bill I introduced then are now supported by many thousands of people who are constantly using this wonder- fully easy and pleasant means of convey- ing themselves from place to place. Why, then, we should not have, both in the towns and country, proper tracks made for them under proper conditions I am unable to under- stand. On the contrary, I think it is the duty of public bodies and public men to assist people in all walks of life who now are using cycles, whether for business purposes or for recreation, to avail themselves of this means of conveyance to the best advantage. It seems to me that . local public bodies ought to hail with satisfac- tion this proposal-which is permissive in its character-to put the cyclists of the colony in a better position. I shall cordially assist the honourable member to put this legislation on the statute-book. I believe it to be necessary for and beneficial to cyclists, and useful in so far as it proposes to give improved means of locomotion for the people. It will place the matter upon a footing that is both desirable and necessary. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) .- I regret that I cannot accord entire support to the Bill now before the House, although I am quite aware that from the City of Auckland there has emanated a very strong agitation in favour of the measure. In the first place, I would like to ask, Why should cyclists be required to Mr Foulis themselves pay the cost of providing ways for their vehicles ? You do not call upon persons who own buggies, or carriages, or any other class of vehicle, to tax themselves for the pur- pose of providing proper and convenient way- for their machines. Why, then, I ask, should cyclists do this ? I Sir J. G. WARD .- Because cyclists want a special portion of the road set aside for them. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. I shall probably deal with that point later. So far as I understand the definition of "cycle," even the owner of a child's bicycle or cycle is to be brought under the provisions of this Act. Now, I notice that under section 4, which is said to be a permissive clause, no number is fixed as being the number of persons who are to bring this Act into opera- tion. It is quite true in the latter part of clause 4 it is provided that one-half the number of the petitioners to bring the Act into operation can stop the

progress of its being brought in : but let me point out in this connection what is the magnitude of the districts that are being created. Let honourable members understand what is implied in the whole of the Auckland Province being a Cycle Board district. It means that under this Bill, we will say, two or three thousand cyclists, resident in and about the City of Auckland, are to be entitled to bring the Cycle Board into existence. It will probably not be difficult in the City of Auckland, or in the City of Christchurch, where bicycles, of course, are more common than in any other part of the colony - it will not be difficult in any of these large centres to obtain, perhaps, a couple of thousand signatures. But what happens when they have set these Boards in operation ? Then, every cyclist in the most remote parts of that particular district, in, say, Gisborne, or Waikato, and in every other part of the Province of Auckland, is compelled to register his bicycle and pay the sum of 5s. per year to the Auckland Cycle Board. The Boards, of course, will naturally spend the funds at their disposal in the localities which have provided most of the money and in the neighbourhood where they would render the greatest service to the largest number of cyclists. Take, for example, the Province of Canterbury. Can anybody conceive anything more absurd than that cyclists in the Culverden district in the north, or Timaru in the south, should be required to pay 5s. for every bicycle in the district in order to contribute to the convenience of the population in and around Christchurch. The expenditure would be entirely in the hands of the Central Board, and would probably be devoted to making cycle-tracks to Sumner or some other suburb. These are objections I have taken to the Bill. I say it is setting up too large a machine to accomplish what you really want. I believe in the principle of cyclists having power within restricted localities to voluntarily subscribe and, in conjunction with local bodies, improve the bicycle-tracks in the neighbourhood ; but I venture to say that the power given under this Bill, by which one central Board can cover a huge province and from every

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cyclist in the province exact an annual tax of 5 s., without any power, so far as the scattered localities are concerned, of being represented on the Board as to the expenditure of that money, will create something in the nature of a revolution, compared with which the dissatisfaction of the Maoris with the dog-tax will be child's play. It will only be when you start in the country districts selling some of these men's bicycles for the purpose of getting the five-shilling tax out of them that you will find the a veritable hornet's nest about your ears. The proper thing in connection with legislation of this subject is to contract the districts, and, instead of a province, to allow each Road Board district and municipality to be a cycle district. Then, when you have done that you can provide machinery by which the local bodies and a central Board set up in each district shall be enabled to work together for the improvement of the tracks; and you can give them also powers, such as are given under the Counties Act, for contiguous districts to be grouped together. Let it be permissive so far as that is concerned. Take as an example the City of Christchurch. I do not think there is any objection to the City of Christchurch and the surrounding boroughs and road districts being permitted, if they choose, to group themselves into one Cycle Board district ; but I do object that men who live fifty miles from the City of Christchurch, and who use their bicycles only perhaps for the purpose of going from farm to farm, as some people in Canterbury do, looking for work, should be taxed the same amount as the man in the city who is using his bicycle every day of the year. I see the Bill makes no difference at all between the man who takes constant use out of his machine and the man who uses it occasionally. It may be said that these are Committee objections. To some extent they are, but I wish to indicate to the honourable member in charge of the Bill the direction in which I think it should go. I think we should be careful in dealing with a measure of this kind that we do not encourage the intense dissatisfaction which I am sure will arise in the country districts of the colony if we put a tax upon bicycles, which are now regarded as indispensable means of locomotion. In fact, going back to my first remark, I fail to see any real reason why cyclists should be compelled to pay the special tax which it is proposed

should be placed upon them for the purpose of providing cycle-tracks. It may be said this is a way of providing a means by which local bodies will be compelled to take the matter over. That may be the case, and it may be shown that it is necessary ; but in the mean- time if the honourable gentleman could get his Bill through providing that there should be much smaller Cycle Board districts than those mentioned in the Bill, and that there shall be a guarantee that before taxation there should be a fair proportion of registered evelists in the locality, there would be much less to object to in the Bill. Mr. PALMER (Ohinemuri). - I agree with the honourable member who has last spoken in a good many things which he has said. I fail absolutely to see why the cyclists should be taxed to provide roads for themselves. Why should they ? The cyclists now are a very large portion of the community, a larger portion perhaps than most honourable members think, and in considering this Bill members will have to think of their constituents. There are cyclists in every constituency in New Zealand. The public and the Government provide roads for pedestrians, for carts and carriages, and everything else, and why should the cyclists be differently treated ? They pay their share of the taxation of the country, and it is not the rich man only nor the poor man only that now uses the bicycle. Both use them. The poor man with his cycle has an opportunity of going into the country, where he can acquire land very cheaply, and where he can build his own little home for himself; and if the cyclists wish to tax themselves so that they may ride out to their homes, why should they not be allowed to do so ? There seems to be in this colony a feeling against cyclists, which I am glad to say is gradually getting less. But I am sorry that there is any such feeling, especially so in a young colony like this, where the roads are bad. and the cyclists have great difficulties to put up with in going over the roads. I therefore think this Bill is a most excellent measure. I was glad to hear the criticism of the honourable member for Riccarton, because it will help the honourable gentleman who has charge of the Bill to pass through this House a good workable measure. We want criticism like that. I think the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill can now claim the support of the honourable member for Riccarton, because from his speech I quite concluded that he wants to aid the cyclists. If, therefore, he votes for the second reading, every one of the objections he has raised can be met in Committee, and the Bill improved in the direction he suggests. I think the cyclists want encouragement for more than one reason. We are now going in for a large tourist traffic in New Zea- land ; we have appointed a special officer to encourage tourists to come here ; and what will bring tourists here more than if you pro- vide them with good cycle-tracks? We know that on the Continent and other places the tourists bring their bicycles, which enable them to go throughout the country. Their money is expended in the country in which they tour, and New Zealand will reap a large benefit from the tourist trathe. An Hon. MEMBER .- What about the rail- ways ? Mr. PALMER. - The railways will not be injured by this, because although the cyclists ride through the country they also travel by the railways with their cycles. I know that I have travelled more on the railways since I became a cyclist, because I can go a certain distance on the railway and then can take my bievele out of the train and ride out into the country. Then, again, you cannot take your bicycle into the train as you can your luggage

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without paying a fee. A cyclist has to pay half a crown freight on his cycle for a very short distance on the railway, and therefore the cyclists benefit the railways rather than do them an injury. An Hon. MEMBER .- They are a great nuisance on the railways. Mr. PALMER .- Not at all. The cycles are simply stood up in the van; and I believe the more bicycles there are carried in the trains the better the railways will pay. An Hon. MEMBER .- If they are scratched there is a claim for damages. Mr. PALMER .-- There is no claim for the scratching of bicycles at all ; and I think it will be found that the Government make more profit out of them than anything else carried on the railways. Although the honourable member for Riccarton comes from Christ- church, where there are the best bicycle-tracks in the colony, I feel sure we shall have the

support of himself and the other Canterbury members to this measure. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) .-- My objection to this Bill, Sir, is the proposal to make such large districts. If the cyclists wish to tax themselves to make tracks in the cities and in the neighbourhood of the cities I have no objection whatever ; but if the honourable gentleman insists upon including the whole of the Provincial District of Auckland in one district I must oppose the Bill. I fail to see why people living in Whangarei or Mangonui should be taxed for the purpose of making cycle-tracks in Auckland, and I am sure if the honourable gentleman looks at the Bill from that point of view he will offer no objection to an alteration in the direction I have suggested. The honourable member must see it is very unreasonable to ask people to submit to being taxed for tracks they never use. If the honourable gentleman will make an alteration in Committee to meet the views of the country members in that direction he will probably get his Bill through. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) .- Sir, I regret, out of respect for the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, that I am called upon to oppose this Bill ; but if the honourable gentleman, after the criticism the measure has received from members of this House, will express his intention of modifying its clauses so as to meet the views of the House I will undertake to vote for the second reading, so as to give the Bill a chance of going into Committee. I have, however, to compliment the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill. The Bill was promoted at the instance of the cycle people in Auckland, who some weeks ago sent round to honourable members copies of the Bill, together with a circular containing valuable information on the subject of cycle traffic in this colony and in the United States of America : and I think every member introducing a Bill might in futuro adopt the course taken by the promoters of this measure and send their Bills round to members of the House a month or two before the commencement of the session. I believe if that were done we should have a great deal better legislation, as members would have an opportunity of carefully considering the provisions of such measures. One objection I have to the Bill is similar to that raised by the honourable member for Marsden. That is to say, clause 4 provides that cycle districts shall be coterminous with the provincial districts. Now, it has been pointed out how very unwieldy the Auckland District would be to work. I would point out how very difficult it would be, also, to bring into operation and to work equitably in the interests of the cyclists in the Provincial District of Canterbury. That is a large district, and the macadamised roads in that district are better than in any other part of the country. The roads in the Provincial District of Wellington, for instance, are wretched, more like a Devonshire lane than a road. An Hon. MEMBER .-- NO. Mr. MEREDITH .- I have been eleven years in the House. and I have been into the country round about Wellington and have never found a decent line of road yet. So that in speaking of the Canterbury District we have, it must be admitted by every member who has been in that district, the finest roads for evelists to be found in New Zealand. It is proposed in this Bill to levy an annually recurring fine of 5s. on every owner of a cycle, and if it is not paid within a month the law can be put into operation for its recovery. Then, again. another clause provides that on a requisition being sent to the Governor signed by a number of cyclists-the number is not defined here- so that though there might be ten thousand cyclists in a cycle district, it is competent for a thousand of the ten thousand to petition the Governor, and on the petition the Governor might declare that district to be a cycle district. But what a hardship that would be on the majority of cyclists. In Committee that clause will have to be amended. so as to define the proportion of evelists who sign the petition, and also those who send in a counter-petition against the declaring of the district. I am of opinion, Sir. that as the Bill stands at the present time five or six centres in the colony would reap the chief -indeed, almost the sole-benefit of it. If those who have formulated the Bill had only called to their assistance my honourable friend the member for Marsden, and the member for Riccarton, or any two country members. a different Bill would have been placed before the House this afternoon. Taking the Past Office in Christchurch as a centre, with a radius of ten miles, I have no hesitation in saying the: there are about five thousand evelists within that district. I believe that that number will be one-half the total number of evelists within the Provincial

District of Canterbury. It is evident that these five thousand, within the radius of ten miles, would be the controlling power of the whole provincial district. They would have the power of levying a fee of 5s. on ten thousand cyclists. That would & ve a revenue of \$2,500 a year. The first than- that would be done by the Cycle Board would

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be to lay off roads or tracks in the neighbour- hood of Christchurch. We have several main what has been said against this Bill, I can see roads converging towards Christchurch-such no objection to it. In the first place, the Bill is as the New Brighton, Sumner, Lincoln, Papa- permissive. Provision is made in the Bill that nui, Riccarton, and Avonside Roads leaving if a petition is got up asking the Governor to out the subsidiary and by-roads. Here are six put the Bill into operation a counter-petition roads, and if on ten miles of each of these cycle- may be sent in, and I presume the majority tracks were formed that would be sixty miles. will carry the day. Now, I think one of the To lay off a mile of track would cost \$1 a chain : strongest points in favour of this Bill is this : that would be \$80 a mile; and to lay off, as I that there has been no objection from the sav, all these six roads in the neighbourhood of cyclists themselves in the scattered districts to Christchurch for ten miles each, at the rate of the Bill. I have not heard of any. The pro- 580 a mile, would amount to \$4,800 to com- moters of this Bill are treating the people with mence with. Take the Provincial District of every courtesy in the matter, inasmuch as they Canterbury as a whole, which, under the pro- have circulated the Bill with information re- visions of the Bill, might be declared a cycle gardening cycling broadcast throughout the colony, and I have not heard of any meeting being held district. From Christchurch to Hurunui is a distance of seventy miles, and from Christ- by cyclists in the scattered districts opposing church to Waitaki is a distance of 150 miles the Bill, on the ground that it is only going to -that is 220 miles of main arterial road. provide cycle-tracks for the towns. Now, Sir, Therefore, multiply that by ten, for the subsidiary and by-roads, and that will make 2,200 miles of road. I believe I am under- estimating rather than , overestimating the mileage of roads. Multiply that distance by the local bodies to give them anything. There £80 and we have an expenditure of £176,000, is no compulsion to force the local bodies to a large sum. The evelists living at Waitaki, or at Waikakahi, at Takatu, or at the Hurunui, see any reason for objecting to the people taxing who use their cycles as a means of going to their work, would be called upon to pay an annually recurring fee of 5s., while in all proba- bility during their natural life they would never have a chance of having a cycle-track made in have listened to some of these so-called argu- their own locality. That seems to me to be fatal to the Bill, and shows the provisions of with one or two of them. In the first place, the Bill are inequitable. When I received the Bill, after reading it through, I wrote to a number of persons in my electorate and asked their opinion on the Bill, and they one and all said the Bill would be of no use to them, and they did not want it. A carpenter, for might perhaps ride on a road where there was instance, who has to go, say, six or ten miles to his work, of what use would the tracks be brought against the policy of this measure ? to him ? or sawmilling-hands, having to travel He says he is not aware of any agitation in over some of the badly formed roads in favour of it. All I can say is this : the honour- different parts of their district,-of what use to such persons would be the cycle tracks in or perhaps he confines his reading to one or the neighbourhood of the large cities? I raise these objections to the Bill, and, when the honourable gentleman replies to the criticisms which are kindly made by the members of the House on the provisions of the Bill, if he inti- mates that he is willing to modify the Bill so as to apply it to districts, say, within a radius of at taxing individuals who are not able to bear it. ten miles from each centre, or to make the cycle districts co-terminus with the districts provision should be embodied in a Bill in order under each local body, I shall have no objection to the Bill. But I would remind the honourable gentleman that there is not such a craze for which they could contribute 5s. a year each to cycling now as there was five or six years

ago. make a cycle-track from Wellington to the Hutt. Many young men are abandoning the cycle and Hutt. That was unanimously agreed to by going back to the horse, and, then, the motor- almost all the cyclists of Wellington. I may say that I was really agitating in that matter have a dozen of these in Canterbury at the present time, and I believe they are going to take the place of the cycle in the future. However, from the City of Wellington to those who might be that as it may, I am prepared to assist the honourable gentleman if he will undertake to whether the member for Eden, Mr. BOLLARD, amend the Bill in the direction I have indicated. rides a cycle or not, but I should fancy he does Mr. BOLLARD (Eden). - Notwithstanding what is it that the cyclists propose to do? To tax themselves in order that they may make tracks in the colony for the purpose of enabling them to run their bicycles. They do not ask make the tracks, and I cannot for the life of me themselves. I intend to support the Bill, and I really cannot see what objection there can be to it. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) .- I move against the Bill, and I propose to deal the speech of the member for Ashley was a mere beating of the air. He told us what grand roads they have in Canterbury, he told us the number of cyclists in Christchurch, and he told us the story of a working-man who not a cycle-track. But what objection has he able member cannot have read the newspapers, two periodicals which do not go in for any kind of sport. Consequently, when a Bill is brought in dealing with cycling he is absolutely at sea on the subject. The honourable member for Riccarton spoke with a great deal of heat, and he seemed to think that this Bill is aimed Last session I proposed that some of the cyclists of Wellington City and suburbs could be put into a sound legal position by wish to take a day's holiday. I do not know

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from the remarks he made. If he does not he ought to, because I feel quite sure he would succeed. We have heard something of the roads of Christchurch, and we something about the roads in one or two other parts of New Zealand. But, surely, because there are good roads in Christchurch that is no argument against this Bill. Here in Wellington our roads are a disgrace-we are prepared to admit they are bad- and we want some legislation passed to enable us to improve our roads so that our cyclists may use them. If we are prepared to pay for the work, surely this is a fair and reasonable measure and does not deserve carping opposition. An Hon. MEMBER .- You tax the people of Wanganui. Mr. WILFORD .- Most decidedly. I have ridden a cycle from Wellington to Rotorua. I have been through some bad roads, and I know what bad roads are. I am quite sure of what I am talking, and I am sure the member for Riccarton does not know what he was talking about. The honourable member does not ride a "bike " evidently. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- I will race you to the Hutt. Mr. WILFORD .- The honourable member says he will race me to the Hutt. The honourable member knows I cannot hold him answerable for the words he uses in this House, but if he will repeat that challenge outside, and pay \$5 if he loses to some charitable institution. I will quickly accept his challenge. I congratulate the member for Auckland City, Mr. Fowlds, on introducing this Bill. The people in this district are in favour of it. and I hope the second reading will be carried. If there are any objections to the measure, they can be dealt with in Committee. I believe the Bill has the support of all the cyclists. I shall support the second reading. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine). - The honourable member who has last spoken sees the matter from one side of the fence. He is not looking broadly at this Bill. If he did so he would see at once that it is in favour of the more largely inhabited districts. For instance, section 4 says,- "This Act shall come into force in any of the said cycle districts upon the receipt by the Governor of a petition, signed by cyclists residing in any such district, praying that this Act be put in force in such district, and upon the Proclamation by the Governor in the New Zealand Gazette of the presentation of such petition, and of the fact that this Act will from the date of such Proclamation be put in operation within such district : " Provided, however, that notice of the

intention to present such petition to the Governor shall have first been advertised in two newspapers circulating throughout the said district for a period of four weeks before the presentation of such petition, and that the Governor shall not have received before the date of such Proclamation as aforesaid a counter-petition, signed by at least half the number of cyclists that signed the original petition." Mr. Wilford Outside the country districts you might not be able to find one-half the number who sign in the borough, and therefore the country districts would be outweighed. Then, clause 34 says :- "The Board, with the consent of the local body, may apply any of the moneys in its hands from time to time in and towards the laying-down of cycle-tracks on the roads or elsewhere, and in and towards the maintenance thereof generally; and also, without such consent, in and towards the acquiring by lease or purchase, or otherwise howsoever, of any real or personal property which, in the opinion of the Board, should be acquired for the benefit of cyclists for improving curves, reducing gradients, shortening distances, or otherwise howsoever, and in the laying-down of tracks thereon, and the maintenance thereof, and may sell, lease, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of such real and personal property." From that it appears the Cycle Board could interfere with the work of a local body, and I do not think it is right that the two bodies should be working on the roads at the same time and have the same powers. I do not think the power should be taken out of the hands of the local body at all. The power should always be exercised with the consent of the local body -- that is, as to whether a cycle-track shall be made in a particular district or not. Then clause 39 provides as follows :- "Power is hereby given to any local body .- "(1.) To set apart such portion of any road or footpath within its district as it may consider expedient for the use of cyclists ; and "(2.) To enter into agreements with the Board as to the laying-down of cycle-tracks, and the manner and proportions in which the expenses thereby incurred be met ; "(3.) To make such payments in respect of the laying-down of such tracks, and the maintenance thereof, as to such local body may seem expedient." The local bodies might in that case actually be spending the money of ratepayers in other districts. That clause, I think, needs some amendment. Then, as to clause 35, which gives the Board borrowing powers, what is the security ? The security, I suppose, is the cyclists themselves. But suppose a loan is raised under the Loans to Local Bodies Act, and the number of cyclists is reduced by half. what about the security in that case ? Clause 42 provides :- " Any person who commits a breach of any of the provisions of this Act, or, not being a cyclist within the meaning of this Act, signs any petition or counter-petition in connection with any of the purposes of this Act, or uses or has attached to, or painted or otherwise inscribed, or displayed on any cycle a number other than that allotted to such cycle for the then current year, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds." I take it, from the reading of this 40. clause, if a district - say, the Wellington District-is declared a cycling district and an adjoining district is not a cycling district, then

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a person living outside that district must pay a { may be remedied in Committee, and that money tax to the Wellington cycling district, otherwise he cannot ride his bicycle outside his own district. Sir, I do not wish to oppose the Bill if it is amended in such a way that will benefit cyclists, but I certainly think that if they want any rate it might be given a trial. I believe the privileges as set forth in this Bill, they have every right to pay for them. I think the House should see that that is provided before the Bill passes its final stage. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- Sir, it ought to satisfy the honourable member for Geraldine to know that already one of the objections he has any reform brought down that is not objected raised to the Bill has been provided for in clause 34. which sets forth that a Board cannot do anything to a road in a local body's district without the consent of that local body. So supporting the Bill. I believe in the principle of the Bill, and will vote for its second that the bogey the honourable gentleman has raised about Cycle Boards making cycle-tracks on a road in a district without the consent of argument of the honourable

member for the local body is actually not in existence. In fact, I have never heard of a local body opposing any one improving their roads or buying land to make tracks for themselves. The great trouble with local bodies is that the rate-payers in a district do not assist -- as they do in here : Those people who give that money have some parts of the United States to maintain the roads by their own work, but simply contribute rates for the maintenance of roads and other works. I think the measure should improve the roads, and the people on the out receive the hearty support of every member of side have little say in the matter. If there the House, and especially the support of the country members. Hon. MEMBERS .- NO.

Mr. PIRANI .- The reason I saw the country be spent in that district, there would be some members is this, that I have time and again heard farmers complain that many of the cyclists have been used against the Bill, and met them are the only people who use the roads without contributing in any way to the maintenance ; that cyclists purchase no horse-feed from the farmers, they do not buy stock from them, and they do not contribute wheel-tax, which is be anxious to have their roads improved, will levied on vehicles in some districts ; and I think this Bill is the first step in the direction of making cyclists contribute their share towards the cost of the maintenance of the roads they use. Sir. so far as we know not a single cyclist has objected to the clauses of the Bill. There matter. That is where I think there is an in- have been no petitions sent to the House against it, there have been no public meetings against justice to certain districts, and if the honourable member will receive amendments to pro- it, but there have been meetings and petitions in favour of it. That is as about as good a districts, shall be spent in those districts, proof that the people who are proposed to be taxed in this Bill do not object to the in order that those subscribing may receive small contribution of 1}d. a week towards the maintenance of a decent track in some parts of the colony. It has been said the result of the honourable member will consent to receive amendments of that kind, I believe the Bill operations of these Boards will be simply to make good tracks in the vicinity of the large cities. But honourable members seem to forget that cyclists do not so much want good tracks near the large cities as better facilities when ground I shall vote for its second reading. they go on a trip abroad-when they travel throughout the colony-instead of going over the roads they have to use at the present time, and it seems to me that under this Bill cyclists will secure in the course of time something have been raised are worthy of consideration, like suitable tracks to travel on. I trust if there and I have no doubt they will receive that con- are any general objections to the Bill, that it bers will not oppose the second reading. I think the measure might be allowed to go into Committee so that it may be put into the best shape in the interests of the colony, and that at the Bill is wanted, both by cyclists and by the general public, and I think it would generally be found to be of very great assistance in a direction that is urgently required. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) .- Sir, I think it will be admitted that there is hardly to by some people. In this particular matter difficulties have been suggested that to my mind have not been met by those who are reading; but, at the same time, I think the Marsden has not been answered. That argument is this : That it is a hardship that cyclists in the out-districts of Hokianga, Whangarei, Waihi, and Coromandel should have to pay their annual fee of 5s. The hardship comes in no voice at all in the making of the roads, and necessarily the expenditure must be wherever the number in the larger centres may decide to were some proposal in the Bill that protected those who pay in each district, so that the money contributed in their own district could fairness in these proposals. The member for Palmerston met some of the arguments that very fairly. I believe the local bodies are all anxious to have their roads improved. At the same time it is not a question of the local bodies, because the local bodies, while they may take no action unless it is decided that certain roads shall be improved. Then, the very place that may most stand in need of improvements, and that may pay a good deal of money by way of income, may have very little say in the vide that the moneys subscribed in certain the benefit of the expenditure, I think the measure would be a reasonable one. If the will be accorded the general support of members of the House. In any case, the tendency of the Bill is in the right direction, and on that Mr.

WITHEFORD (Auckland City). - Sir, there is a ring of self-reliance about this Bill that I like. " God helps those who help them- selves," and no doubt Parliament will assist the cyclists in this matter. The difficulties that

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sideration when the measure reaches its Committee stage. Objection has been raised that cycling might interfere materially with the railway revenue of the colony. I do not think that will be the case, otherwise the Minister for Railways would not be so enthusiastic in his support of this Bill. The honourable gentleman would have sung a different tune if he had thought the cyclist traffic of the colony would bring down the railway revenue. Sir, I shall support the Bill, as I believe it is going in the right direction. Mr. FOWLDS (Auckland City) .- Sir, I desire to thank honourable members for the generally favourable way in which this Bill has been received, and I think I can remove some of the difficulties that have been raised by honourable members. In the first place, it was pretty evident that most of those who raised objections were not themselves cyclists, and were therefore not able to speak the mind of the cyclists in reference to the Bill. For example, the remarks made by several honourable members seemed to indicate that if this Bill were passed, the money raised by the tax on cyclists would all be spent in and around the large centres of population, where the controlling influence of the Board would rest. They seemed to think that the idea of the cyclists was only to get round the towns. Now, as a matter of fact, when a cyclist gets on his machine, he wants to get into the country as quickly as possible. A good many of the cyclists in the large centres will even take the train for some miles out so as to get right away from the traffic of the city and get on the country roads. I am perfectly certain if the Bill passes into law we shall find in a very short time that the whole of the country districts will be covered with evele- tracks which will be of immense benefit to the settlers themselves. Taking seriatim the objections that have been raised to the Bill, I come first to the honourable member for Riccarton, whose objection was that no number was fixed in clause 4. That clause provides simply for the petition. and it will be difficult to fix any given number, because until this Act is brought into operation there is no record of the number of cyclists in any district. It is only after the Board is constituted and the Act brought into force that you can get a record of their number. The question whether the petition shall be signed by a large or small number is met by the proviso in the clause which enables as many as signed the original petition to petition the Governor against the adoption of the Act ; and, in that case, the Bill could not be brought into operation in that district. I am so certain of the general desire of the cyclists in most districts to have this Bill adopted, that I am even prepared to accept a smaller proportion petitioning against it. as sufficient to prevent it coming into operation. I believe you could not get a quarter of the cyclists in any district that really needed and desired the Act to sign a petition against its being brought into operation. There are some districts, such as Canterbury, where they have particularly good roads for cycling on, in which it is possible a majority of the cyclists would prefer to say, "No, we do not need it ;" but that is no reason why in any other district, where a large majority of the cyclists desire to have it, that they should be excluded from participating in the benefits which will arise from the passing of the Bill. Then. another objection which has been raised several times is about the size of the districts. I have indicated already that the essence of the Bill is to enable the cyclists to get away into the country, and the making of paths right away from the towns, and not in or near them. Now, the honourable member for Marsden pointed out the difficulties in a place like Whangarei. As a matter of fact, I believe the number of cyclists signing the requisition to the Government asking them to take this Bill up as a Government measure was larger at Whangarei in proportion to the population, and in proportion to the number of cyclists there. than the number signing in the City of Auckland. And the adoption of the Bill would be entirely in their interest, because the Board would, for the sake of securing the smooth working of the measure, see that justice was done to these

outlying districts. But, to meet the objection of those who think the districts may be too large-I would not like to see the size of the districts reduced- - I am quite ready to see a proviso added to this clause, to the effect that on a petition being received from the cyclists of any portion of a district asking that their particular portion might be excluded from the operation of the Act, their petition should be given effect to. I would prefer to put that power in rather than reduce the size of the district, because I feel sure no such petition would be forthcoming. Mr. McGOWAN .- That is not the difficulty. Mr. FOWLDS .- What is the difficulty ? Mr. McGOWAN .--- That the cyclists who pay would have very little control over the expenditure of the money. Mr. FOWLDS .- I have already replied to that by saying that the central Board would see that justice was done, so as to get the Act carried out in a smooth manner, and the further reply is in the proviso I have offered to accept. If dissatisfied, the cyclists in that portion of the district could have themselves cut out of the district. If they thought they were not getting justice let them present a petition, and on the receipt of the petition the Governor could authorise the cutting out of any portion from the larger district. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- Are you prepared to accept that ? Mr. FOWLDS .-. I am quite prepared to accept an amendment in this direction, because I am certain no such petition would ever be presented. The central Board would find that it was their duty and interest to administer the moneys which they collected fairly all over the district, and in doing that they would be best serving the interests of the cyclists as a whole, who do not want to stay in or near the city, but to get out from one part of the country to the other. You could cut out any Road Board?

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district, town district, or a borough, or any [time are almost impassable. I therefore hope other division that already exists. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- If the tax once comes into force, does it stop for ever ? Mr. FOWLDS .- No: there is provision that the tax can be reduced to a minimum rate. If any district found that they had no need to collect a 5s. tax, they could reduce it to, say, 6d., simply to carry on the registration of bicycles, as at present. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- Do I understand you would i.e prepared to alter the Bill in Committee so that on a petition from the cyclists in any Town Board district or county which wished it they might be exempted from the operation of the Bill? Are you prepared to accept such an amendment as that ? Mr. FOWLDS .- Yes. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- Or Road Board district ? Mr. FOWLDS .- Any division that exists in the county at present. If such cyclists petition to be cut out, I for one would say their wishes shall be given effect to. Now, the honourable member for Geraldine, Mr. Flatman, spoke about the cyclists interfering with the local authority. Well, it is expressly provided they shall not do so. They can only operate on the roads with the consent of the local authority, but they can buy land for making cycle-tracks without consent. Surely you would not give the local authority the power to say the cyclists shall not buy land in a district to make a track, so long as it does not interfere with any existing road ? In fact, they can buy land for a track now without the Bill at all. The common law would allow an individual as well as the Cycle Board to buy land in any part of the colony to make a cycle-track, so that absolutely no interference with the local authority is involved by the Bill. The honourable gentleman also raised a difficulty about them borrowing money for want of security. The lender of money will always take care of that. If there is no security he will lend no money. I think these are the main points raised in the debate, and with respect to the size of the district, I think I have fairly met it, by the proviso I have offered to accept. I am sure the Bill as a whole will be of very great benefit to the cyclists in the various parts of the country. If the cyclists in districts where good roads exist do not want it, they need not bring the Act into operation ; but in other districts where the roads are bad they will gladly bring it in and contribute the small tax necessary to put it into operation. Now, with reference to the length of tracks that may be made : they can be made for about \$50 a mile, and in some districts they might be made at the rate of fifty miles a year. That would soon cover the major part of the country with passable tracks, and I am sure, when these

tracks are provided, there will be greater inducements for tourists from all parts of the world to come and visit our colony, and benefit will result in every way. It will provide, as I said in my opening remarks, a good footpath in country districts, where the roads in winter that the House will agree to the second reading of the Bill, and that in Committee the main features of the Bill will not be interfered with, but that the suggestion with reference to the cutting out of a district will be accepted as a satisfactory solution of the difficulties raised about the size of the districts. Bill read a second time. STATUTES COMPILATION BILL. Major STEWARD .-- Sir, I offer this Bill to the House with very considerable confidence, because I think that it will be found a very useful Bill to the public generally. The contents are the work of the last two or three years, in which I have had the assistance of the Statutes Revision Committee, and I may say also, indirectly, the assistance of the Solicitor-General, inasmuch as in the first drafting of the Bill to meet this object there were certain difficulties pointed out by him which were threshed out in the Statutes Revision Committee, and are got over in the form in which the Bill is now presented. I have not previously had the opportunity of bringing this Bill forward, and, therefore, I will shortly state what it is proposed to effect. It proposes to enable our Acts with their various amendments to be compiled, and enable them to be printed as compiled statutes, so that the public can, by paying a shilling or so for one copy, obtain practically the whole of the law upon any one subject instead of having, as now is too often the case, to invest in a dozen Acts and amending Acts. Sir, there is also a method proposed in the Bill, whereby if it is desired the compiled statute can be turned into statute law by a very simple process. Nothing could be more clear and intelligible than the wording of the Bill, and if the House will allow me to read the Bill itself that will be all the speech I need to make on the subject. What the Bill proposes is this :- "From and after the passing of this Act, whenever either House of the General Assembly shall by resolution direct the compilation with its amendments of any Act in force in the colony, it shall be the duty of the Solicitor-General. so soon as may be possible after the termination of the session in which such resolution shall have been passed, to prepare a compilation embodying all the provisions of such Act and the amendments thereof, omitting all those portions of the text of such Act which have been repealed or altered by subsequent Acts, and inserting in the proper places all words or sections substituted for or added to the text of the original Act by such subsequent Acts, with marginal reference notes citing section and Act ; and he shall add to such compilation an appendix showing the Acts and sections of Acts comprised therein." The next section provides- " Such compilation shall be forwarded to the Clerk of Parliaments by the Solicitor-General, with a certificate under his hand that the same is a true and correct compilation of such Act and the amendments thereof ; and thereupon

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the Clerk of Parliaments shall cause the same to be printed, and shall forward a copy thereof to the Speaker of each House, who shall lay the same on the table at the commencement of the next succeeding session." Now, this compilation can be enacted into statute-law, if the House so desires, by this simple method : - " Such compilation may at any time thereafter be enacted in manner following, that is to say :- " (1.) The full text shall be set out in a Schedule (A) appended to the enacting statute, and the appendix containing the list of Acts and parts of Acts comprised in the compilation shall be appended as Schedule B. "(2.) The enacting statute shall set forth that the compilation as printed in Schedule A is thereby enacted under the title of . The (giving the Short Title), and that the Acts and parts of Acts set forth in Schedule B are thereby repealed ; and it shall not be competent to amend or alter either of the schedules otherwise than for the correction of errors of transcription or printing, or for the incorporation of any amendment which may have been made after the preparation of the compilation and before the passing of the enacting statute." This will altord the Government and the House, if it be so desired, opportunity of converting the compiled statutes into statute-law ; but before that is done this

also is possible :- " If, before the passing of an enacting statute, either House of Parliament shall by resolution direct the printing for public use of any such compilation, then in printing the same the word 'Compiled,' and figures denoting the year of compilation, shall be placed at the head of each page thereof next after the designation of the Act, as, for example, . Regulation of Elections (Compiled 19),' and a copy of every such compilation shall be bound up with the volume of statutes of the session in which such resolution is passed next after the statutes of such session.' Then, Sir, a copy of the compilation could be obtained at the Government Printing Office at the usual price of an Act of Parliament, which is ordinarily about 1s., and any person purchasing it would know that he had the whole of the statute-law on that particular subject within the one document. This would be exceedingly useful to solicitors, to local governing bodies, to public men, and to the public generally, and therefore probably the House will see its way to accept this Bill. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) .- I rise to second this Bill which has been introduced by the Hon. Major Steward, and I do so with a very great deal of pleasure. I think there can be no question as to the necessity for this Bill, and any one who has at any time had to make reference to the statutes and Acts of passing this measure. I feel quite sure that, if the House decides to take this course and to allow the Bill its second reading, and it should subsequently become law, posterity will be indebted to a very considerable extent to the Hon. Major Steward. I feel quite certain also that it will afford great help to Justices of the Peace in the administration of justice. We constantly see cases where some particular statute is produced as evidence of the law in force, while it may be that there are other statutes which absolutely conflict with it. You will often find that the law which is apparently summed up in a statute is materially altered by amendments which have been passed later. If this Bill becomes law, there will be on the face of the statute a clear and simple explanation of the whole position of the law at the present time. I think if this had been done in regard to the Native land laws of the colony it would have been a boon indeed, and I would suggest that Act ' when this Bill becomes law, if it is passed, the first Act dealt with should be the Native Land Court Act, because, if we could have such a compilation as the honourable member suggests in regard to the Native land law- of the colony, that would be an immense advantage. This is a kind of codification or compilation- "compilation " is the word used -- and there is no doubt, short and comprehensive as the measure is, it is impossible to do exactly what is really required by a Bill of this kind. I understand the Bill has been introduced some two or three sessions, but that on each occasion it has been among the "slaughtered innocents." But I feel quite sure that honourable members to-day will help the mover in getting it through. It requires no explanation ; the explanation given by the honourable member is quite sufficient. The clauses are short and concise, and I believe it has already passed the Statutes Revision Committee, and been approved of by them. I therefore have very much pleasure in seconding the second reading of the Bill. Mr. PALMER (Ohinemuri) .- I, like the last speaker, Sir, must compliment the gentleman who has brought this Bill in. It is a principle in our law that every one is presumed to know the law, and that ignorance of the law is no excuse. We have, Sir, over 220 Imperial Acts in force in New Zealand, and over a thousand of our own Acts. They are like an old coat that has many patches: they are all patched up in such a way that, as one may say, you cannot tell which is the coat and which are the patches. Now, is it fair to the public to say that they must know the whole of these laws-over a thousand New Zealand statutes and more than 220 Imperial Acts in force " Is it fair to the Justices of the Peace. 4.30. to say, " You must know all these laws, and you shall also administer them correctly "? The position is unfair to the people to say that we who build up statute after statute year after year should never balance our accounts by codifying our laws, What should we think of a system of book-keeping where the different items were

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of the accounts at all? It would become more and more confused and confusing. And that is the state our

laws are in at the present time. They are getting more intricate every year as we pile them up. In Victoria they are a long way ahead of New Zealand in this respect. In Victoria, in the year 1850, they found that they would have to codify their laws, and that codification was introduced under direction of Mr. Justice Higginbotham, and it has been an inestimable boon to the Justices of the Peace and to the public generally in Victoria. Under the present system we are only making work for the lawyers, and even the lawyers and the Judges very often cannot understand our law, which has been amended and patched about so much. I think, therefore, we ought to compliment the honourable gentleman who has introduced the Bill in the interests of the public. We should endeavour to bring about some system of codification. Sir, there are some of the clauses of this measure I do not agree with. I think, myself, that there should be an officer of this House, who is responsible to this House, into whose hands this classification ought to be given, Some day - though that day may be a good way off - there may be an Attorney-General in this House : and, when we have an Attorney-General, I think he is the responsible person to take charge of this, rather than the Solicitor-General. If we substitute the word " Attorney-General " for " Solicitor-General " in the Bill, and make him responsible for the book-keeping of the House, I feel sure the measure would be greatly improved. Hon. MEMBER. - Hear, hear. Major STEWARD. - I agree with the honourable member, and am prepared to make the amendment. Mr. PALMER. - Then, Sir, another thing I would mention : there have been great complaints that the statutes that were passed in the House last year, and which have come into operation, were not printed for a considerable time after the close of last session, and the consequence was that the Justices of the Peace had to administer those statutes without knowing anything about them. We have had people telegraphing down from Whangarei and other places to Auckland asking to be supplied with copies of the statutes; but in Auckland they had not got them, and the consequence was that decisions were given before the Magistrates knew anything about the statutes, and before they were printed. We ought, therefore, to take into consideration, when we are codifying our laws and passing our laws, the desirability of making them as simple as possible, so that the people may understand them. and codification is the best way of doing it. The only real attempt that has been made in the direction of codification at all has been the publication of "Curnin's Index." If it had not been for "Curnin's Index " I do not know what difficulties we would not have been in. In conclusion, I again wish to congratulate the honourable gentleman upon having introduced this important and useful measure. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) . - I have only to thank the House, Sir, for the very favourable way in which they have received this Bill. I would only like to point out now that the carrying into effect of the Bill, if passed by this House, would practically rest with the Government of the day, because the direction of the House by resolution is to be given; and the Government will, of course, know which measures it is desirable should be so codified, and will no doubt act upon that resolution and order a codification of such measures as they think desirable. They could, of course, be approached by members of the House with suggestions, and there will therefore be no difficulty involved. The codification can then go on steadily, and I am quite sure honourable members will find that the power given in this Bill will be an exceedingly useful instrument in their hands. Bill read a second time.

PEDLARS AND HAWKERS BILL. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) . - Sir, it is not my intention to detain the House at any length in regard to the features of this Bill and in urging that it be read a second time. The Bill is of so simple a nature that those who reside in the country must understand full well its provisions, and must understand that such a measure is absolutely necessary at the present time, and has been for some time past. I have endeavoured in years gone by in this House to get a measure of this kind brought in by the Government, but unfortunately I have not been able to succeed. The interpretation clause of the Bill clearly defines " pedlars and hawkers," and " commercial travellers," and distinguishes between wholesale houses and retail houses. One of the most important features, or perhaps the most important feature, of the Bill is contained in clause 5, which defines to whom licenses shall be issued : --

" Licenses under this Act shall be of one class, called . local licenses,' and shall be issued to British subjects only who shall have resided in New Zealand not less than twelve months prior to the date on which the application is lodged with the local authority." Now, Sir, at the present time, in the extreme northern part of this colony, we are overrun by a class of pedlars and hawkers known by the name of " Assyrians," and any one travelling in that district cannot go many miles during the day without meeting one or more of these people on the road, with or without a pack-horse. These men, I consider, do a great deal of harm to the district. They carry about a class of goods which are of no earthly use, in a certain sense, to the people. They get into the back districts and they persuade the people, unfortunately, to purchase their wares at a very high figure ; and, being principally of the " Brummagem " character, they take the eye of the country people, and the result is that a large amount of these goods are purchased which are of no use to the settlers whatever. Now, it is necessary that some check should be placed on this class of men travel-

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ling in the district, and this clause 5 will have { in the North Island, of making their vehicles the effect of putting a stop to it. Then, under clause 6, it will be necessary for any person before obtaining a license to prove that he is of good character. He will have to satisfy the local authorities to that effect by obtaining a certificate of character signed by I think it will be admitted by four ratepayers. honourable members that this is a very wise provision indeed. Then, in clauses 7, 8, and so on, we have different forms of licenses and fees. and it states also how those fees are to be paid, and what fines and penalties are to be imposed. All these fees, fines, and penalties become part of the revenue of the local bodies. Clause 14, I think, will be admitted to be a very important clause also. It prevents pedlars and hawkers from hawking spirituous liquors about. Now, it is a well-known fact that in some of the back districts on the back roads, if you meet one of these men and make yourself known to him there is no difficulty in getting a glass of grog from him on the payment of a certain sum of money. This is most injurious, and a curse to the district, and I have included in that clause a heavy penalty to prevent a repetition of such a state of things as that. The clause says :- " If fermented or spirituous liquor is at any time being hawked or carried about by any one holding a license under this Act, such person shall, on conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, or three months' imprisonment with or without hard labour, and his license shall be declared null and void." He will not be able to obtain a license again for any purpose in the country. Clause 15 also sets out clearly the duties of the commercial traveller. The definition is here given as between a commercial traveller and a pedlar and hawker. It is well known that some of the commercial houses make their travellers no better than a pedlar and hawker, and they go round with goods and are prepared to sell small samples of goods to any one willing to buy them. I think that is wrong, and if a commercial traveller is found doing this without a license he is made liable to a penalty. Clause 16 defines who shall issue these licenses :- "The license issued by each local authority shall only extend to the district issuing the license, and not to any other district." Each district shall have the revenue derivable from the issue of the licenses, and it shall apply to that district alone. A person travelling from one county to another must get a license from each county. The schedule clearly points out the form of application and the form of license to be issued by the local authority, and also the fees to be paid. I do not think it is necessary for me to detain the House longer. Honourable members will see that the Bill is very plain and simple and easily understood, and I therefore move the second reading. Mr. TANNER (Avon). - The honourable gentleman will not, I am sure, object to a few words of criticism with regard to the Bill. I admit he has made out a fairly good case with regard to a certain class of peripatetic hawkers, some of whom are alleged to be in the habit, travelling unlicensed publichouses. That is an evil which requires checking, and if the Bill does any good in that direction it is perhaps desirable that some of its provisions should be

passed. I have also every sympathy with the honourable member in trying to place under some regulation the multitude of Assyrians who are continually travelling about the colony. But I have several objections to the Bill in its present form. I think it is somewhat ill-considered, and it comes at once into conflict with what the House did last year on this subject in the Municipal Corporations Bill. Last year we arrived at a decision to the effect that in a borough a certain license-fee, not exceeding £1 annually, could be charged by the Borough Council, but that certain forms of goods—articles of food, et cetera—could be hawked free. This Bill, if made applicable to both boroughs and counties, overrides what we did last year, and it will commence again the confusion which prevailed before the municipal law was codified. We have all thought that the municipal law would be found gathered together within the four corners of last year's Act, but, if this course which the honourable member has initiated is followed, we shall soon again have five-and-twenty Acts containing municipal law. For my own part, I do not wish to give any opposition to the Bill if the honourable gentleman will indicate his willingness to make it applicable to counties only, and leave to boroughs under the Act of last year. I wish also to call attention to the scale of fees in the schedule, and to point out how unfair it is and how oppressive it may be made. The Bill provides that a pedlar and hawker shall pay a license-fee up to £4 per annum, whereas a commercial traveller gets off with 10s. The two statements only need putting side by side to set how unfair they are. We talk of giving encouragement to our New Zealand producers—those who are anchored to the soil—and yet if this Bill is passed in its present form it will play into the hands of those who at the present time are engaged in teaching the producers that this Government is distinctly inimical to their interests—at any rate, if the Government is inimical to their interests, these people may conclude that the House is. If a man is a small market-gardener in a county or borough, and loads up his cart with two hundred cabbages and attempts to vend and sell them, he has to pay £4 under this Bill for the privilege of doing so. Now turn to the commercial traveller. He moves about the country on the payment of a £10 license per annum, and he is engaged in the selling of silks, broadcloth, and all manner of general merchandise, and the amount of his orders in the course of a week would represent more than the profit of a farmer's farm for a whole season. Yet he may be let off with 10s. a year. Surely the Hon. the Minister for Railways will remember that, when by Act of Parliament we imposed a license-fee on commercial travellers who were non-New Zealanders, protests were lodged by the agent of Messrs. Peak, Freen, and Co., the biscuit-makers in -

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the Old Country, which finally reached the [a commercial traveller or a hawker without a Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the result was that that impost has been dropped out from our law. A special Act was passed in this House in order to repeal the particular clause by which that fee was charged. Without saying more at this stage, I shall endeavour to get certain amendments inserted in the Bill, unless the honourable gentleman can see his way to accept them in advance, and especially one that the action of the Bill shall not apply to boroughs. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs). - I should like to point out to the honourable member in charge of the Bill some points which I think are worthy of his consideration. In the first place, an absolute change in our criminal law is proposed by clause 11 of the Bill. It is a clause which it is impossible to stigmatize in too strong terms. The clause reads as follows : - " Any constable may, without warrant, seize and detain any person not being a licensee under this Act who is found carrying on the business of hawker or commercial traveller, and detain him till the following day for the purpose of proceeding against him for such offence, unless the same can be sooner disposed of." Now, I ask honourable members whether a more ridiculous provision was ever introduced into any Bill ? I feel satisfied that there is not one single member of the House who would dare to vote for it. Just fancy ! We talk about the powers of the police ; we talk about the powers that we should give to constables ; but here under this Bill we propose to allow a constable-

and not only that, but a constable without a warrant -- on his own initiative and as he thinks fit. to arrest any person he considers is carrying on the business of a commercial traveller or a hawker without a license ; and if he likes he can deal with him on the day of arrest, or he can lock him up and hold him till the following day, and then deal with him as it suits him. Does the honourable member know that there is such a clause in the Bill ? I venture to say he has got a big contract to justify it. Is he aware that it proposes to extend the powers given to the police under every statute ever put on the statute-book of the colony? Does he know that he is placing in the power of the police something absolutely inimical to the interests of the citizens of this colony ? Where may it lead to? Suppose a policeman arrests a man who he believes to be a commercial traveller -and look at the definition of "commercial traveller " -- suppose he decides to arrest some man who he believes to be a commercial traveller, he does not require the warrant, he simply arrests him. He sees a man trying to sell some bootlaces, or to sell some moleskins to a sheep-farmer-although I shall show you that a traveller is not allowed to do so under the Act-he sees this man trying to sell moleskins to a sheep-farmer or to the men in his employment, and forthwith locks him up for the night. No warrant is required- nothing at all ; he does it on his own initiative ; he believes him to be a licensee. This will be a disgrace to the Legislature. I cannot understand how it was ever put into the Bill, and I cannot imagine that the honourable member will ever ask members to vote for it. Under such a clause no man would be safe. Honourable members will note that when the honourable member who introduced the Bill read its clauses he started at clause 1 and read them all up to clause 9, but he then skipped clause 11 and went on to No. 14, which he deemed the only important clause. I do not wonder he skipped clause 11. I do not know how he is going to justify the introduction of such a clause into any Bill. Supposing the Minister of Justice, in introducing the amendment to the Police Offences Act. had proposed a clause that a policeman should be allowed to arrest a man without warrant for such an offence and put him in gaol and keep him there till the following day, not even allowing bail. Talk about the Czar of Russia! However, I believe the honourable gentleman skipped over that clause for the very good reason that he did not like to refer to it. I propose next to deal with clause 14. He says that clause 14 is introduced because these hawkers carry round with them in their vans spirituous liquors-that is, they carry on a sly-grog-selling trade, and make their caravans sly-grog shops. I should like to ask the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, if this is so, why he has not made it an offence in the clause? The offence is not selling liquor according to the clause ; if honourable members read the clause they will see the injustice of it. Is a man going to be found guilty for having a bottle of whisky in his possession, or is the sale to be the offence ? Which is to be the offence? Supposing a man with a hawking license is told by his doctor that he is seriously ill, and he had better, having a long journey to go, take a couple of bottles of whisky with him : if he is a pedlar or hawker under the Bill he has to be fined \$20, and his license is forfeited ; he does not even have to sell it. Surely if this breach of the law goes on so broadly as the honourable gentleman says, the police in his district must be blind or deaf if they cannot find it out. If the thing is constantly occurring, why cannot the police catch the man and proceed against him ? Mr. HOUSTON .-- Why cannot they do it in the King-country ? Mr. WILFORD .- That is what I am asking-why can they not ? But because the police in a district do not carry out the laws that are on the statute-book should you create a new offence ? Why suggest that a new offence should be created ? In clause 3 you say, " Every person who carries on business by the sale of goods hawked or carried about in any manner for sale shall be deemed to be a pedlar and hawker under this Act." There, or in your definition of "pedlar and hawker," you set out he has to be peddling or hawking " for sale": and, undoubtedly, if he peddles or hawks spirituous liquor for sale he can be proceeded against now without this

clause, so I see no necessity for it. Then, let me turn to clause 15: what is the sense of that ? - "If any commercial traveller solicits orders from any one not engaged in trade, he shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine of five pounds for the first offence, and ten pounds for every succeeding offence, and his license shall be declared null and void." What is the meaning of it ? If a hawker or a commercial traveller goes on to a sheep-farm where there are fifty shearers and sells enough moleskin pants for the men, he is liable to a fine of \$5 for the first offence and \$10 for the second offence. Mr. HOUSTON .- You do not understand it. Mr. WILFORD .- No, I confess I do not understand it as it is drawn ; I admit that at once. "Commercial traveller' shall mean every person who travels through the country, either with or without goods or samples of goods, as the representative of a wholesale house, and soliciting orders from those engaged in trade only." Therefore, I presume, if a man went travelling round selling goods for a commercial house to people not engaged in trade he is not a commercial traveller ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Certainly not. Mr. WILFORD .- But he would be locked up by the constable if found selling. Mr. HOUSTON .- He is not a commercial traveller. Mr. WILFORD .- You say he is not a commercial traveller : but directly he is found hawking he is liable to arrest because he has not got a license ; and you say he cannot get a license because he is not a commercial traveller. I cannot understand it. I agree that there is a necessity for some statute of this sort ; but if the honourable gentleman had contented himself with providing for the licensing of pedlars and Assyrians, and dealing with the case of men travelling selling worthless articles, he would be doing good. He has gone beyond his province and has got out of his depth. In a Bill introduced by the Premier in 1897 it was provided that Harbour Boards, as well as the local authorities, should make by-laws regulating the conduct of licenses and entailing penalties for breach thereof ; but, in addition to that provision, it would be desirable that hawking should be forbidden on the property of Harbour Boards unless by their consent. If such authority is given to Harbour Boards, the penalties for breach thereof should be payable, as is the case at present for breaches of other by-laws, to the Boards. Now, there is no such provision here at all. I would ask the honourable gentleman to explain, when replying, whether he does not consider clause 11 constitutionally an improper clause to put on the statute-book of this colony, and if it would not be a disgrace to the people if they approve in any way of the desirability of passing such a clause. I cannot understand why it is in the Bill, and I am sure the honourable gentleman will not succeed in obtaining his second reading of this Bill. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) .- I can hardly say that I like the Bill, and I do not think the member in charge of it made out a very good case in introducing it, except with regard to that part of it dealing with the Assyrian hawkers. The Bill commences by providing that certain individuals, who are described as pedlars and hawkers or commercial travellers, shall pay certain license-fees which are specified in the schedule to the local authorities, and "local authority " is defined to mean the Council or Board of any borough, or town, or county. Now, I would point out to the member in charge of the Bill that there are districts in the colony to which neither one of these terms applies-important districts of the colony where the Counties Act is suspended, and where the work of local government is carried on by the Road Boards. What would the honourable member do with respect to those districts? The Bill as it stands at present does not include them. If we are going to have a law such as this, I think it ought to apply to the whole colony, and not to certain parts of it only. Then, as the honourable gentleman admitted in the course of his speech, those people to whom the Bill applies-commercial travellers, hawkers, and pedlars-will be compelled to pay license-fees in every district in which they do business. The effect will be to do a serious injustice not only to those people, but also to the people with whom they are doing business, because there is no doubt that such a provision will compel those commercial travellers, and pedlars, and hawkers to increase the price of their goods to the people to whom they sell them. Then, it seems to me that this definition of pedlars and hawkers is somewhat comprehensive. As far as I can see, it applies to the bakers', grocers' and butchers' carts, which go about the country districts selling and delivering their goods. The interpretation is as follows :- ""

Pedlars and hawkers' shall mean every person who travels through the country. either with or without goods or samples of goods. whether representing a wholesale or retail business, and soliciting orders from private individuals." I think it is quite clear that the Bill goes much further than intended by the member in charge of the Bill. If this is the case, I think we ought to thoroughly understand it. as, supposing there are objections to hawkers and pedlars, we have to be very careful that the cure is not worse than the disease. I do not propose to call for a division on the second reading of the Bill, but we shall have to be very careful with it when it goes into Committee. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) .- I do not like this Bill. I consider it a bad Bill. I do not think that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, when speaking on the second reading, made out a good case at all. The whole thing is bad-"lock, stock, and barrel." The honourable gentleman stated that his object in introducing the Bill was to put an embargo on those unfortunate people known as Assyrians in this colony. Our laws have allowed the

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Assyrians to come here ; they are here amongst us ; and the least we can do is not only to allow them to stay, but to encourage them to earn an honest livelihood. If you debar these people from getting a livelihood in the manner they are doing at present you drive them into the towns, you congest the population in the cities, they become a burden on the charitable aid, on the old-age pensions, and upon charitably disposed members of the community. There was a time when such a Bill as this would have been condemned in the strongest terms on the floor of the House. These people have been driven by the hands of the oppressor from Damascus, the mountains of Lebanon, and from the plains of Armenia. I need only remind honourable members that there was a time when Great Britain opened her doors and received numbers of refugees from Holland, when the people of the Netherlands were being cruelly persecuted by the Duke of Alva. Were they placed under any disadvantage in Great Britain at that time? None whatever, They settled in Britain, earning a livelihood in different parts of the country, and became industrious, law-abiding, respectable citizens. I do not believe in oppressing these people. We ought to treat them kindly ; and, as far as I have had an opportunity of meeting with these Assyrian hawkers and pedlars in country districts, I have found that no objection whatever has been raised against them. They are industrious, sober people ; they seem thrifty and careful, and they deserve in their own way to get a living, and in such a way that they will not dislocate our own industries in any shape or form. But this Bill not only prohibits Assyrian pedlars and hawkers, but prohibits those of our own people. For example: Suppose an accident happens to a young man ; he loses an arm, and is thus incapacitated from carrying on his former occupation. The neighbours of this young man organize a subscription, and they probably raise from \$100 to \$150, and fit him out with a hawker's cart and goods ; but under the provisions of this Bill that man is to be placed under a disability. He is to be called upon whenever he goes into the neighbourhood of a Town Board or a Road Board to pay a recurring license-fee that I look upon as penal. In my district I can imagine such a young man going into the district of a Town Board where he can do business in one day with almost all the people of that district ; but as soon as he gets to the limits of the Town Board district and gets into the Road Board district he is called upon to pay a fee by the Clerk of the Road Board. I consider this a great hardship, and I say that these penal laws should not be imposed on our people in the manner proposed by this Bill. Then, again. I have the greatest objection to clause 15, which interferes with commercial travellers. There are establishments in Christchurch, such as Ballantyne and Co., Strange and Co., Beath and Co., and the D.I.C., who carry on a very large retail and wholesale business. They have got their commercial travellers travelling all over Canterbury. A traveller at the end of the day reaches a farmer's house and stays there for the night. He takes the measurement of the sons for suits of clothes ; he takes orders from the good lady of the house for clothing for the girls ; but under the provisions of this Bill he is

not allowed to do so. An Hon. MEMBER .- He is not a traveller. Mr. MEREDITH. - You cannot call such a man anything else than a commercial traveller as defined by the Bill. An Hon. MEMBER .- He is a pedlar. Mr. MEREDITH .- He is nothing of the kind under the definition of the Bill. But, supposing that he is a pedlar, he is a prohibited person, and such an unnecessary and vexatious interference with the rights of the people should I intend to not be tolerated for one moment. oppose this Bill. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton). -- I should like to ask your ruling, Sir, whether, in regard to a Bill like this, which proposes to tax certain members of the community, it should not emanate from the Government, and be introduced by a Minister of the Crown. It proposes to place taxation upon persons who are carrying on their businesses. Mr. SPEAKER. - I have not studied the Bill in the light of its being a tax Bill, well knowing that only a Minister of the Crown can propose to impose a tax. But charges can be imposed without the recommendation of the Crown when they do not become colonial revenue or affect colonial expenditure. In this Bill the charges become local revenue. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- It appears to me that the measure is so wide-reaching in its effect that I can hardly understand one of such importance being introduced excepting by the Government. It will change to a very large extent the whole manner of commercial life so far as the country districts are concerned. If it were entitled, instead of a "Hawkers and Pedlars Bill," a "Bill to confer a monopoly in country trade upon country storekeepers," I think that would be a more accurate title for it than the one that is placed at the head of the Bill. We all know that in the country districts people obtain goods at a lower cost through commercial travellers and others than they would otherwise be able to obtain if they were forced to deal solely through the storekeepers. Of course, it may be said that that is a disadvantage to the storekeepers who live in the district, but equally it is an advantage to the purchaser. A very important matter is that country people receive the benefit of cheaper goods through having larger stocks to select from and the lower rates that the city houses are able to sell at. Now, many honourable members are aware, as was stated by the honourable member for Ashley, that there are large metropolitan houses in the cities who are able with their large finances and larger stocks to give a wider selection at a very much lower cost. Why should these houses be prevented from sending their travellers out in order to obtain clients in the way they have been doing for a number of years past ? Under

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one district to another, will be compelled to register in each district. It is not as if provision were made in the Bill by which one license would give a general roving-power throughout the provincial district where the travellers, or pedlars, or hawkers, as they are called, are allowed to go. In every district, directly they pass the boundary of each local authority, they will have to lodge fresh certificates of character and take out a fresh license. The whole Bill appears to be drawn on the most limited and restricted lines. It is purely a parish Bill without any breadth. The idea of saying that a man who is in a small way of business as a market gardener, and wishes to send his cart out for the purpose of turning his produce into cash, should be compelled to take out a license from every road district that he happens to pass through appears to me to be a most extraordinary proposal. I shall certainly oppose the Bill. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) .- I desire to say that I am quite unable to understand why commercial travellers are included in this Bill in the way in which they are. According to the provisions of the Bill as it stands now, every commercial traveller - every representative of a wholesale house in the colony - would have to pay a sum of 10s. as a license-fee for every district he travelled in, so that a man going from Dunedin or from Wellington through the colony, or through the particular province, would have to pay a very considerable sum indeed, perhaps as much as \$20, or \$30, or \$40, or 550 as license-fees for all the various districts and towns he went through. I agree. Sir, that it is no doubt right and proper that these Assyrian hawkers and pedlars should be scrutinised and their characters looked into, and that they should take out a license; but I am

unable to see why we ought to interfere with a class of commercial travellers who have been doing business in the colony for many years, and who are well known and generally respected, and oblige them to take out licenses which it has not been found necessary for them to take out in the past. No reason was advanced by the mover of the Bill, so far as I understood him, why it should be necessary to introduce it. Of course, a great many of the criticisms that have been made on the Bill appear to be very well founded. Clause 11, which has been alluded to by the honourable member for the Suburbs, is clearly an utterly impossible clause. It is a clause which practically amounts to an abrogation of the Magna Charta : it is a clause which practically suspends the Habeas Corpus Act and every other kind of Act which protects the liberty of the subject. The honourable member for Christchurch City suggests to me that it is actually an incitement to murder, because the words are :- " Any constable may, without warrant, seize and detain any person not being a licensee under this Act who is found carrying on the business of hawker or commercial traveller, and detain him till the following day for the purpose of proceeding against him for such offence, unless the same can be sooner disposed of." If that means "unless the traveller can be sooner disposed of." it is certainly a very dangerous clause indeed. Clause 15 appears to me to be certainly a very objectionable clause. It reads :- " If any commercial traveller solicits orders from any one not engaged in trade, he shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine of five pounds for the first offence, and ten pounds for every succeeding offence, and his license shall be declared null and void." A commercial traveller may come through my district, and I happen to know him and tell him to send me along a couple of chests of tea. or something of that sort, and, behold, he is liable to punishment under this Act. Mr. HOUSTON. - He is not a commercial traveller : look at the definition of " commercial traveller." Mr. BARCLAY. - The interpretation clause says, "' Commercial traveller ' shall mean every person who travels through the country, either with or without goods or samples of goods, as the representative of a wholesale house, and soliciting orders from those engaged in trade only." Well, it appears to me that the clause bears that interpretation. I do not think it is necessary to say very much more. A good deal of criticism of the Bill has been made which is very true, and I suggest to the honourable member that he should confine his Bill. as I think has been already suggested, to Indian hawkers and pedlars, and leave out commercial travellers. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) .- Sir. I am thoroughly in accord with the honourable member for Ashley. I am opposed to this Bill, and I am opposed to it because it is a needless piling-up of legislation. There is absolutely no need for this Bill at all. Nearly every one of its provisions come into conflict with statutes we already have on our books, and which are quite ample to deal with the respective cases. Now, Sir, it appears to me in the first place. that the Bill is badly conceived and badly drafted, and I regret to say it was very poorly explained to the House. Indeed, the honourable gentleman evidently does not understand his own Bill. Let us suppose, as has been suggested by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Barclay .. the case of a commercial traveller who is going through a district. He may meet a friend who may suggest to the commercial traveller that he should send him a couple of boxes of tea- a very likely thing to happen in the case of a man living in the country. Now, the honourable gentleman says the Bill does not touch him at all. Let me read clause 15 of his Bill :- " If any commercial traveller solicits order from any one not engaged in trade, he shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine of five pounds for the first offence, and ten pounds for every succeeding offence, and his license shall be declared null and void." Therefore, if a commercial traveller happens

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to visit him, and asks if he is in want of a couple of boxes of tea, and he says " Yes," then he has sold to a person not in trade a couple of boxes of tea, and he is liable to a fine of \$5. Sir, there are thousands of people in the colony who get their tea in that way, and they are not committing any offence. Sir, this Bill comes into conflict with the Municipal Corporations Act ; it comes into conflict with the Licensing Act, and

the Police Offences Act : and every case here provided for has already been provided for in the statutes which have been passed by this House. That being so, what is the use of passing this Bill at all ? If the honourable gentleman wishes to deal, and deal solely, with what he regards as an undesirable class of hawkers and pedlars-the Assyrian class-why did he not confine himself to them and to them alone ? The undesirability of bringing in such a Bill is apparent. Some members appear to think it necessary to introduce a long Bill containing many provisions. If they would bring down short measures, setting forth their proposals in a concise form, they would not have the same difficulty in getting them passed by the House. As I have said, I am opposed to this Bill. and I thank the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs for bringing under our notice the 11th clause. Could anything be more dangerous than to put power into the hands of the constables to arrest an individual on mere suspicion that he might be an unlicensed hawker or a pedlar, to take that individual in charge without warrant. and hold him in custody until next day, before he would have an opportunity of disproving the accusation : and he might be treated with great indignity by the mere fact of his arrest, and be put to considerable inconvenience and suffering because a policeman had a suspicion that he was a pedlar. I feel bound, as I have said, to vote against the second reading of the Bill. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) .-- I shall not detain the House by replying at length to the statements made by honourable gentlemen opposed to the Bill. I cannot, however, pass over the arguments used by the honourable member for Dunedin City, and the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs. I was not, in one sense. astonished to hear their arguments as to the difference between commercial travellers and pedlars and hawkers. It certainly was the kind of argument one might hear advanced by a solicitor in a Police Court, but they were not such arguments as one expects to hear advanced in this House. It is quite apparent to me that neither of those honourable members have read the Bill. It is clearly defined in the interpretation clause what is a pedlar and a hawker, and what is a commercial traveller. It is also clearly set forth in clause 15 that if a commercial traveller converts himself into a pedlar and hawker without taking out a hawker's license, he shall be liable to be fined ; and I say that a commercial traveller who represents a wholesale house, and who goes from house to house and sells a pound of tea or a pound of candles, must be considered to be a pedlar and hawker, and if he infringes the law in this respect I say he should be liable to a penalty for such breach of the law. A great deal was made of the clause which deals with hawkers and pedlars going from one district to another and trying to escape the taking out of another license, but I do not think it is necessary to reply in detail to what was said on that point. The member for Wellington Suburbs also dealt with clause 14, and the provision in reference to selling spirituous liquors. I may inform him that under the English Act a pedlar may be fined if he is found with liquor in his possession, whether he is selling it or not. He is held to be committing a breach of the law, and may be fined in a similar way to that in which persons may be fined for sly-grog selling who have liquor in their possession. The talk about the liquor being carried about for the good of the person's health or as a medicine, in my opinion, is neither more nor less than "buncombe." We have heard that argument over and over again in sly-grog cases in country districts, and we know what it means. I say there should be a law to prevent the selling of liquor by pedlars. With regard to some of the other arguments used with reference to how this measure will affect bakers, butchers, and those disposing of vegetables, these matters can be dealt with in Committee. It was necessary in my opinion that something should be done to rid the country of a class of men who are certainly not a desirable class. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. The House divided. AYES, 24. Allen, E. G. Guinness Morrison Barclay Hall O'Meara Buddo Pirani Hall-Jones Carneross Lawry Stevens Ward. Carroll McGowan Mackenzie, T. Duncan Tellers. Fisher McKenzie, R. Houston Flatman Mills Palmer. Giffedder NOES, 30. Allen, J. Hogg Russell, W. R. Lang Steward Arnold Atkinson Laurenson Tanner Bollard Lethbridge Thomson, J. W. Ell Wilford Massey Fowlds Millar Willis Fraser, A. L. D. Monk Witheford. Graham Napier Tellers. Hanan Rhodes Collins Hardy Russell, G. W. Meredith.

Herries Majority against, 6. Second reading negatived. STATE - SCHOOL CHILDREN COMPULSORY DRILL BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 1 .- "The Short Title of this Act is 'The State School Compulsory Drill Act, 1901,' and it shall be read with and form part of 'The Education Act, 1877.'"

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Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) moved, That the word " compulsory " be struck out. The Committee divided on the question, "That the word stand part of the clause." AYES, 24. Russell, G. W. Allen, E. G. Houston Russell, W. R. Bollard Lang Buddo McGowan Svmes Ward Mackenzie, T. Carneross Flatman McLachlan Willis. Guinness Monk Tellers. Fisher Palmer Hardy Heke Parata Massey. Herries NOES, 30. Allen, J. Hall-Jones Napier Hanan Arnold O'Meara Rhodes Atkinson Hogg Hutcheson Barclay Stevens Tanner Laurensen Duncan Thompson, R. Ell Lethbridge Fowlds Thomson, J. W. McGuire Fraser, A. L. D. Meredith Tellers. Millar Collins Gilfedder Pirani. Graham Mills Hall Majority against, 6. Words struck out, and clause as amended agreed to. Clause 2 .- " It shall be the duty of the Board of Education in each district constituted under ' The Education Act, 1877,' to cause military and physical drill to be taught to all boys and girls over the age of eight years attending the public schools in the school district." Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) moved to strike out the words " military and." Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) moved, That the Chairman do now leave the chair. Motion negatived, and, subsequently, Mr. Millar's amendment agreed to, and words "military and " struck out. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City) moved to add, at the end of the clause, the words " and every such Board may at its discretion cause military drill to be taught to all boys over the said age. " (2.) Section eighty-five of ' The Education Act, 1877,' is hereby amended accordingly." The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added." AYES, 13. Fraser, A. L. D. Pirani. Allen, J. Barclay Hall Collins Laurensen Tellers. Atkinson Lethbridge Ell Millar Hutcheson. Fowlds NOES, 34. Allen, E. G. Duncan Heke Arnold Field Herries Flatman Bollard Lang Gilfedder Buddo Lawry Graham Carncross Massey Carroll Guinness McGowan Colvin Hardy McGuire Mills Russell, W. R. Ward. O'Meara Seddon Tellers. Palmer Stevens Rhodes Tanner Fisher Russell, G. W. Thomson, J. W. Mclachlan. Majority against, 21. Amendment negatived. Clause 6 .- " Upon the certificate in writing of the parent or guardian of any boy or girl, such boy or girl shall be exempted from being instructed in military and physical drill." Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) moved to strike out all the words after " Upon the." with a view of inserting the following words: " 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." Amendment agreed to, and clause as amended agreed to. Bill reported. EIGHT HOURS BILL. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .-- Now that the Eight Hours Bill is again before the House I take this opportunity of saying a few words with regard to it. We have had many Eight Hours Bills before the House since the date. very many years ago, when Mr. Bradshaigh. Bradshaw first introduced an Eight Hours Bill. Eight Hours Bills in various forms have been before this House, as I have said. on many occasions -- some complicated, some simple. This Bill appears to be very complicated. It contains provisions which I think would imperil the passage of any Eight Hours Bill through this House. Nevertheless, although there is that danger, I feel bound to say that at the second-reading stage of the Bill it is my duty to support it, as affirming the principle of an eight-hours day. It is my duty. as representing the working-classes of this city, always to take that stand. I shall, therefore, vote for the second reading: but when this Bill goes into Committee I hope the Committee, in its wisdom, will expunge certain portions of it which I am sure would prevent any Eight Hours Bill becoming law. I shall say no more with regard to this Bill now, because I have a Bill of my own-the Libel Bill to come on for second reading, and I am extremely anxious to proceed with that Bill. Mr. FIELD (Otaki). - As a member representing a farming constituency I cannot allow this Bill to go to a second reading without making some remarks upon it, because I fit . as I understand many farmer members who have spoken

before me do-I had not the plai- sure of listening to the first portion of the daha'e on the second reading-I feel with them that if this Bill passed it would practically paralys the whole of the farming industry. First and for- most, there is no call in any farming distri .: for such a Bill as this. At any rate. in my experience of country life I have never known any farm-labourer complain of his houn labour. It seems to me quite impossible to

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apply any fixed rules as to the hours of | fixed rule in regard to the hours of labour for labour in the occupation of farming, and in a lesser degree the same remark applies to domestic life. In cities different conditions prevail. There the industries do not, speaking generally, depend, as in the case of a farming industry, on the seasons and weather. The labourers in cities work under roofs, and eight hours a day can always be worked. Then, the labourer can go home, the day's work being done ; but in country districts it is quite different. A farmer knows that his success in life depends largely upon his taking advantage of the seasons and weather. In addition to that, in almost every branch of country work and life there are seasons when the work is hard and continuous, and others when it is intermittent and slack. Take the dairying industry. We all know that in that the work is very much harder in the summer months than in the winter months. In the summer months the hours of labour are long, in the winter they are short. There is no pro- vision made in this Bill to say that the eight- hours day shall be the legal time for the year through, but only eight hours every day for the whole year. A labourer must not work more than forty-eight hours a week, whether it is the busy season or not .. On a dairy farm, although it may be necessary, in order that the farm should succeed. that the labourers should work sixty hours a week for some weeks in the summer - in the winter season they may not need to work more than twenty-four hours per week -there is no provision made where- by the average of eight hours a day all through the year should be allowed. If so, there might be said to be some justice in the Bill ; for I am one of those who believe in a fair day's work-and a fair day's work is eight hours. Then, take the sheep-farming industry, we are just coming on the lambing-time, and it may be one man's duty to put in his whole day going through the ewes. He starts at daylight in the morning, and he finishes at nightfall in the evening. If that man were restricted to eight hours, the farmers would have to employ two men for the work, and, probably he could not afford to pay two men to do that work. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- You can pay over- time under clause 6. Mr. FIELD .- Why should I pay that man for overtime, when in a month or two the man may be doing only his four hours a day ? That is the position. The Bill is altogether de- fective, and it seems to me altogether unneces- sarv. I would instance harvesting and other farm labour, but it is useless to take up the time of the House multiplying instances, though it is not too much to say that yon could cite dozens of instances where the Bill would be utterly unworkable, and, in fact, damaging to the farming interests. I do not want to waste time, as the Bill has been al- ready fully discussed, and other members have Bills waiting to come on ; but I cannot allow it to go to its second reading without regis- tering my protest against it. Similarly, in domestic life there seems to be no reason for a domestic servants. I do not know that there is any great complaint from the domestic servant class, or any demand for such a measure as this. I have never heard of any. My experi- ence is that the domestic servants throughout the colony get very fair treatment indeed. I know the maids in my own house get more than one half-day per week, and they can get off practically any evening they like. That may not be the case in every house, and if the ser- vants are unjustly treated, then, it seems to me, you can pass legislation dealing with that phase of the question, and I should not object to it. Now, it is well known that in cases of sick- ness of children it is very necessary sometimes that the nursemaid should have to sit up at night, as it may not be necessary or convenient for or within the means of the householder to employ a trained nurse. The ordinary nurse- maid may have to get up over and over again at night to attend to the children, and if the employer

allowed that he would have to pay overtime under this Bill, or else run the risk of breaking the law. The Bill, it seems to me, would lead to all sorts of unnecessary complications, and I shall have to vote against it. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston North) .- I do not think it is right for any one who has strong feelings on the eight-hours question to give a silent vote upon it. I think, so far as the Eight Hours Bill before us is concerned, the object aimed at could be very much better attained by a suggestion I made the other evening in regard to the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. As the honourable member for Otaki has just said, it is impossible to apply an Eight Hours Act to some occupations in the drastic way proposed in this Bill, and there will undoubtedly have to be, for some considerable time, a give and take in regard to the hours of labour. I think that give and take could be very much better applied under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act by some simpler mode of reference to that Act, or to the Board constituted under that Act, than the cumbrous system in force at present, because it would be a ridiculous thing almost if the question were referred to the Conciliation Board, with all the time and expense that would be incurred, and then, as a matter of course, afterwards to the Arbitration Court. I think, if the powers of the Arbitration Court could be used without great expense, when a certain number of employés or employers in an occupation or trade in any part of a district desired the question of the hours of labour to be referred to the Court in the same way as the whole question of employment is referred, we would get that give and take which must be applied necessarily to the farming community. Of course, we know that even in the dairying industry, with its very long hours of labour, there is no necessity for continual work. If a certain number of hours were fixed for the forenoon and a certain number in the afternoon, it would be very much better than to fix an eight-hours day, to start at a given hour and to finish not later than a certain hour in the afternoon.

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So far as the eight-hours day is concerned, the colony is practically unanimous as to that. It is only where it is impracticable that there has really been any opposition ; and I see that the Arbitration Court over and over again, in fixing the hours of labour, in most cases fix them under an eight-hours day, and therefore that shows they are fully aware that it is necessary to differentiate in different trades. I now ask members representing the Ministry to take this matter into consideration, and see if it is not possible to deal with legislation on the lines I have suggested to-night. I feel certain it is almost impossible to get an Eight Hours Bill like the one now before us through the House, and, though we have over and over again affirmed the principle, we have never been able to come to an agreement as to the trades and occupations which should be dealt with in an Eight Hours Bill. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) .- I do not wish to give a silent vote on this Bill. I am sorry that it has been introduced. I think it is quite unnecessary, for in the district which I represent eight hours is considered the regular working-day, and if farm-labourers are working at any other work, excepting where horses and cattle are concerned, they start at eight in the morning and work up till five in the afternoon, with an hour for dinner. Some of the members who spoke in this debate on a previous occasion said a good deal about child labour in connection with dairy farms. Well, Sir, I think more has been said on that than is necessary. It has been said these children go to school after milking, and cannot do their work, but go to sleep during lessons. I think a good deal of this talk has been caused by school-masters in certain districts who are not quite up to their work in getting their children past the standards, and they blame it on to the milking. Settlers, I think, are not likely to overwork their children in this or any other form of work on farms. I merely wish to say that I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill if it goes to a division. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) .- Like other members who have just spoken, I feel that I cannot allow the second reading of this Bill to take place without saying a few words with regard to it. For a very great number of years in New Zealand now we have considered and prided ourselves upon the fact that we do practically work an

eight-hours day. Time after time, as the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) told us, Eight Hour Bills have been presented to this House. Sometimes they have been brief and simple, and sometimes very complicated. Now, when a Bill is brief and simple, as a rule, it is acceptable ; when it is complicated it is not acceptable : and, personally, I think this is one of the most complicated Eight Hour Bills that could possibly be pre- sented to the House. I intend, if there be a division on it, to vote for the second reading. At the same time, when the matter comes before Committee, at that stage I shall move amend- ments or support amendments in connection with the different clauses therein. At the pre- sent time, in connection with our big cities we hardly need an Eight Hours Bill of any kind. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act applies, and is used not only for our organized trades or skilled trades, but the Act has been amended so that those engaged in unskilled trade can take advantage of it. There is another Bill that has been before this House, and in all probability will pass-I allude to the Shops and Offices Bill-that will apply also to those who are in retail shops, and in some offices at any rate ; and when we have these two Bills upon the statute-book we have that which can be taken advantage of by all the employés in our big cities. Then, outside our cities we have our country workers, both male and female. If the Eight Hours Bill cannot be made applicable to those workers in some way, then it is almost useless to place it upon the statute-book, unless we are to place it there simply for the purpose of affirming the prin- ciple of an eight-hours day. It has been ad- mitted here that it is impossible for us to pass an Eight Hours Bill that will be acceptable and applicable to all country workers. I take it for granted that such is the case, as the country members seem unanimous upon that point ; and, consequently, if we can- not make this Bill so that it will apply to country workers, the question arises whether it is really worth our while to let it go on the statute-book at all. On the other hand, it may be possible, and I believe it is possible, to follow the example of the Boards in another colony, and so group the various workers in the country together that some can be brought under the Bill and mentioned as those to whom the Act shall apply. Then, as to the question of female labour, it has been pointed out by the member for Otaki that an Eight Hours Bill can hardly be made fairly to apply to female servants of any kind. Whether that be ~ or not I am not prepared at the present time to say, but I do say, as one of those representing labour in this House, that I should prefer that this class of labour should not be mentioned at all, rather than that there should be a clause in an Act upon our statute-book hx- ing the hours of labour at twelve per day. And you must remember that they would naturally have something to do during 11.30. the hours of meals, and, if so, when you include the hours of meals it makes four- teen hours a day. I repeat that I should prefer not seeing them mentioned at all rather than have a clause such as this placed upon the statute-book. Then, in clause 5, we have the question of persons employed by the State and also by local authorities. Now, if we can pass an Eight Hours Bill that shall apply in this manner we shall have done very good work indeed, for we must recognise this : that while we passed a Bill last year applying to certain contracts, and making it strictly compulsory and binding that workers under those contracts should only work eight hours per day, nevertheless there are a large number of workers employed under the local bodies who work longer hours than that, and when we look at

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some of the departments of our own Govern- ment we find that those employés work very long hours indeed. I can quote one case specially-there are numbers that could be quoted-down South, where a man was work- ing in connection with the railway, and where he got under a truck and had his legs cut off. That man had worked for about sixteen hours during that day, and it was very little wonder that when night came on he was so fatigued - that might have been the reason ; I do not say it was ; but in all probability it had something to do with it-that that man slipped and met with the accident he did meet with. Then, during last session of Parliament, I brought before the notice of the Minister of Justice from time to

time the question of the hours that were being worked by the warders in the gaols of New Zealand. I have not mentioned that question this session-not because I have forgotten it-but I trust the Minister will be able to tell us presently what has been done with regard to this class of Government labour. I thought, Sir, it was necessary to say a few words on this Bill for this simple reason, that I consider that as at present presented to us it is most unsatisfactory. I do not think it will accomplish any good; but I trust that the matter having been mentioned here will cause the Ministry once more to think of their employees, and rectify some of these evils that do exist, and which are I was going to say a disgrace, Sir, - but certainly a weakness in a party that so well and ably represents the labour people of this colony. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City) .- I wish to say, Sir, that I agree with the greater number of the speeches I have heard in this debate, and especially was I glad to hear the speech of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Arnold), who preceded me. I am substantially in accord with him, and with the great majority of those who have already spoken : but, though I share their opinions with regard to this Bill, and with regard to the question generally, I am not at present able to follow their example when they say they propose to vote for the second reading. The attitude of the average member who speaks on the Bill is this : that he will vote for the second reading, provided, however, under no consideration whatever will he vote for the third reading. Now, my position is this: I quite see that clause 3, dealing with domestic servants, and clause 4, dealing with farm labourers, cannot possibly stand. At the same time, I am thoroughly in accord with the general principle which is laid down in clause 2 of the Bill : but I am determined not to vote for the Bill simply on account of its good name, nor even on account of its affirming an excellent abstract principle, unless it is going to affirm it in such a way as will lead to some beneficial result. Therefore I put it to the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill that it is incumbent on him to show to me and others who are in the same position what the concrete result from the Bill may be expected to be when these clauses are taken out of it. There will be left clause 2, which affirms the abstract principle that eight hours shall be a legal day's work ; and there will be left clause 6, which says that " Any person employed for a longer period than forty-eight hours in any one week, except as provided in this Act, may demand from his employer, and recover in any Court of competent jurisdiction, full additional wages or salary pro rata for the overtime so worked, and in addition thereto a further sum of twenty-five per centum on such amount." What the practical value of that last clause is I fail to see, unless there is fixed not only the legal number of hours, but the legal rate of wages. If the legal rate of wages fits in with the legal day of eight hours, then, of course, the net effect of these two clauses would be something practical. Supposing I want to work a man nine hours a day, and only pay him 8s., though you may declare eight hours is a legal day's work you will not be declaring that 8s. is a legal day's pay. I may think 8s. nevertheless a fair pay for a day's work, and yet there is nothing to prevent me agreeing with my workman that I shall pay him at the rate of 6s. a day and employ him nine hours; there is nothing illegal in that. Assuming that 6s. is the wage agreed upon, and I employ the man for nine hours, then by this Bill I should have to pay 25 per cent. extra for the ninth hour, which still comes to something less than what admittedly would be a fair rate of pay, 8s. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- It would be a hard case to pay a man worth 8s. only 6s. Mr. ATKINSON .- I want to put it to the honourable gentleman that what we have got to guard against in legislating is the dodging of an Act ; and, if it is as easy to be done as to tumble off a log, then the Act is not worth putting on the statute-book ; it will not aid in achieving what honourable members desire. What I desire to find out is, in the first place, if the Bill does not fix the legal rate of pay in addition to the legal length of the day, how can we possibly make that provision in clause 2 operative ? Now, another question, which is a very serious one, and to which I would like to draw his attention is this: the relation of that declaration in clause 2 to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The Arbitration Court may fix forty-five hours a week as the legal week, and this Bill says it shall be forty-eight hours. The honourable member for Palmerston reminds me that in some cases it has been fixed that forty-four and a half hours shall be the

legal week. What is the position then? Of course, the inference from clause 2 is that forty-eight hours a week is the legal week, notwithstanding the award of the Arbitration Court, and the award of the Court then would be an illegal week's work. That has not been contemplated by honourable members, who surely must see that a relation- ship should be established between the declara- tions of this Bill and the awards of Arbitration Courts. I remember the period to which the honourable member for Palmerston has re- ferred, the period of Parliament from 1893 to 1896, when there were a good many Eight

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Hour Bills introduced ; and I remember one of those bills when it emerged from Committee provided that eight hours shall continue to be a legal day's work in those trades in which it was already the custom, but that in those trades where the hours before the Bill passed were longer they should continue to work the same hours afterwards. A Bill of that kind would have been harmless enough, but it was not con- sidered worth putting on the statute- book. I cannot see how we are to get at the happy medium between the futile and harmless, in a Bill of this kind, and the rigid and drastic. It is admitted by the honourable member himself, I think, that this Bill would be absolutely dis- astrous to a large number of industries in the colony in its present form. Then, the honour- able member for Dunedin City (Mr. Arnold), who spoke last, and who speaks with some authority on labour questions. says that it is not really needed in the cities; while the country members have all said it would be positively disastrous in the country. Now, one fails to see, that being so, to what part of the colony this Bill is going to have any satis- factory application at all. I have already re- ferred to the period from 1893 to 1896, when this question occupied the attention of the House a good deal, and I remember arriving at the conclusion then that it was impossible to fix a rigid limit of this kind in an Act of Parlia- ment, or even by a carefully tabulated schedule to provide different but rigid limits for different trades. The conclusion I arrived at then I have maintained ever since, and it is that the Arbi- tration Court must fix these matters. I would like the honourable member to point out to us what relation he supposes this measure of his will have to the Arbitration Act, and whether he proposes in any particular to supersede the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Courts? And will he point out to us what particular class of trade or industry is not covered by an award of that Court that will be covered by this Bill ? Having done that, will he also point out how, in view of the fact that the legal rate of wages is not fixed, he can really make his provisions with regard to over- time operative? If the honourable gentleman will satisfy me on those points, I shall have great pleasure in voting for the second reading of this. Bill. I have full sympathy with the honourable gentlemen's object, and with the abstract principle he seeks to affirm ; but I cannot vote to enact an abstract principle, and unless the honourable gentleman can show me that some concrete good is likely to come of it I cannot support the second reading. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL

(Riccarton). - Sir, after the very lengthy debate that has taken place, I think it is unnecessary that I should refer at any length to the points that have been raised. The debate has been exceedingly comprehensive and very instructive, and I have nothing to complain of so far as the fairness with which the provisions of the Bill have been criticized by honourable members on both sides of the House and representing all phases of the industrial life of this colony. I should like merely to say a few words with regard to the speeches that have been made this evening. In regard to the honourable member for Otaki. who pointed out the position of farm-labourers, whose work is somewhat intermittent, I think it is not very often that no work is to be found for a man engaged on a farm. It is true at some seasons work is longer and more pressing than at others, but it is not often that a farmer cannot find sufficient occupation for eight hours of fair work for the men he has regularly about his place. In regard to domestic servants, I should like to tell the honourable gentleman that he is probably one of those masters. and his home is probably such, that his ser- vants would probably not be affected by the provisions of this Bill; but I am aware of numbers of cases where young girls are em- ployed as domestic servants whose lives are practically lives of slavery,

on account of the long hours they are kept at work and the laborious duties they have to perform. It is quite true that farm labourers are not usually required to work more than a reasonable number of hours a day, but I think it will be admitted by farming representatives that while at harvest time the ordinary hands are kept at work for very long hours without any extra pay, the farmers have to pay the casual hands overtime for all hours after eight that they work. I fail to see that it is impossible to provide legislation reasonably restricting the hours of farm labourers. At the same time I recognise that the sentiment of the House is against an attempt to include farm labourers and those engaged in pastoral occupations in this Bill; and, that owing so, I do not desire to imperil the good points of the Bill by trying to force something that I recognise the House will not submit to. In regard to what has been said by the honourable member for Dunedin City, Mr. Arnold, he is recognised as a labour authority; but I would point out that although he argues that the Bill is impracticable, and speaks as though an Eight Hours Bill were not even necessary in the country, yet the Trades Council in Christchurch—an extremely active and brainy body—waited on the Premier and exacted from him: s pledge that an Eight Hours Bill should be introduced. When I say it is only within the last month or two that in the flour-mills of this colony the hours of labour have been lowered—and then by the Arbitration Court—from twelve hours a day to eight hours a day; when I say that state of things has been going on in a country that claims to be an eight-hours country -- it is not necessary that I should support my position with any further argument. The Arbitration Court made that provision because those men formed a union and were able to utilise the provisions of the Act. There are numbers of cases I could name of persons engaged in unskilled occupations in the colony who have not yet been brought into unions or other organizations, and who have now to work long hours, but whose condition would be improved under this Bill. I can appeal to those members who have, I think, quite as much experience in the cities as even the member for

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Dunedin City (Mr. Arnold). Those members will agree with me in saying that there are still numbers of cases of men who are working far more than eight hours a day, and who, not being organized, are not able to bring themselves under the provisions of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. With regard to what was said by the member for Wellington City (Mr. Atkinson), I think that he will admit that the clause in the Bill that brings the Government departments under the provisions of the measure is one that is desirable in connection with the Bill. As to what he said about fixing a legal rate of pay, I may put it to him that it is not necessary that a legal rate of pay should be fixed. This Bill goes on the assumption that men are paid in a like manner, be revoked as to all or any of reasonable rate for their work, and then if they; the districts specified therein, whereupon, and are required to work overtime they have the right, on the basis of the wages they receive, to get rate and a quarter for overtime work. Sir, I shall not keep the House longer, as I wish to get the Bill passed. In Committee I shall be prepared to accept reasonable amendments, so that we may get the Eight Hours Bill on the statute-book. The House divided. AYES, 25. Allen, E. G. Palmer Graham Guinness Arnold Seddon Steward Bollard Hall-Jones Buddo Tanner Hutcheson Ward. Carroll Laurensen Colvin McGowan Duncan McLachlan Tellers. Eli Collins Millar Russell, G. W. Fowlds Mills NORS, 17. Stevens Atkinson Lang Carneross Lawry Symes Thomson, J. W. Flatman Massey Hall Tellers. Monk Field Rhodes Hardy Russell, W. R. Fraser, A. L. D. Herries PAIRS. For. Against. Hanan Houston Parata Hoke Mackenzie, T. O'Meara Lethbridge. Napier. Majority for, 8. Bill read a second time. The House adjourned at five minutes past twelve a.m.