

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Tuesday, 8th October, 1501. First Reading - Third Reading- Lake Ellesmere-

Labour Day -- Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill-Money lenders Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER

took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Royal Visit Expenses Bill. THIRD

READING. Mortgages of Land Bill.

<page:271>

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA asked the Minister of Education, Whether it is true that the waters of Lake Ellesmere are to be drained through the Native fishing reserves ; and, if so, what steps are being taken by the Government to conserve the rights of the Natives as set out in the Ngaitahu deed of sale? He was given to understand that certain drainage-works were being undertaken on Lake Ellesmere which would seriously interfere with the fisheries of the Natives - that was, their eel-weirs, where the lase drained into the ocean. This class of fishing - ground was reserved to the Natives under the conditions of the Ngaitahu deed of sale. He believed that if the water was carried away by means of pipes the Natives would lose their fisheries, upon which they had subsisted for many years ; and if this work was to be done he thought that the authorities who put in the drain-pipes, whoever they may be, should recompense the Natives in order that they might have something to live on in the future. This particular place to which he referred was where the Natives had been in the habit of catching eels as they migrated from the lake to the ocean, and had been used by them from the very earliest times that the Ngaitahu Tribe went to live there, and they had continued to work the fisheries up to the present time. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said his information pointed to the fact that certain works were being done by the Selwyn County Council, who had power in accordance with law to deal with the lake. He was unable to state officially whether, in the opinion of the Government officers, the works would interfere with the Native fisheries. Apparently, however, it was admitted that the fish would not be able to get up or down at spawning-time ; but it was added that, owing to the large growth of weeds in the lake, the access of the fish to the sea was actually stopped at the present time. However, he would refer the matter to the Government officers for further investigation and report. He would refer it in the first instance to the Native Minister, and ask him, in the interests of the Natives, to see that this very important matter for them was thoroughly looked into, and that their rights were properly preserved and protected. LABOUR DAY. The Hon. Mr. RIGG asked the Minister whether he proposed to adjourn the Council on account of Labour Day. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER thought it would be very proper to do so, but, as Wednesday was private members' business day, he proposed that the Council should meet in the evening. He would therefore move, That the Council, at us rising to-day, adjourn till eight o'clock to-morrow evening. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI again raised his voice against these continual adjournments. Members were there to perform a public duty, for which they were paid. The Government ought to put its foot down and maintain the dignity of the Ministerial position, instead of them by the unions. He maintained that the Council should do their business in a business-like way, as members representing the people of the colony. The Hon. Mr. RIGG said they had plenty of time to do all the business that was before them, or likely to be before them during the week. Last year the Council adjourned on this occasion ; and this being the one day in the year when the labour people have their holiday, and the demonstration being in itself an object-lesson and a moral to the younger people that no country could grow great except through the industry of its people, the adjournment should be granted. The Hon. Mr. REEVES thought that, instead of adjourning till the evening only, they should adjourn altogether till Thursday. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said, With regard to private members' business, he found there were only two measures on the Order Paper, and these

appeared to consist of business which could be disposed of in a few minutes. The Order Paper altogether was very light, and he did not suppose there would have been any objection to the adjournment except for certain people who desired to advertise themselves. The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND could not see why the Council should suspend their business because the unionists were going to march in procession through the streets of Wellington. It was taking them too much at their own valuation. He did not suppose that if the agriculturists or pastoralists were going to form a procession Parliament would take any notice of them, nor did he think that the House of Lords or the House of Commons would adjourn for such an occasion as a procession of trades-unionists through the streets of London. making too much of the unions, which were causing trouble enough in the country already. The Hon. Mr. REEVES pointed out that the House of Commons always adjourned on Derby day. The Council divided. AYES, 20. Smith, A. L. Jenkinson Arkwright Baillie Johnston Swanson Barnicoat Jones Twomey Bolt Kelly, T. Walker, L. Walker, W. C. Kelly, W. Bowen Gourley Pinkerton Williams. Rigg Harris NOES, 6. Shrimski Reeves Bonar Scotland Taiaroa. Feldwick Majority for, 14. Motion agreed to. INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND) ARBITRATION BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I do not propose to deal with the points at issue in this Bill. It has come to us from the other House, and it proposes, as the result of experience, to amend the present Act. The most

<page:272>

be referred to the Labour Bills Committee for their consideration and report, and when it comes back to us that will be the time to debate the measure and say whether we approve of it or not. I therefore move, That the Bill be read a second time pro forma, and referred to the Labour Bills Committee. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI. - Sir, I hope the Labour Bills Committee will not mutilate this Bill as they did the Shops and Offices Bill. If they do the other House will not accept it. Motion agreed to. # MONEY-LENDERS BILL. ADJOURNED DEBATE. The Hon. Mr. REEVES .- During the course of this debate on Friday I heard one of the best speeches I have heard in this Council for some time, delivered by the Hon. Mr. Lee Smith. He clearly showed the folly of this Bill. The Bill cannot effect the object in view; there is no doubt about that. The remarks he made with regard to the indorsement of bills were very pertinent to the point. As he very truly said, a man went to a money-lender and the money-lender said, "Yes, I am prepared to lend you this money at 10 per cent."-that is the maximum laid down in this Bill-" but you must get an indorsement." The man has no friend whom he can get to indorse the bill, but the money-lender has a friend, and they go to him, and this man says, " Yes, I will indorse the bill, but I must have some consideration," 25 or 30 per cent., or even more. This is agreed to, and consequently the Bill is evaded altogether, and it is simply making a farce of the Bill. Now, how are you going to deal with money-lenders ? Money is like every other commodity - it is worth what it will fetch. If a man is hard up and wants money he will have to pay for it. If he goes to the bank they refuse him point-blank, and the only source he has is to go to the money-lender ; and if this Bill is passed it will inflict a great hardship on many people who want to get temporary accommodation. Take, for instance, the case of a ship coming into port disabled, and the captain of the ship, in order to get out of port again, requires perhaps £1,000 or £2,000, as the case might be. Some honourable members in this House know that to be a fact. It is a very risky proceeding, and no man will advance money on a bond unless at a high rate of interest. If everything goes all right, and the ship gets to its destination, this thing can be reviewed by the Judges. The man who advanced the money has taken a big risk, and consequently, when reviewed by the Court, he may be despoiled of what he is fairly entitled to. The preamble of this Bill is, without exception, one of the most extraordinary things I ever saw in my life, and I think it is no credit to the Government or the other place to pass it. The preamble says,- "Whereas certain persons trading as, and known by the name of, money-lenders inflict by harsh and unconscionable bargains great injury upon those who borrow money from them ; and ! It is word for word the same, with two small Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker their methods of carrying on such business of

money-lending should be subject to control." As I said before, it is impossible to subject these people to control, and I repeat that the mere passing of this Act would be a very severe hardship on a large number of people. Pawn-brokers receive 20 or 30 or 40 per cent., and that was a far more desirable kind of Bill to have brought in than this. In order to bring my remarks to a close, I will intimate that after the second reading is agreed to I will move that this Bill be referred to the Statutes Revision Committee, with power to call for persons and papers, to take evidence with regard to money-lending in Wellington, and I presume that evidence on money-lending in Wellington will apply to other centres in New Zealand. There are in Wellington two large lending establishments that have had to close down. Their profits have been so small and their losses so great that after having been in business for twenty years, I think, in one case, and fifteen years in the other, they have had to close their doors and wind up their businesses. I think it is a fair thing to refer the Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee and let them report, and if they call for evidence they will be quite satisfied that there is no necessity for this Bill being brought in. The Hon. Mr. BOWEN .- This is hardly the kind of Bill to send to the Statutes Revision Committee. It is a Bill dealing with a social question involving serious moral considerations. If the Bill is to be sent to a special Committee at all, it should be sent to one set up for the occasion. With regard to the proposed legislation, I feel very sceptical with regard to its effect. It appears to me that the only practical way to put an end to exorbitant interest is to make interest above a certain rate irrecoverable. Of course, there are difficulties in the way of fixing rates of interest in special cases, and it may be necessary to provide for revision by order of a Court under certain circumstances. I do not know how you can define "money-lender." In the case of most public companies the interest charged is generally lower than that charged by private individuals. There are cases in which money-lenders are cruel usurers. It is very hard to define the thing. I think, myself, that it is not to the advantage of anybody that it should be easy to borrow money at an exorbitant rate. People are tempted in cases of great difficulty to take money, and to promise to pay any charge demanded, although the best thing for them to do would be to face the worst at once, rather than to take money at such a rate of interest as will crush them down all the years of their life. I do not wish to oppose the second reading of this Bill, because something may be made of it ; but, as it is now, I do not think it will have any practical effect. The Hon. Mr. ARKWRIGHT .- The honourable gentleman who has just sat down seems to have forgotten that this Bill is not a new measure ; it is almost an exact copy of the Act passed by the Imperial Legislature last year.

<page:273>

Act dealing with money-lenders sending circulars to infants, which is omitted as not necessary in this colony ; and there is another point of difference which is not an alteration for the better. It is in the direction of the remedy which the Hon. Mr. Bowen seems to advocate -namely, limiting the rate of interest. The definition of "money-lender" excludes any person "bona fide carrying on the business of banking or insurance, or any business in the course of which and for the purposes whereof he lends money," and there the English Act stops : but this Bill goes on to add, "at a rate of interest not exceeding ten per centum." To me this seems a most undesirable innovation. If I am not mistaken, in the Bill originally passed by the House of Lords there was a schedule which limited the rate of interest which should not be considered usurious to 15 per cent., but that clause was struck out when the Bill went through the House of Commons. This was a great improvement in the Bill, and it is a pity that such a limitation should have been introduced into this Bill. With this exception, the Bill is word for word the same as the English Act, with such verbal alterations as are necessary to adapt it to this colony. The Hon. Mr. Reeves is opposed to the Bill, but his arguments appear to me a little contradictory. He began by saying the Bill would have no effect whatever. I must confess I am a little sceptical as to whether it will have much effect ; I think it may do some good, and, unlike some other Bills that are before us, it will not do any harm. But, then, the honourable gentleman went on to argue that it would have a good deal of

effect, for he quoted cases where he thought that money - lenders would be prevented from making loans at a high rate of interest, and thereby hardship would be inflicted on poor people. The Bill does not prevent any loans from being made; it does not take the line of saying that a money-lender shall not be entitled to recover a debt for which interest has been charged above a certain rate ; all it says is that in any case where a money-lender sues to recover money lent the Court shall have the power of examining the case, and if it finds that the money-lender has acted harshly or uncon- scionably in any way-for that there are such cases cannot be denied-then the Court shall have power to fix what rate the money-lender is entitled to recover. That is all the Bill does, and our Courts are to be trusted, I think, with that power. I do not want to take up the time of the Council on this occasion. Perhaps it might be as well to refer the Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee, but I trust they will not make any material alteration in it. It is an experiment, but it is one for which we have a very good example, as it is being tried in the United Kingdom, and so long as we stick to the lines of the Imperial statute we cannot go very far wrong. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY. - So much has been said already in favour of this Bill and so little against it that it is very difficult to find anything fresh to say. I also thought the only VOL. CXIX .- 17. tent ; but that has been dealt with so com- pletely by the honourable gentleman who has just sat down that it is unnecessary for me to allude to it now. I am one of those who do not think that Utopia will be realised in a few years-I think it is a long way off-and conse- quently we must conform with our surround- ings and legislate for the present, and not for the future. I believe that money-lending is not altogether an evil, and I will give an instance of it. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- It is the borrowing that is the evil. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I do not know where the honourable member is going to draw the difference. The exactness of the Hon. Mr. Jones is always so extraordinary that he now draws a distinction between borrowing and lending. I know a Cheviot settler who bor- rowed every penny that enabled him to take up a holding there, and that man is worth thousands to-day. Sir, in this case money- lending and money - borrowing - in order to suit the Hon. Mr. Jones-was a good thing ; it blessed him who gave and him who re- ceived. I do not see why this Bill should be condemned because it has not reached the indorsers of bills. It may be desirable to reach them, but if we mitigate the evils is not that something ? I notice the Hon. Mr. Lee Smith has a genius for amending Bills, and I give him every credit for it, and if he can amend this Bill in the direction of reaching the indorsers he shall have my vote and support. But if we cannot reach them let us reach such as we can. Some people may be reached under this Bill. It practically sets up a Court of equity to examine into such accounts as are brought before it, and to assess what is a reasonable and fair rate of interest. I think it is far better to allow discretion to the Court than to lay down a hard-and-fast rule. The Hon. Mr. Lee Smith, who made a very able speech on this subject, complained that under this Bill those persons interested in dredging who borrowed at 20 per cent. could not get the money. Again I say, if he can frame a clause to meet this he shall have my support; but in the mean- time this will do a little good. It is not exactly what I wish it to be, but the very fact that any borrower has the power to take a lender before the Court will make that lender more careful than he would otherwise have been. I do not know how far the power exists at present ; I think it exists to some degree, but there should be no harm in giving the Court the definite power laid down here. The greatest objection I have to the Bill is to the definition \- - of "money-lender." So far as I can see, I do not know that anybody will be caught by the Bill unless the definition is changed : "' Money- lender ' includes every person (whether an individual, a firm, a society, or a corporate body) whose business is that of money-lending." So far as I can understand, this means that the person lending the money will not be engaged in any other business except that of money- lending. If that is the meaning, then there 1

<page:274>

are lawyers who will not come under the Bill, for the reason that part of their business is law ; yet they are often very large money-lenders. Then, there are auctioneers, whose sole busi- ness is not that of

money-lending, and yet they do it. There are merchants and storekeepers, and others whom I need not particularise, who also lend money as part of their business, and not one of them would, so far as I can see, come under the interpretation of money-lender in the Bill. Then, it exempts bankers, insurance companies, and others who do not charge more than 10 per cent. I suppose such persons as I have mentioned are contemplated here -- that they shall only be able to recover 10 per cent. That is, I take it, what we ought all to set our face to, and try to amend the interpretation so that people would understand what a money-lender is and what he is not. The Hon. Mr. Reeves complained of a certain money-lender having to shut up. Well, I suppose it is very hard on the money-lender, but I believe it is a great advantage to the colony at large. I remember the time when the rate of interest was crushing the colony ; but the Advances to Settlers Act has lowered the rate of money, and since that time we have had unexampled prosperity. Now, we always realise that the individual must give way to what is for the good of the people as a whole, and if the money-lenders have not been satisfied with the ruling rate of interest, and they have been able to collect all the money they have advanced, I do not think we ought to take any cognisance of that fact. They were undoubtedly contributing largely to the terrible depression from which this colony suffered some years ago. We shall never experience such depression again so long as the rate of interest remains as low as it is now. For these reasons I think we should on all occasions do everything in our power to keep the rate of interest reasonable. And, above all, we should protect the weak from the strong--that is, we should protect the needy who must borrow from the lender, who is strong. This Bill may effect a little in that direction. I am not at all sanguine about it; I do not think there is anybody sanguine about it ; but the very fact that such a law exists, and that power has been given to the Court to review transactions between borrower and lender, will, I think, have a steadying effect--an effect to bring both parties to understand their relative positions better than at present, and that it will do good so far. I, Sir, object to sending this Bill to a Committee. That means, at this late stage of the session, that it is very doubtful whether it would pass at all. There is nothing in it to amend which a Committee of this Council cannot deal with, and for this reason my vote shall be given against sending it to any Committee.

The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Sir, the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has made one of the best speeches we have heard on the question so far--a good, practical, and sensible speech. But I myself differ from him with regard to the desirableness of borrowing. He Hon. Mr. Twomey said that a Cheviot settler had borrowed every penny with which he purchased land, and that he is worth his thousands to-day. Now, was it--the borrowing of the money or the Cheviot Estate he has to thank for that ? The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- He could not have gone on the Cheviot Estate if he had not borrowed the money. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- I can understand that a man does benefit through a combination of circumstances. It was his being able to get the money at a reasonable rate, and also good and cheap land. The two circumstances went together. But, for the honourable gentleman to say that borrowing is an excellent thing is an absurdity, because it is not the man who borrows who generally makes money ; it is the man who lends who makes money, and makes it out of--what ? An Hon. MEMBER .- What is the colony doing ? We are all living on " tick." The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Certainly ; and it is all the worse for us. I say it would be far better if we were to rely a little more on our own resources ; and we should be able to do that were it not that we are spending so much money on things which do us no good, and are undesirable in every respect. An Hon. MEMBER .- Whisky. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Yes, whisky is one thing, and tobacco is another. But let me, first of all, say that I do not approve of the idea of sending this Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee. If the Bill is to be dealt with it should be dealt with by the Council. If it is too difficult for us to deal with, then let us say so at once and make an end of it. The Statutes Revision Committee could not deal with the matter, I think, in the way the honourable gentleman who suggested it should be sent to them supposes. They could not touch the principle of the Bill, and it is the principle of the Bill we have to deal with, and the sooner we deal with it the better. Of course, if it once goes to the Statutes

Revision Committee the probability is that it will never see the light of day again. Now, it has been said that this Bill is a replica of the English Act on the same subject, and I think it will be interesting, therefore, to read to the Council some of the evidence on which the Bill was passed, and which justified, or seemed in the mind of the Imperial Legislature to justify, such legislation. Mr. Farrow, who has instigated a crusade against usury, and is the author of a book on money-lending. as a witness before the House of Commons Committee to inquire into the money - lending system, says :- " In scores of cases the preliminary fees and expenses were obtained by so-called money- lenders with no intention whatever of lending anything. He recommended reforms in respect to preliminary fees, bills of sale, warrants of attorney, summary diligence, default penalties, the assumption by money-lenders of the title of 'bank,' the licensing of money- lenders, and the rate of interest. He gave instances in which individual money-lenders assumed a multiplicity of names, one gentleman

<page:275>

representing himself, with other aliases, as a | No, Sir ; none of that sort for me. Continuing, widow lady. The witness also gave a case in which a person had borrowed £60, had repaid 55s. 15s., and still owed \$689. Having once borrowed money, in some cases escape was impossible. In other cases clergymen and the like, rather than bear the shame of exposure, submitted to the most extortionate demands. He knew of an instance in which a clerk with a salary of £400 a year was in the hands of twenty - four money - lenders, having had to borrow from one to pay off another. The amount of salary this man had the enjoyment of was now \$35 a year, and the time was coming when he would be unable to pay the interest on the accumulated debt of £1,129, and would assuredly be dismissed from his situation. Distraint was made upon the borrower's goods if his rent was in arrear, and the homes were quickly sold up on ruinous terms. Furthermore, by a trick, power to issue execution was obtained by money-lenders. The Bills of Exchange Act was taken advantage of by money-lenders to prevent debtors from putting in a defence to the action." Then, the notorious Mr. Isaac Gordon, whose name has been published in our cablegrams in connection with money-lending operations, came before the Committee, and this is what occurs in the Times report :- ". The Chairman then called witness's attention to the case of a Mrs. Williams, of Liangollen, a dressmaker. She borrowed £50 from Edwards, of Chester, the charge for which was \$20. After paying four monthly instalments she defaulted, and obtained a loan of \$70 from Spencer, of Liverpool, with which she paid off Edwards. She defaulted on the second loan, and borrowed \$100 from Isaac Gordon, of Birmingham, to pay it off. Then she went into the Bankruptcy Court, and found that the three lenders were the same person. " Well, Sir, it is not a crime. "The Chairman : When she had defaulted on the first loan, were you aware that she applied for the second ? " Witness: Of course I knew. I instructed my manager, and furnished him with full particulars, and told him to deal with the lady in the name of Spencer. " Do you call that legitimate business ?- In a certain way. If I risk my money and care to lend my money to that lady in forty different names I can do it. " The Chairman put the case of a Mr. Alfred Lewis, of Hereford, who between 1889 and 1-96 borrowed from Gordon £1,106 and paid altogether £3,361. " Witness admitted the accuracy of the statement. He also said he was born at Leustadt, in Russia. Isaac Gordon was his birth name. He was still a Russian subject. He did not deal ' with the ignorant, common class ' at all. " Mr. Warr: Do you deal with the professional classes ? - What do you mean ? " With lawyers and clergymen ?- Oh, clergy- men! I have dropped them. They are an awful lot. (Laughter.) " With young officers and undergraduates ?- witness said that he had put out on loan perhaps £20,000. "Mr. Warr : Do you get security when you can ?- Not once in three years, because when people have security they know better than to come to me. (Laughter.) The ordinary form I use is a promissory note. " Witness said that as long as the law did not limit the rate of interest he was entitled to charge 5,000 per cent. if he could get it. He could not say that he had lent money at that rate, but he had at 3,000 per cent. He did not think whether the interest was reasonable or not, but simply whether the

borrower could and would pay it. Like every other business- man, he wished to make as large a profit as possible. He would strongly object to the Courts having power to decide whether the rate of interest was reasonable. He would not take out a license. If he could not have a perfectly free hand in every way he would give up the business altogether. If the Court had power to review the transaction the business would not be worth following." Now, Sir, those extracts show what has been taking place at Home, and what takes place there would probably take place here, though, perhaps, in a minor degree. The same habit of borrowing is rife, and the same principles by which borrowers are treated are in vogue. Sir, the Committee, after taking all this evidence, and carefully deliberating on the matter, came to a conclusion, of which the 'Times writes in this way :- "The trend of opinion amongst influential members of the Committee appears to be against reviving the old usury laws, which limited and defined the amount of interest, it being thought that a more effective way of striking at exist- ing abuses would be to give County Court Judges an equitable jurisdiction in all money- lending cases.' An Hon. MEMBER .- That is what this Bill does. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Yes, that is what this Bill does ; and I think that the clause which effects this reform is the wisest clause of the whole Bill, and if there were no other clause in the Bill, in addition to the necessary machinery clauses, it would be a good measure. I contend it will not effect any cure merely to restrict the interest, as there are so many ways in which a money-lender may extort unreason- able and ruinous payment for the service he renders. As the Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith has pointed out, an indorser may be a party to a transaction, obtaining a large solatium for the use of his name ; and the Bill does not appear to deal with that phase, as previous speakers have already pointed out. The worst feature of the money-lender is that he can levy black- mail. He may get into his clutches a young man whom he has inveigled into borrowing sums of money, and then, having got him into his clutches, he threatens him with exposure if he does not pay his extortionate demands. I think that leaving full equitable jurisdiction to the Court would be beneficial, though there is this

<page:276>

objection to that course : that the party who bor- rowed the money would be exposed and perhaps utterly ruined. I suppose that cannot be helped unless investigations affecting such were, if the Magistrate thought proper, held in camera. Now, Sir, I have said that the fixing of a rate of interest would not be of any advantage, and I think that can easily be borne out when one comes to consider the various conditions con- cerning loans-small loans, large loans, loans with security, and loans without security. If it be fair to fix 10 per cent., for instance, on a large loan, and that with security, certainly it would be proper to fix a much larger rate of interest for a loan of a few pounds where there is no security. There can be no question that the Court should have power to review trans- actions ; but the question arises, What are the poor people to do if you prevent them from get- ting a few pounds when they really require it ? When there is a death or sickness in a family, or when there is some extraordinary occurrence in a household at quite an unexpected time- in the household of a man who is getting a regular wage, and just about enough to maintain himself and those dependent upon him-what is to be done ? There are occasions on which a man may want, say, £5 for three months. If the man has no security to offer, and goes to the money-lender for the money, the money- lender, under this Bill, would have to charge 2s. 6d. He could not charge more. Of course, the amount is simply absurd. It would not pay for the clerical expenses of negotiating the loan. Here are some figures with regard to small loans which I am sure will be interest- ing : A requires a loan of £10 for three months, and gives a bill of sale. The result is : In- terest, £1 ; solicitor's costs, £1 1s. ; Govern- ment (for registration), 5s. : total, £2 6s. That is what takes place now. An Hon. MEMBER .- How do you know ? The Hon. Mr. JONES .- I got the figures from a loan company. Under the new Bill this is what would result from negotiating a loan of the same amount : Interest, 5s. ; Go- vernment (for registration), 5s. ; law-costs, £1 1s. : total, £1 11s. That is, 5s. for a loan of #10 for three months, and the other expenses would be £1 6s., so that the man who really did the greater service and

sacrificed his money would get only a tithe of the amount that would go to others. But, Sir, after all, perhaps it is better that it should be so. I think it is far preferable that we should have legislation in the direction in which this Bill goes, to prevent rash borrowing, so that people may, if possible, be taught to be more self-reliant. It is far better that a man should save his money by frugality and carefulness for a rainy day, and to meet contingencies which are natural to family life, than that he should be reckless or improvident through the knowledge that he can get a few pounds from the money-lender if he should require it in a desperate pinch. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, because, though I believe it is not perfect, it is perhaps the best start towards legislation to meet this difficulty that we could contrive. I Hon. Mr. Jones do not expect anything perfect in this world, and I believe that the effect which this legislation will have on the minds of those persons who are in the habit of rushing to the money-lender when they find themselves in a difficulty, and who carelessly drift into difficulties because they feel that they can get a few pounds when they require them, will be salutary. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY .- I have carefully read this Bill, and I have compared it with the English Act on the subject. The English Act is dated 1900, and, as the Hon. Mr. Arkwright stated, it is almost in similar terms to the Bill now before us. Before proceedings were taken by the Imperial Parliament an inquiry was made by a very able Committee, and it was found that the only possible way of securing and giving relief to those persons who borrowed at a very high rate of interest was to give the Courts the power when applied to to review the loans. This Bill is, of course, to do that and nothing more ; and I think where the English Parliament has made careful inquiry into a subject of this character and passed an Act to deal with it and provide a remedy, we would act very wisely in following it. As far as this Bill goes, I intend to support it in every clause, if possible, without alteration, because it is of so highly technical a character that any alteration made without fully comprehending its I think the import would be very unwise. Bill pretty well speaks for itself, and there is no occasion to send it to any Committee. What could the Statutes Revision Committee do? At this period of the session there is no time to take evidence. Unless some very good reason was shown, they could not make any alteration of a practical character that would tend to improve it ; and, after having passed the scrutiny of the Lower House, where it was carefully discussed and several amendments made in it to adapt it to the circumstances of the colony, and having kept close to the original Act, I think we shall act very wisely in passing it as nearly as possible as it is. This phase of money-lending is a growing evil. I know in New Zealand, where young persons get mixed up and entangled in the nets of money-lenders, who have no conscience and no mercy, young men who are only possessed perhaps of a limited salary, and no resource to meet the usurious demands of these financial vampires, are very frequently ruined. Under this Bill a way of relief and escape is provided, and the young and inexperienced who have been caught in the meshes of the money-lender may, if they have the courage to face their difficulties and appeal to the Court, ultimately escape from the grasp of the money-lenders. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I thank the Council for the extremely considerate way in which they have dealt with this Bill, and have recognised that it is only an endeavour to raise our statutory law up to the standard of the Mother-country. I admitted in my opening speech on the second reading that possibly there were not as many gross abuses in this

<page:277>

still even here there are abuses, and it is only right that we should have the power by law of checking abuses whenever they occur. And the fact that there are abuses is very evident from matters that crop up every day in our Courts and assignments made in our Mercantile Gazette. I am quite satisfied that the Bill is a good Bill, because it is founded on an Imperial statute which was proved at Home to be required by a parliamentary Committee. Of course, some persons contend that to interfere with money-lenders is an endeavour to make a Utopia. To some extent this is true. If there are fools in this world, by some inscrutable providence there are some people who take advantage of the fools, and probably no

legislation we can bring in can prevent some fools suffering at the hands of some money-lender. The terror in this Act is the fact that a Court can review any transaction that is unscrupulous, unreasonable, or usurious. But how many people there are, after all, who might under certain conditions prefer to pay up to the last penny rather than seek the protection of the Court, which would investigate into their private transactions. That shows how difficult it is to get to the bottom of a matter like this, and how zealous we ought to be to see that the profession-if I can use the word with respect to the three-ball community-is properly looked after, and regulated on proper lines. So long as the Council recognises that this is a fair and honest attempt to deal with a live question I am perfectly satisfied ; but at the same time I do not see any good in referring this Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee. That Committee is set up for perfectly different objects. My idea of the Statutes Revision Committee's functions is to revise legislation which is being altered or consolidated- old legislation, rather than the consideration of new principles, new departures. The machinery part of legislation is much more their function than new endeavours, and for that reason I have sometimes been inclined to think that that Committee has occasionally gone outside its functions; they have sometimes been a little inclined to step over the border-line and deal with questions of principle and policy, when really it was their function to do nothing of the kind. But that is by the way. I only desire to state that I do not think the Bill will be in a better position if referred to the Statutes Revision Committee. The Council is quite able to judge of so simple a question as this Bill submits : Is it reasonable, right, or proper to regulate the money-lending business ? If it is, the Council can deal with every clause on its merits. If a clause is not strong enough it can be added to, and if they think a clause is too strong it can be struck out or amended. The whole matter is in the hands of the Council, and I trust it will give me a second reading. Bill read the second time. On the question, That the Bill be committed on the next sitting-day, The Hon. Mr. REEVES .- I move, That this Bill be referred to a Committee, for the reason a Committee were set up to deal with the question, papers and books could be produced to show that nothing of the kind exists in New Zealand as has been proclaimed by the Hon. Mr. Jones. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- The grounds on which the honourable gentleman has moved his amendment is that it reflects on certain people in Wellington. I have read the preamble, and it does not mention Wellington, nor does it mention any other part of the colony. What it mentions is that "certain persons trading as and known by the name of ' money-lenders ' inflict by harsh and unconscionable bargains great injury upon those who borrow money from them." It is only certain money-lenders, not all; and I think there is not in this Council -I do not believe the honourable gentleman himself would stand up here and say there is nobody in this colony who does extort more interest for money lent under certain circumstances than he ought to. I have known, myself, very hard cases of this nature. I remember long ago-and it turned my attention to the rate of interest for the first time-a case where a farmer borrowed £100 on his crop. He first went to a lawyer, who charged him 2½ per cent. procuration-fee and other fees, and the money-lender charged procuration-fee, and then he charged 10 per cent. It went on, and before the harvest was reaped the £100 had become £300. You will find this in the columns of the Timaru Herald, of which I was then a reporter. This is not an isolated case; there are any number of them. And it is no good for the honourable gentleman to say such things do not occur in this colony. Perhaps they do not occur in so aggravated a way as in the case quoted by the Hon. Mr. Jones ; but still these things do go on, and it is no use to say they do not, nor to try and make out that people in this colony are more moral than other people. They are not, and, consequently, when we know the evil exists it is our business and our duty here to regulate it, and to prevent, as far as possible, the existence of such an evil. I think the honourable gentleman, who usually takes a very broad view of things, and looks at things from a good-natured point of view, has in some way gone astray, as we all do sometimes to a certain extent. I remember the time when I was all alone in this Council, and, although the whole Council was against me, I believed then, and I believe still, that I was right. I am under the

impression the honourable gentleman is labouring under some misapprehension in this respect, and that he ought to withdraw the amendment and let the Bill go on, as is proposed by the Hon. the Minister. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- In support- ing the amendment of my honourable friend I would like to assure the Hon. the Minister op- posite that it is with no desire to delay the Bill in any way ; but I really think, from what I have heard from so many who have spoken on the proposed measure, that they do not really see the gravity, in the wrong direction, of some

<page:278>

mittee set up for the purpose of improving or amending the Bill, we should arrive at very much better results than we can in Committee of the whole House. I have myself one or two amendments I should like to propose, and I hope to convince honourable members who may be associated with me that these amendments would very much improve the Bill. I flatter myself that I could do that. The object of the Council should be to make the measure as perfect as possible. My honourable friend on my left, in speaking to the Bill, gave, as an object-lesson, the passing of a similar measure at Home ; but he did not recognise this : that that Bill has gone into force, and that it has been seen that there are some flaws in it, and, therefore if we, seeing these flaws, do not try to amend them by improving the Bill, we should not be doing what I think is the function of the Council. I do not know that honourable members have noticed that clause 3 really leaves behind the whole of the other parts of the Bill, and goes, I think, in a direction not intended-that is, in the direc- tion of making every one who lends money liable to have the transaction brought before the Court at any time, whether six months or five years after the transaction is closed. There is no limit of time. The honourable gentleman says " Hear, hear." That, I suppose, is to indi- cate that he approves of the Bill in its entirety. Surely the honourable gentleman could not argue that if an ordinary man-not technically a money-lender-lent money at 6 per cent. or 7 per cent. he should be liable to be brought before the Court at any time afterwards by the borrower, who possibly may have some private reasons for doing so, apart altogether from the question of the rate of interest, in which case the lender must go into Court and produce all particulars of the transaction, a transaction which may be six or seven years old. Surely no member of the Council will recognise a state of things like that as being in the interest of any person whatever. Honourable mem- bers do not appear to see that subsection (8) says, "the expression ' money-lender' includes any person who lends money for interest." There is no limitation as to interest, or time, or the definition of the lender, as in the interpretation clause provisions, and I say if you allow a Bill to pass in that form you are passing legislation that cannot be shown by any one, I think, to be `in the interest of the borrower, of the lender, or of the public. I shall support the amendment of my honourable friend, because I think there can be amendments put in the Bill which, when shown to the Council as a whole in Committee, will be recognised as improvements. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- The objections the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has made to allowing the Bill to be considered by the Council, without having it referred first of all to a Select Committee, are such as can be well dealt with by the Council itself. If it be proper to send this Bill to a Committee, a simple Bill like this-for it is a simple Bill, Hon. Mr. A. Lee Smith on the surface-I say, if it is necessary to send a Bill of this sort to a Select Committee, it is necessary that all Bills should be sent to a Select Committee. And what does it mean ? Why, the honourable gentleman must know that at this stage of the session it means that in all probability the measure will not be passed at all. We have, according to the honourable gentleman, to make a number of amendments in the measure, and it must be sent to a Select Committee in order that the amendments may be made with greater ease. And then the Bill, so amended, has to come before the Council, and we are to accept those amendments whether we like them or not. Now, I want to know how it will simplify the consideration of this Bill, and contribute to the passing of it, to send it to a Select Committee. The large majority of Bills are not sent to Select Committees. Measures that deal with stock are sent to the Stock Committee, and Bills dealing with industrial matters are sent to the Labour Bills

Committee. I can understand that ; but why should this Bill be sent to a Select Committee at this juncture more particularly ? moved the amendment knows as well as I do that the Committee would call for individuals to state the money-lenders' case, and for others on the other side to give evidence. Does he know what he is contracting for? Does he know that that means occupying weeks or months in taking evidence that will only demonstrate what we already know quite well ? We all know what is taking place, and I say that if one-tenth of what has been exposed at Home, under a searching investigation, takes place in this colony it is time we dealt with the matter-dealt with it vigorously and at once ; yet the honourable gentleman wishes to deal with it by putting it aside for a more convenient season. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- There is no idea of setting it aside. The Hon. Mr. JONES. - There is no doubt that if we send it to a Select Committee it means that we are not going to deal with it this session. The honourable gentleman who is in favour of that course knows this perfectly well. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- The honourable gentleman should not say that; it is misrepresenting -- The Hon. Mr. JONES .- I am not misrepresenting the honourable gentleman, and he should not interrupt me; I am referring more particularly to the Hon. Mr. Reeves, who does not want the Bill to pass. The Hon. Mr. Reeves has pointed out that the preamble casts a slur upon the money-lenders of the colony. It does nothing of the sort. It only refers to those who have been guilty of improper practices in respect to the lending of money. It does not refer to those who have acted straightforwardly, honourably, and liberally at all ; and, as to the others, I say that those whom the cap fits can put it on-they have the right to put it on, and it will be all the better that they should

<page:279>

vigorously. We ought not to deal with them as though we were afraid to touch them ; and I say that for grappling with this subject as they have done the colony is indebted to the Government, and the people will thank the Council if they take it up with a vigorous and not with a trembling hand. Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to. The Council adjourned at twelve minutes past four o'clock p.m. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Tuesday, 8th October, 1901. The Late Hon. J. Kerr-Land and Live-stock Auctions Bill-Library Fund-Supply. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. THE LATE HON. J. KERR. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER announced that he had received the following letter :- " To A. R. Guinness, Acting-Speaker, House from the associations and farmers' unions in of Representatives. " KINDLY convey to your fellow-members the sincere thanks of Mrs. James Kerr and family for their sympathy during their late bereavement. " Tainui Street, Greymouth, 18th September, 1901." On the motion of Mr. SEDDON (Premier) the letter was ordered to be entered on the Journals of the House. # LAND AND LIVE-STOCK AUCTIONS BILL. Mr. LAWRY (Parnell) brought up the report of the Joint Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee on this Bill. The Committee recommended that the Bill be not further proceeded with this session, but that it be forwarded to all agricultural societies, and their opinions asked thereon. He moved, That the report do lie on the table. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) moved, That the words "and that a copy of the Bill be also sent to the various farmers' unions " be added. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said, In this connection it seemed to him that something more was required than the ordinary motion, "That the report do lie on the table." The Committee went into this matter very exhaustively, and they were almost unanimously of opinion that an important Bill like this should stand over till next session, and in the meantime be circulated amongst the agricultural associations, and that they should be asked to express their opinion thereon. It seemed to him that a mere motion that the Bill do lie on the table was not giving effect to the wishes of the Committee. If he was in order he would move, That the recommendation of the Committee be adopted by the House. member for Waihemo to mean that he did not disapprove of the Bill being sent to agricultural associations, but he wished it sent also to the farmers' unions. Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the honourable gentleman was entirely right regarding his desire to move the words as an addition to the motion. Words

added. Or the question, That the motion as amended be agreed to, Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) moved as a further addition, That the report of the Committee be adopted. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) would like to ask would the motion now moved by the member for Franklin mean that the report would be printed as well as adopted ? Unless the Bill was printed and distributed, how could copies of the Bill be distributed amongst the agricultural societies ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the honourable member's amendment would not have the effect he desired to attain. What he would suggest to the honourable member would be this, that these words be added : "and that communications be sent, and replies be obtained respect to the Bill." If they adopted the report, it would stop there ; but if they altered the motion, as he had suggested, it would meet what the honourable gentleman wanted. Mr. MASSEY did not think the Premier quite understood what he (Mr. Massey) was driving at. As far as he understood, with the motion moved by the Chairman there was nothing to prevent the Bill going on the Order Paper, and being brought down in the ordinary manner, and that was what he (Mr. Massey) wanted to avoid. He wanted to make quite sure that the Bill should not be dealt with this session, that it should stand over till the next session, and that in the meantime the farmers' associations would be consulted. Mr. SEDDON .- You cannot stop that ; the Bill is in the possession of the House. Mr. MASSEY believed he was right in raising the point, and leaving it to Mr. Speaker to decide. Mr. SEDDON said the Bill was back again in the House, and the Committee might report against its further proceeding ; but that was only the recommendation of the Committee. The position was this: As a Government Bill it went back on the Order Paper. This could not be prevented. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER believed that to be the correct interpretation of the Standing Orders. If the amendment were carried, it would be an indication to the Government of the feeling of the House. Words added, and motion as amended agreed to. LIBRARY FUND. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) brought up the following report of the Joint Library Committee :-

<page:280>

be asked to secure the sanction of Parliament to the payment of the £500 Watson fine to the Library Fund." He moved, That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government for favourable consideration. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) did not think the Premier had the resolution of the Committee in his hand, and he was not quite sure that the honourable member heard the report read. The report dealt with the report on the Bank of New Zealand inquiry, which report recommended that the \$500 fine be paid into the Consolidated Fund. The Standing Orders of the House, as far as one could read them, provided that all fines should be paid into the Library Fund. They did not specify the amount or nature of the fine, but simply that all fines should be paid into the Library Fund. This fine-as he had said-had been paid into the Consolidated Fund. An Hon. MEMBER .- The Speaker said it was too big. Mr. J. ALLEN said that did not affect the question as he read the Standing Orders. Even 80, he thought the Speaker ought to have communicated his decision to the House. But, be that as it might, the impression of the Library Committee was that the fine ought to have been paid into the Library Fund. It could not now be paid into the Library Fund, as it had already been paid into the Consolidated Fund. There was a letter from the Premier saying it had been paid into the Consolidated Fund, and that without the sanction of Parliament that decision could not be altered. The resolution passed by the Library Committee asked the Premier to secure, if he could, the sanction of Parliament to the payment of the \$500 to the library. He imagined there would be no difficulty in getting that sanction, and that the sum would be placed on the supplementary estimates. He hoped the Premier would do so. He might mention that the library wanted money very badly. It was only right that this money should go to the library, and the Standing Orders, he believed, directed that the money should be paid into the Library Fund. He hoped the Premier would consent to the sum being placed on the supplementary estimates. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) said that the \$500 might very well be utilised in preparing a catalogue of the books in the library. They had, of course a catalogue now, but it was a catalogue that would give them no real information as to what books

were in the library. Stock had not been taken when preparing the last catalogue. Mr. J. ALLEN said that was going to be done next recess. Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked, Why was not stock taken before the country was put to the expense of £3,000 or €4,000 in the preparation of a catalogue listing all the books that had been in the library during the last twenty years or so ? If any member wanted a particular book, and took the trouble to look up the catalogue, they could not understand really Mr. Fisher's books catalogued had for years been lost. It had taken ten years to prepare a catalogue which, for all practical purposes, was largely useless. He was astounded that the Library Committee had not taken stock of the books in the library before preparing their list. As he had said, they had listed all the books which had been placed in the library during the last twenty or thirty years, without any reference whatever to the fact whether these books were still there. He was quite sure the Premier would be willing to give the Committee this £500. The honourable gentleman was never anxious to swell his surplus with extraneous sums of this sort. At any rate, if the money was required it ought to be devoted to this purpose. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) said, With regard to the unsatisfactory condition of the library there could be little doubt. There were about seventy millions of people in the United States of America, and the State Legislatures in that important country were constantly passing important laws, and yet there was not a single work in the library-not even a little hand-book-to inform them of what was being done in the States in these matters. They had the statutes of the States of Canada, but they had none of the statutes that were passed in the different State Legislatures of the United States, and he thought this was a matter which the Library Committee should take in hand at once and see that members get more up-to-date information as to what was taking place in that country. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said that the Library Committee had this £500 last year. Mr. J. ALLEN .- No. Mr. SEDDON said here was the item : " No. 23 : Parliamentary Library-Purchase of books, \$500." They had therefore had \$500 from the Consolidated Fund. Mr. PIRANI .- Is that Watson's fine ? Mr. SEDDON said, Certainly. To say they were going to particularly locate that €500 and identify it, after the lapse of these years, was nonsensical. The fact remained that the Library Committee had had many a \$500 since that, and they must recognise that they had no right at all as regards any particular \$500. If money was wanted for the library, and a good case was made out, it would be the duty of the Government to find it, but not to admit any special liability with respect to any particular \$500. According to the Standing Orders the fines that went to the library were -- Mr. J. ALLEN said, " All fines." Mr. SEDDON begged to assure the honourable member he was wrong. Mr. ALLEN said, No. Mr. SEDDON said he was. Standing Order No. 435 said, " Any member adjudged by the House for any of the above mentioned causes guilty of contempt shall be fined in a penalty at the discretion of the House not exceeding 150." These were only fines. Then, Standing Order 436 said " All fines are applied to the Library Fund."

<page:281>

" not exceeding £50." The fine referred to in this case was \$500. Mr. SEDDON said that proved his case. They could not possibly pay over to the Library Fund any fine that was over £50. They had had that out before. An Hon. MEMBER .- NO. Mr. SEDDON said, Yes, they had. How was it that the money had got to be paid to the Consolidated Fund? It was done because Mr. Speaker said it had to be paid there ; and, what was more, the Controller and Auditor-General, who was a higher controlling authority than Mr. Speaker, also said it had to be paid there. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) would like to point out that the Premier was quite wrong in his contention so far as Standing Order No. 435 was concerned, inasmuch as that Standing Order applied to members only. And Standing Order 436 had nothing to do with Standing Order 435, because it said "all fines," from whatever source they may come, whether from private individuals or from members, were to be paid to the Library Fund. There could be nothing clearer than that; and, if the English language meant anything, then Standing Order No. 436 meant that this \$500 must go to the Library Fund. Mr. SEDDON said, Well, it had been interpreted differently by Mr. Speaker and officers of

the House. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) did not see that this discussion served any useful purpose. The Premier had made up his mind, and it was nonsense to further discuss the matter ; it was mere beating of the air. If the honourable gentleman said " Yes," the Library Committee would get the money. If he said "No," the #cc-zero Library Committee would not get the money. That was an end of the matter. Mr. SEDDON had said they had already had it. Mr. FISHER said, If the honourable gentleman insisted that the Library Committee had had it, that was enough. The Library Committee had not already had it. The right honourable gentleman having got hold of £500, which was in reality the property of the Library Committee, he merely said now that he intended to retain it in spite of Standing Order No. 436. which said, without qualification of any kind whatsoever, that all fines were to be applied to the Library Fund. Here was a fine of \$500 which clearly, according to that Standing Order, ought to have gone to the Library Fund ; but the honourable gentleman plainly said, " I have possession of the money ; I intend to keep possession ; and the Library Committee shall not have it." There was an end of the matter. Motion agreed to. SUPPLY. CLASS VI .- CUSTOMS AND MARINE DEPARTMENTS. Customs offices and services, £35,176. 3.0. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked why the Collector of Customs at Auckland reflectors at the other large centres ? Mr. MILLS (Commissioner of Customs) said Mr. Rose, the Collector at Auckland, was the oldest officer in the service. He was formerly in receipt of £600 a year, but at the time of the reductions some years ago his salary was reduced to £550. It was thought that Mr. Rose was entitled to this increase as he was probably the only officer who had not had his salary reinstated since the 10-per-cent. reductions were made. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked if Mr. Rose would be entitled to a pension in the event of his retiring. Mr. MILLS said he would. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) did not believe in the system of granting increases of salary to officers just on the eve of their retiring, as the amount of the pension was computed on the amount of the salary received at the date of retirement. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) knew of similar cases where officers had had their salaries increased for two or three years before their retirement, so that the pension was estimated on the salary received at the time of their retirement. He thought it was unfair to the taxpayers of the colony that this should be permitted. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) asked why the cadet at New Plymouth had been reduced in salary . from £105 to \$95? Mr. MILLS said the Collector at Auckland was not now receiving as high a salary as was paid him years ago before the general reduction was made. The valuation of the pension was made on the average of the last three years' service. In reply to the honourable member for Egmont, he might state that the cadet mentioned was a new one, the other cadet having been promoted to be Clerk. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) entirely objected to this question of pensions. It seemed to him that an officer who was paid \$575 per annum did very well, and if an officer was paid a good salary while in the service he did not see why the country should be burdened with pensions afterwards. Civil servants ought to be in precisely the same position as servants employed by private people. It seemed to him, also, that many pensions went by favour in this colony. He believed nearly all the officers of the Customs Department retired on comfortable pensions, while in other departments only a favoured few got a pension. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) did not see that there was any good in finding fault with the law. That there were more in the Customs than in any other departments entitled to a pension arose from the fact that the Customs had always been under the central authority, whilst the officers in the various departments of the provinces were not entitled to pensions. If a Civil servant was entitled to a pension, he got it by law, and could claim it as a right. The Government could not give nor take away & pension. In respect to this increase, he might say that Mr. Rose was one of the best officers in

<page:282>

and, so far as he knew, Mr. Rose was as clear and active and efficient as ever he was. The Government had not laid down any hard or fast age-limit when an officer should retire on pension, but that matter was now under consideration. If such a rule were laid down it would mean that we would save some of the

higher salaries, and give juniors an opportunity to rise in the service. Mr. BOLLARD (Eden) was surprised to find honourable gentlemen objecting to the salary of the Collector of Customs at Auckland, because he was one of the oldest of Customs officers, and stood next the Secretary of Customs, and also because he had greater responsibility in Auckland than in any other port of the colony. This officer collected the largest Customs revenue in the colony. He knew Mr. Rose, and knew he was as active to-day as he was at forty years of age. Mr. FOWLDS (Auckland City) said that, as Mr. Rose's salary was reduced at the time of retrenchment, and as most of the other officers then reduced had had their salaries reinstated, Mr. Rose naturally thought he was suffering an injustice when his salary remained unaltered. He thought the Government had done right in granting this increase, but they might as well have gone the whole length, and re-placed the salary at £600 instead of £575. But there was involved in this question a larger one, that had been touched upon by various speakers, and that was the question of the retirement of officers at a given age. He admitted that Mr. Rose was a very competent officer. But he wished also to draw attention to the position of the Landing Surveyor at Auckland, who received \$350; that was less than the salary paid to the officer holding a similar position in Wellington. He believed the Landing Waiter at Auckland had seen longer service than the Landing Waiter at Wellington. The Landing Waiter at Auckland only received the same salary that he got ten years ago, and the salary he now received was £50 a year less than that paid to his predecessor when the present officer took charge ten years ago. If the Government had carried out the regulations this officer would have received a larger salary years ago. As to officers retiring at a certain age, he thought the regulations ought to be observed faithfully. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £1, as an instruction to the Government that all officers over the age-limit of retirement should be retired. Mr. E. G. ALLEN (Waikouaiti) did not intend to oppose the increase to the Collector. He desired to heartily support what had been said by the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) with respect to the Landing Surveyor at Auckland. He was a very old and very efficient officer. Officers holding similar positions in other ports had received increases, and he did not see why this officer should have been overlooked. He hoped provision for an increase of this officer's salary would be made on the supplementary estimates. Mr. Seddon see why an active and experienced officer should be retired against his will. He had no objection to a man retiring if he wished to do so at a certain age, but he did not think an officer should be retired while he was fitted to discharge his duties efficiently. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) denied that he wished to repudiate a contract. He had merely given his opinion with regard to the general question of pensions. He did not agree with the amendment of the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) as to the compulsory retirement of officers at a certain age. He thought that in the case of a strong, healthy man his matured judgment at the age fixed for retirement was of great value to the State. Of course, there were men in the service who would be useless at the age of sixty. He thought, after all, it was a question for the decision of the Government whether or not a public servant was to continue in a responsible position; and if he was not, then the Government should have the backbone to retire him. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) supported the amendment of the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds). The honourable member for Waihemo would surely agree that whatever the rule it ought to be uniform. The regulations said Civil servants of a particular rank should retire at the age of sixty. Here was an officer over sixty who ought to be retired for this reason, if for no other: that his non-retirement was unjust to those below him who were entitled to promotion. It did not only refer to younger men, but also to other men of higher rank than these young men who might be denied their legitimate promotion by being compelled to retire at sixty in a subordinate rank. The only way to act honourably, as far as the Government were concerned, and justly so far as Parliament was concerned, was to apply the rule equally to all. Then there could be no charge of favouritism. It had been bruited abroad in non-official circles that there was an intention to either separate the Customs and Marine Departments and appoint a responsible head to the Marine Department, or to appoint an assistant

secretary in the Customs Department to assist the Under-Secretary for Customs in the administration of both departments. The increase in the work of both departments justified such a step, but the work of the Marine Department had increased in greater proportion than the Customs. Formerly there was an Under-Secretary for Marine, Mr. L. H. B. Wilson, and the work of the department had now grown to such proportions that there ought to be a separate head, acting either in conjunction with Mr. Glasgow, or independent of him and acting under the direction of the Minister of Marine. He would like to know whether the meditated intention of the Government would be given effect to or not. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) said it was a puzzle to him, as it must be to other members, to understand on what system or basis these salaries

<page:283>

vercargill he found the Clerk and warehouse- age still had large cares of family upon them, and he thought in this country, where there keeper received an Irishman's rise of £20, while was a declining birth-rate and marriage-rate, the next two officers received substantial in- such questions as this should be looked at from creases. Then he found that the Customs a family point of view. However, the first Expert at \$800 got greater remuneration than question should be, was a man fit for the posi- the Secretary and Inspector of Customs, who tion, and able to do the work? He admitted stood at £650, while the Chief Clerk got an that the responsibility of deciding whether a advance of £25. If there was a system at all man was fit or not rested with the Minister; it must be a haphazard system. He thought but, where fitness and efficiency continued, he the estimates ought to be accompanied by a statement showing how long the officers had did not think age should be a barrier. Person- been in the service, and the grounds on which ally, he should have no alternative but to vote against the amendment. the increases or decreases were made. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) said he was opposed plain that he did not say he would take this to this increase of salary, but at the same time he could not see his way to support the amend- as an indication that a man should be retired ment proposed. He intended to vote against after thirty years of service. Age and length any increases in salaries to heads of departments of service went together, and a man could only or to the more highly-paid officers of the Go- be retired after thirty years of service. vernment. He considered Civil servants with over \$500 a year should be satisfied, especially one officer in the service more than another entitled to an increase, that officer was Mr. when there were hundreds of clerks in the ser- Rose, who was actually receiving £600 per an- vice who could barely afford to keep a decent num prior to 1888, when there was much less ceat on their backs. Nor did he see why in- sidious distinctions should be made. No ad- work attached to the position than there was dition was made to the salaries of the Collectors now. He could not support the amendment of the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds). at Wellington, Dunedin, or Lyttelton. If an increase of salary were allowed to the Collector Mr. Rose at present was receiving £550 a year, and if he retired he would be entitled to a of Customs at Auckland, all the Collectors at pension of £400. The officer who took his the other centres would have a cause of com- plaint, and naturally would consider themselves place would receive a salary of £500; so that, looking at the question from a financial point entitled to a similar increase next year. As to the proposition that an officer should be retired of view, to retire Mr. Rose meant an annual expenditure of \$900 instead of £550. They had when he reached a particular age, he did not agree with that. He thought there could be no contract with younger men, and he thought the member for Auckland City ought to remem- no hard-and-fast rule respecting the age at ber that we were here as trustees for the public, which a man should be retired. An officer should only be retired when his employer began and it was our duty to look at these things from a business point of view, and, so long as to find that he was no longer capable of per- forming his duties and earning the salary paid an officer did his duty well and efficiently, it was the duty of the Government to keep him in the to him. As regards pensions, he thought people service, unless the officer himself wished to retire. earning good salaries should be able to make

provision for themselves. If this amendment the Minister would take a note of the fact that were lost, he intended to move that the £25 increase be deducted. It seemed to him an ex- the messenger at Auckland was getting 6s. a day. He would like to say, in regard to the traordinary thing that Civil servants with £550 general question, that this department collected a year should require their salaries raised, and three-fourths of the whole revenue of the colony, yet working-men on the Rimutaka incline, con- and did it in a most economical manner, and tending with a rigorous climate, were expected had shown last year a decrease in the cost of out of 7s. a day, less the time lost through the management. He thought these were salient inclemency of the weather, to maintain their families and themselves. points in the apportionment of salaries. No Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) said, With doubt the claims of the younger generation had regard to the amendment proposed, to reduce to be considered in the question of retirement, the item by £1, he was sorry to hear the inter- but the honourable member must remember jection of the Premier to the effect that he was that there was no other Customs Department except the Government department, and he prepared to accept a general instruction that made bold to say that a man who had served all officers who had been in the service for the Government for fifteen or twenty years was thirty years, or who had attained the regula- tion age, should be retired. Did the honour- absolutely incapacitated for private employ- able gentleman think an officer was unfit for ment. In regard to the increase of salaries, further service when he reached the age of there was the head of the department, the forty-seven years? Even at the age of sixty, Secretary for Customs, who was also Secretary for Marine. He was the lowest paid officer at many men were better fitted for work that required ripe experience and knowledge of the head of a department in the service. details than they were as younger men. He would instance the ages of Lord Roberts, Glad- Minister to explain how these Collectors were stone, Bismarck, and others. Members should paid-whether according to ability, length of Mr. SEDDON (Premier) would like to ex- Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said, If there was Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) hoped Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) would like the

<page:284>

ing at the estimates, it did not appear that they were paid according to the amount collected. He thought there should be some arrangement for paying Collectors at the various ports ac- cording to the amount of work they did. Mr. W. FRASER (Wakatipu) said this was a matter in regard to which the Government ought to have given a lead to the House. He did not think it right that the House should, upon a side issue, decide the question as to the retirement of officers at a certain age. Mr. MILLS (Minister of Customs) said, With regard to the first question raised, about Mr. Rose, he would point out to the House that that officer was reduced in 1888, and he had never received any advance in his salary since that day. He was a good officer. Not having received a rise since that year, he thought the proposed increase might be agreed to. As to the question of retirement as provided for by the Act of 1866, he might point out to the Com- mittee that it had never been rigidly observed by any Government. It would be very difficult sometimes to fill a gap in the service caused by the retirement of experienced officers. In the case of Mr. Rose, if they retired him they would have to pay him a pension of £376 per annum, and it would be well for members to think over both sides of the question before voting on the amendment. With regard to the statement made as to young men coming forward, there certainly was reason in that ; but there were many of them who thought they should re- ceive certain positions who, it would be found on inquiry, were not entitled to them, even supposing the older officers were retired. Mr. Carter, the Landing Surveyor in Welling- ton, was senior in the service to Mr. Sibbald, who held a similar office in Auckland, Mr. Car- ter having joined in 1865, and Mr. Sibbald in 1869. With regard to pensions, there were now eighteen officers in the department who were entitled to a pension, and the honourable member for Masterton seemed to find fault with these men. Why should he, seeing that the contract was made when they entered the service? And no Government could ignore these contracts. The honourable member for Kaiapoi had

referred to the want of system about the salaries. In explanation, he might say that some of the figures in the estimates were probably somewhat misleading. they were framed some retirements had taken place, and the officers who had been appointed to fill the vacant positions were not entitled to such high salaries as the retired officers had been receiving. For instance the officer at Invercargill, instead of receiving £425, was only receiving £380. With reference to the messengers, their pay had been increased this year. In the Customs Department they were paid for seven days a week, and therefore the pay looked smaller than it really was. With respect to the matter referred to by the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher), it was under consideration by the Government, and it would be decided in Cabinet whether to separate the Customs and Marine Departments or otherwise. Mr. Flatman Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said this latter information was perfectly satisfactory. But, to show to what an absurd degree this seniority idea was carried in the public service, he might state that there were seven officers on the list senior to Mr. Carter who were no more fit to fill these high positions than were the men at the bottom of the list. He did not want to give their names. Two of them were in Dunedin, one at Greymouth, one at Nelson, one at Invercargill, one at Auckland, and one at Port Chalmers. They were all higher in seniority to Mr. Carter, of Wellington, but not one of them was fit to fill a high position. He asked, therefore, whether the special fitness of an officer was to count for nothing. Of course, he knew the honourable gentleman could only answer in one way, and he did not want to press his question to the injury of any man in the service. Yet, here was an officer of Mr. Carter's ability, with a salary of £375, who could get no further forward because of the men of less ability who stood in his way on account of their seniority. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) believed this was one of the most important questions touched on that afternoon. As an able writer and administrator had pointed out, the bane of the public service in England was the advancement of officers only by seniority. Would any private business firm or trading corporation follow such a method as that ? Certainly not. He altogether objected to increasing the salaries of those occupying ornamental positions, but he hoped the Minister would see his way before another year passed to recognise the abilities of the gentleman in charge of this department. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) asked, What was the position the Premier intended to take up with regard to this amendment ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, the Government having had an expression of opinion from honourable members, he would now suggest to the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) to withdraw his amendment. It was clear that the responsibility of any action in this connection must rest with the Government, and it was the intention of the Government that a large number of the older officers of the service should be retired. Discretion would, of course, have to be exercised. It was very hard on the junior officers when old men were kept on in the service and were not being retired as was intended by law. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) would support the increase to the Collector at Auckland, who he knew to be one of the most capable officers in the Customs Department. It must not be forgotten that about fourteen years ago Mr. Rose was receiving a higher salary than was proposed to be given to him to-day. At the same time he considered Mr. Sibbald, the next officer, was entitled to some increase of salary owing to the very large increase of business at the Port of Auckland. He believed that ability should govern promotion rather than length of service. He was not in favour of the compulsory retirement of all officers at sixty years of age. He believed that a man like Mr. Rose

<page:285>

fitted to perform their work at their present age the temptation. than many younger men. To be deprived of " temptation " or the word " bribe," and he did the mature experience of Mr. Rose would be a distinct loss to the colony and to the public not hint at either. service. On general principles he was in favour of the retirement of public servants at or a had forgotten what he said. It would, of course, be impossible to get from the honourable member what he really did say; but if he attended with mischievous results. any honourable

member knew of any circum- Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) said he had a prior stances such as the honourable member for amendment to move. He moved, That the item Auckland City had related about a public "Collector of Customs, Auckland, \$575," be re- officer, he was not doing his duty unless he daced by \$25, in order that the salary might be exposed the conduct of the persons he hinted brought back to the same level as the salaries at. It was a pity the honourable member was not careful in making insinuations about the of the Collectors at the other ports of the colony. He did not intend to vote for the amendment way public officers carried out their duties. to reduce the vote by £1 as an indication that He (Mr. Pirani) believed that Mr. Rose was a man should be retired when he reached the a straightforward public officer, and he would age of sixty years, for the reason that there not believe that any one had ever attempted to bribe him to do what was not his duty. were many men at seventy years of age who were far better fitted for business than others Mr. Rose was one of those officers whose salaries were reduced in 1888. It had not yet been at nfty-five years of age, and in these cases he brought up to the original amount, and the thought it was just as well to leave the respon- House should therefore support the proposed sibility with the Minister in charge of the de- increase of £25. He hoped the honourable partment, who was better able to decide the member who moved the reduction would not question than members of the House. press it. He would like to ask the Minister if Mr. MONK (Waitemata) felt that some in- Mr. Mckellar was retired because he was over justice was exhibited by the desire of honourable age, and, if not, for what reason was he retired ? members to reduce this vote. He thought it would be an ungracious act if they tried to re- dices this officer, who had given the country said was that pressure had been improperly exercised in Mr. Rose's case-and be presumed forty years' efficient service, when an increase of #25 was put on his salary. He felt and said also in other cases. Money was not offered, but there was pressure exercised of another kind. this as one who, in company with the Pre- mier, had voted for retrenchment, by which this officer's salary had been reduced, in 1888. One to support the amendment of the member for argument was used by some members that this Kaiapoi. He did not think the statement ch■cer was paid more than other officers in which had been made with regard to the amount of work done was borne out by the similar situations. His answer was to ask mem- bers to find out the amount of 'work they had facts. He thought the Collectors of Customs at Auckland, Dunedin, Wellington, and Christ- done, and their length of service as compared church ought to be placed on the same footing. with that of Mr. Rose. Mr. MILLS was not personally acquainted That was why he protested against the increase with all the officers in the different depart- proposed to be given to this officer. He wanted ments in the colony, but he believed that the to know the principle which guided the Minis- otheers who occupied high positions were men ter with reference to these increases. If it of long service, of strict integrity, and who applied to the increased work at Auckland, then did their duty to the colony. In reply to that principle was not applied to other places. the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher), he wished to say that seniority curred in the service to which officers were did not always guide appointments : it never appointed, and those officers carried with them had ; special fitness, with merit and seniority, the salaries they had been receiving. were always considered. He had in his hand a list of all the officers in his department, and Minister to state where the Chief Clerk at Dun- edin, who received a salary of £390, had gone ? there was quite a number of cases of men who had advanced but little since they entered the Had he been appointed Collector at Timaru ? service, but they were satisfied, for the reason that they had fair salaries. the same salary he received at Dunedin. He Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said the member carried with him the salary he enjoyed in the for Auckland City (Mr. Napier) had told the larger centre. In answer to the honourablo House that he knew of instances in which member for Palmerston, Mr. Mckellar had attempts had been made to bribe the Collector been retired on account of being over age. at Auckland. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) said he did not forcible instance of the manner in which the Government were carrying out the retirement Say SO. Mr. PIRANI said, Well, the honourable system. Mr. Mckellar was an officer than gentleman hinted at it. He

said that, notwithstanding whom there was no more efficient in the service, standing that inducements had been offered to and he knew of any number of less efficient officials. Mr. NAPIER said he never used the word Mr. PIRANI said the honourable gentleman Mr. NAPIER might explain that what Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) said he intended Mr. MILLS said, Vacancies sometimes occur. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) wished the Mr. MILLS said he had gone to Timaru, at Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said this was a

<page:286>

cers who were retained. It was time some proper system of retirement was introduced instead of men being picked out for retirement haphazard. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) failed to see what rule the Minister followed in regard to advances of salary in this department. For instance, more duty was collected in Wellington than Auckland, yet the Collector in the latter port was now receiving a higher salary, and it was proposed this year to still further increase him. It seemed to him that no time should be lost in appointing a Civil Service Board which would relieve Ministers and members, and be better in every way for the service. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said the worst feature in regard to the increase in the salary of the Auckland officer was that it confirmed him in his position, for he could not well be retired next year on the ground of being over age after increasing his salary this year because of his great efficiency. The case of Mr. McKellar, referred to by the member for Palmerston, opened up a whole train of questions in regard to retirement of officials which he was afraid to touch for fear of injuring any of the officials concerned. Mr. McKellar was an officer against whose efficiency no word could be spoken, yet he was retired on the ground that he was beyond the regulation age-sixty years. In Auckland there was a man who was also beyond the regulation age, but he was not only retained in his position, but his salary was increased by £25. It was an axiom in the department, and had been in the country for the last thirty years, that special fitness was the first consideration in promoting the higher officers of the service, and this branch of the service in particular. That principle had not been observed in this department during the past year, and he asked the Minister to see to it that in future the rule that fitness was the first consideration should be carried out in the making of these high appointments. The Committee divided on the question, "That the item 'Auckland-Collector, \$575,' be reduced by \$25." AYES, 21. Allen, J. Meredith Hall Herries Russell, G. W. Arnold Bennet Hogg Thompson, R. Collins Hornsby Thomson, J. W. Kaihau Ell Tellers. Buddo Flatman Laurensen Gilfedder Mackenzie, T. Millar. Graham NOES, 31. Heke Allen, E. G. Palmer Bollard Houston Parata Carneross Lang Seddon Carroll Lawry Stevens Lethbridge Colvin Ward Duncan McGowan Willis Fisher McKenzie, R. Witheford. Fowlds Me Lachlan Hall-Jones McNab Tellers. Hanan Mills Massey Hardy Napier Monk. Majority against, 10. Mr. Pirani Amendment negatived. Amendment to reduce the vote by £1 negatived. Vote, £35,176, agreed to. Miscellaneous services, Vote, Customs : £5,010, agreed to. Marine and Harbours, £31,810. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked for particulars of the several items of contingencies. Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister of Marine) said the amount expended last year as contingencies under the head of "Harbours" was £338, made up as follows :- Removal of wreck of "Waipara" 71 .. Repairing Napier, Bluff, and Hokitika Lighthouses 41 .. Freight and cartage of stores 37 Removal of piles from Opawa River 29 .. Removal of snags from small harbours 23 .. Harbour telephones 20 Sounding Okarito and Rangitikei Rivers .. 18 Travelling - expenses of Mr. Perham, reporting re Opunake Harbour .. 17 .. Cutting channel at Okarito 15 Maintaining Riwaka lights 10 Expenses of officers reporting re wharves at Awanui and Puponga 10 Looking after harbour gear, Rangitikei .. Water-rates, Nelson 6 Plan, &c., of Foxton Wharf extension 3 Repairs to Okarito Wharf 3 Sundries 23 .. £338 Then, under "Lighthouse : Other charges." the contingencies amounted to £332. The following were the items :- 41 Storage on oil . Wages of workmen at Marine Store 67 .. Cartage of stores 45 .. New drainage at Marine Store .. 3.8 . Freight on stores 36 . Medical examination of candidates for appointments .. 10 Insurance on stores 9 .. Shoeing station horses S .. Nelson Lighthouse telephone 7 .. Magazines for lighthouses . Planting sand-grass at Manukau 6 Pigeon mail-service Sundries 11 £332

Under the "Inspection of Machinery and Survey of Steamers" the contingencies amounted to \$327, made up as follows :- £ Wages of temporary clerks 200 . . . Advertising 5.3 Telephones 20 . . . Books and instruments 26 . . . One iron safe .. 12 Legal expenses 5 . Sundries . . . £327

<page:287>

Under " Protection of Fish and Oysters " the contingencies were £211, made up as follows :- Wages of temporary Inspectors 142 Travelling-expenses 44 . . . Rewards 13 .. Sundries 12 . . . £211 Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) said there did not appear to be anything on the estimates for the purpose of port signalling from lighthouses at the principal ports. Mr. HALL-JONES said the department had written to the Board of Trade asking for their advice as to the best class of rocket for fog- signaling, and he proposed, when the information came to hand, to place a sum of £200 on the supplementary estimates for this purpose. Mr. MILLAR thought the Minister would agree that it was necessary that all the light- houses for ports should be equipped with a proper method for signaling during fogs. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Yes; and it was proposed to supply the rockets to the stations where they were most required. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) noticed on the estimates some very small sums, such as £25, as he could in this very desirable work. \$30. and so on, for salaries of signal-men. Surely this was not the total salary received by what had been done in regard to the fish- these men. Were they not employed in some other work by some other department for which they received pay ? Mr. HALL-JONES said the work of signal- had been the result of the experimental trawl- ing at places like Mokau and Opunake was ing, whether it had been satisfactory, and carried out by men who had some other avoca- tion, and this small salary was merely supple- mentary to what they received for their other also like to know if any regulations were to work. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked what steps the honourable gentleman was taking to put the dredging industry on a more permanent footing. Had the Minister any legislation in hand for this purpose ? He also wished to know if the Minister was taking any steps to have all accidents on board ships reported to the depart- ment. At present, unless a man was actually killed on board a ship, no report was made to the department. Mr. HALL-JONES said, With regard to the question of engineers upon dredges, he was inquiry, before which any person could give bringing in a short Bill which would get over in certain districts to stop trawling. He thought the difficulty, provided that a first-class en- gineer were placed in charge of each dredge. Then, in the Shipping and Seamen Bill, which was being circulated, there were very much done, and the report showed that in some parts more stringent provisions dealing with acci- dents on board ships. He hoped to get that Bill through during the present session. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) noticed that vate venture. He might explain that the vote there was a pound-for-pound subsidy paid to- wards the Hokitika fish-hatcheries, and that the sum of #46 was expended last year. He not proposed to take any vote for carrying on further trawling this year. With regard hoped the Minister would meet the claims of other places for a similar pound - for - pound to the Dunedin Hatchery, at first a site was selected at Purakanui, but the expert evidence subsidy. laid before him showed that the water there Mr. HALL-JONES said that any application was impure and unfitted for the purpose. Ex- from districts instituting new fish - hatcheries perts at Dunedin have since recommended a site would receive due consideration. Mr. J. W. THOMSON (Clutha) said it was. quite a common thing for fishermen carrying on their avocation at the mouth of some of our large rivers to find in their nets very large trout, weighing, sometimes, up to 20 lb. The regula- tions under the Fisheries Act provided that fishermen were liable to a fine if trout were found in their possession either dead or alive. He thought this was rather hard, as it was im- possible to prevent the trout getting into their nets. These large trout were full-grown, and the rivers were better without them. Mr. HALL-JONES said he would look into the matter, as he could understand that the law might be acting somewhat harshly. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said, In refer- ence to the pound-for-pound subsidy for Hoki- tika Acclimatisation Society, he trusted the Minister would favourably consider the applica- tion of any other society for similar help. He believed that last year the Auckland

society, which was doing very good work in stocking all the rivers in the King-country, and thereby increasing the value of the Crown lands there, applied for a subsidy and were unable to get it. He trusted if they made an application now the Minister would encourage them as much Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) would like to know hatchery to be established near Dunedin, and whether this vote of £1,000 was for that purpose. He would also like to know what could they expect in the future better fish-supplies owing to this experiment? He would be framed to prevent trawling within a certain distance of the shore, as the fishermen complained that their work was being interfered with by the trawling near the shore. Mr. HALL-JONES said, With regard to the complaint that trawling had caused the destruction of young fish, a report had been received from a Committee of the House recommending that careful inquiry should be made so as to ascertain whether damage had been done by trawling, and he had promised that Mr. Ayson should visit the districts and hold an evidence. In his opinion, it would be necessary the results of the experimental trawling had been satisfactory. Reports had been presented last year and this year showing what had been of the colony there were good fishing-grounds which would justify any one in starting a pri- before the House was for the payment of expenses incurred since the 31st March. It was <page:288>

almost perfect for the rearing of fish, and a site had been obtained there for the erection of the necessary buildings, and this vote was for the purpose of erecting the building. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) would like to ask the Minister if any regulations were likely to be made to regulate the distance from which trawlers should work off the shore. Mr. HALL-JONES said that this was one of the questions to be inquired into by the Inspector. The matter would be dealt with when his report was received. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) asked the Minister whether anything was being done to protect two or three aged fishermen who had been earning their livelihood at the mouth of the Wairau River for the last thirty years, and who were threatened with prosecution and the destruction of their industry at the hands of the Acclimatisation Society, because, along with other fish, they caught a few vagrant trout which got into the nets, and which they could not keep out. Mr. HALL-JONES said that what he had heard from the member for Clutha and the last honourable gentleman was the first intimation he had had of any prosecution of sea-fishermen for finding trout in their nets. He would inquire into the matter, and endeavour to have this grievance remedied. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) said that the vote of \$150 for the collection and distribution of trout-ova was a ridiculously small sum for this purpose. Mr. HALL-JONES would like to interrupt the honourable gentleman to explain that when starting operations at the Hakataramea Salmon-hatchery applications were made by some acclimatisation society for a supply of trout-ova, and they collected a great many thousands of trout-ova at this hatchery. This expense was incurred in doing that, but it would be recouped by the sale of the ova. Mr. WILFORD said he wished to refer to the general question. He understood it was the intention of the Government to foster by every means in their power the tourist traffic, and he would tell the Minister that people came from the whole of the British dominions and from English-speaking countries at the present time to enjoy the trout fishing of New Zealand. He knew instances of people coming from America and England for this purpose. He thought the country did not realise the tremendous asset it possessed in the trout streams of New Zealand, and that the Government did not realise the great impetus that could be given to the tourist traffic by some small assistance. He wanted to ask the Government if they would see next year that a sum of money was placed upon the estimates for the purpose of helping acclimatisation societies to fully equip and stock the various rivers in the colony. Experts recommended that the rainbow trout was the most suitable, at all events, for the North Island rivers. It increased very prolifically, and provided splendid sport. Mr. Hall-Jones 8.0. supported the placing of a larger sum on the estimates for the introduction of salmon and other ova. If the Minister would confine his vote to such an effort as that it would perhaps be advisable. He should also use some of his trawling-gear on Lake Ellesmere, and clear it of the weeds that at present

make fish- ing on it an impossibility. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) did not think the country had gained much by the trawling ex- peditions, except to prove that fish were no: found in the deep water in such quantities as was hoped ; nor yet had they found the new varieties that were expected. All the trawling had scarcely brought to light anything that was not previously known. The Minister, he thought, should ascertain how near to the shore trawling should be permitted. The breeding-grounds of the fish were really so limited that the Government should find out what extent of water adjacent to the shore should be reserved for breeding-grounds. Mr. LANG (Waikato) wished to impress on the Minister the importance of aiding acclima- tisation societies by granting a sum to help them in their work in distributing fish through- out the rivers of New Zealand. This was par- ticularly desirable in parts of the country that were not now settled, such as the King-country. On the estimates there was a sum for aiding the Hokitika hatchery, and he hoped the Minis- ter would see his way to put a sum on the supplementary estimates to aid the Auckland Acclimatisation Society in the way of stocking the various rivers in that province with fish. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) indorsed the re- marks of the honourable member for Waitemata with regard to trawling, and hoped the inquiry promised by the Minister would be carried out at an early date. There was no doubt serious harm was now being done to the fish by the trawling that went on in the harbours and close to the shore. Steam-trawling was at present prohibited in Ireland within three miles of the coast, and in Scotland the Fisheries Board had power to prohibit trawling within a certain distance of the coast, and, he thought, in all the harbours. He was inclined to think the sooner that was done in New Zealand the better. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) suggested the desirableness of importing the ova of deep-sea fish from the North Sea, such as herring and cod. If these fish were introduced to New Zealand waters they would be a source of great wealth to the country. Mr. HALL-JONES said the Government had written to the Agent-General, asking him to make inquiries with reference to the best class of deep-sea fish ova to be obtained, and as to the best way of obtaining it, and of forwarding the same to New Zealand. This vote was for the purpose of making the necessary prepara- tions for the reception of this ova. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said he had no objection to a moderate expenditure for intro- ducing salmon-ova, but he thought the sugges- tion of the member for Lyttelton was far more important. If they could only introduce the

<page:289>

that would be a matter well worthy the con- sideration of the House. Mr. HALL-JONES said, If any application were made to the Government for a subsidy, and the circumstances justified it, he would recommend that it be granted. Vote, £31,810, agreed to. Government steamers, £13,500. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) desired information with respect to certain trips of the Government steamers "Tutanekai" and ". Hinemoa." He might mention that the " Tutanekai " made a trip to the Macquarie Islands in March, 1899, in search of the schooner "Gratitude." She brought back from those islands 86 tuns of penguin-oil. The " Hinemoa" also made a trip to those islands in April, 1900, and brought away 42 tuns of oil, for which the freight paid was £74. The cost to the country of that visit to the Mac- quarie Islands was £300, so that the colony lost \$226. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) asked for details of the item, " Working-expenses within or outside the colony, £17,000." Mr. HALL-JONES said, In reference to the trip of the "Hinemoa" to the Macquarie Islands: In the first place, a boat called the ". Gratitude " had been sent to the islands and had not been heard of for some months, and it was supposed she was wrecked at the Mac- quaries ; and, as there was very little in the shape of provisions on the islands, the trip of the "Hinemoa" was justifiable. They did find the "Gratitude" wrecked on the islands, and the crew had been living on the small quantity of provisions that were there. The second trip was necessary because the owner of the boat could not get any vessel to go with provisions to the men working on the islands. The reason only a small quantity of oil was brought back was that the captain had in- structions not to wait if the weather was bad, and owing to the very bad weather they were unable to take on board a larger quantity. The balance of the oil was there to this day. Now, the following were the details of the £17,000 for working-expenses: £18,794 was

expended last year out of the two votes, " Working - expenses," and "Repairs," et cetera. These were the items : First, in re- gard to the "Tutanekai " : - d. B. Provisions 1,786 13 4 .. Coal 1,886 14 11 . . Wages of crew 4,128 12 4 .. Stores 1,238 5 6 Repairs 489 5 4 Extra labour 350 17 3 Washing ship's linen 54 16 7 Expenses putting vessel on slip 175 0 4 Maintenance of crew injured on 14 vessel 5 0 Medical attendance on crew 47 0 7 Medicines 3 48 11 . Artificial arm for member of crew 17 17 0 Repairs to Hokianga Wharf 23 0 0 VOL. CXIX .- 18. service of vessel 0 0 18 .. 17 10 0 Towage of vessel .. 24 5 3 Sundries . . £10,321 5 8 Then, the " Hinemoa " was as follows :- 8. d. Provisions . 1,521 4 10 .. Coal 9 10 . 1,181 .. Wages of crew .. 3,559 15 4 .. Stores 971 10 3 . Repairs, &c. 862 13 8 Extra labour, loading, &c. 1 10 110 Expenses putting vessel on slip .. 80 19 6 Washing ship's linen 27 14 .. Towage of vessel to and from slip 0 0 7 Medicines 9 9 10 Medical attendance on crew 3 11 8 Maintenance of injured seamen . . 29 6 2 Adjustment of compasses 5 5 6 . Repairs to Hokianga Wharf 52 10 5 Gratuity 0 5 0 New boat 23 12 6 Sundries 8 17 2 £8,472 16 3 Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) asked why it cost 50 per cent. more this year for pro- visioning the " Hinemoa " than it did last year. For the year just finished the amount was £1,521, while for the previous year it was £1,005. Mr. HALL-JONES said he could only ac- count for it by the fact that some of the accounts for the previous year had not been sent in by the 31st March of that year, and they had been included in this £1,521. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked at what salary Captain Post was appointed commander of the "Tutanekai " on the death of Captain Fair- child. Mr. HALL-JONES .- £350. Mr. GUINNESS asked if the salary had been increased since. Mr. HALL-JONES said it had been increased to £375. Mr. GUINNESS asked if the Minister did not consider that a very small increase to an officer of Captain Post's long service. Mr. HALL-JONES admitted it was small, but it was higher than that received by the captain of the "Hinemoa." He proposed to give each of these officers an increase, so as to more nearly approximate the salaries paid by private employers. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked if the Minister did not think it would be better to get rid of the " Hinemoa" altogether, and hire or charter a vessel when occasion required. He thought the "Hinemoa " was costing the country too much for the work she did. Then, he thought there should be more particulars of the trips made by these vessels. The Minister should furnish details of what the vessels were doing, the time occupied in the trips, the recoveries from pas- sengers and on account of cargoes carried for private individuals, and so forth.

<page:290>

information as to what was being done by these vessels, and who had free trips on them. He believed charges were made in some cases and not in others, and he would like to know why. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said a comparison of the expenditure of this year and last year was very interesting. This year the "Tutane- kai " cost nearly £2,000 more than last year, which seemed a very extraordinary thing ; be- cause, under any circumstances, the vessel had to be maintained all the year round. He admitted that the trip to the South Sea Islands last year was exceptional, but it could hardly involve an extra expenditure of \$2,000. The "Hinemoa " also showed a large increase. He would also like the Minister, as he had given details of expenditure, to explain what the receipts were. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said, in regard to the trip to the South Sea Islands, which nobody begrudged to the Premier, there was a current report that between thirty and forty persons not in any way connected with the Govern- ment of the country were on board on that trip. Mr. HALL-JONES .- No, that was incorrect. Mr. MEREDITH said he would like the Minister to rise in his place and contradict that statement. He would also like to see the items of expenditure for that trip, and the item of the income derived from these passengers, given to the House. He thought the House was entitled to that information, in order to correct reports that had been circulated inside and outside the Chamber. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) hoped the Minister would give some information in regard to the cost of this trip to the South Sea Islands. According to the correspondence with the Auditor-General it cost the sum of £1,151, of which £379 was for wages and the rest for provisions. Mr. HALL-JONES said, If the honourable gentleman had got the Auditor General's

state- ment he could reckon that he had an account of every penny the trip cost. He would point out to the honourable gentleman who had spoken just now that in the estimates this year there was a larger sum put down for alterations to the "Hinemoa," which had been allowed to run down somewhat, because it was considered that the whole of the Government work could be done by the "Tutanekai." However, it had been shown conclusively that the work could not be done by the "Tutanekai," and, gradually doing a little each year, he had been making improvements in the "Hinemoa." Provision was made in the estimates for a new stern-shaft and a new deck for her, and he did not know but that provision would be made for steam steering- gear. Instead of carrying out all these altera- tions in one year, he had been spreading them over a number of years. He said, emphatically, they could not dispense with that steamer, or a similar boat at great cost, for attending to lighthouses. Periodically each lighthouse must be visited, and they must have one boat Southern Islands to see if there were any casta- ways, and that the provision depots were in good order. All this meant a year's work fer any one boat, and they could not send the "Tutanekai " on this work, because she must be somewhat near at hand for cable-repairing. He said the "Hinemoa " well earned her money, and more than earned it, and the "Tutanekai" also earned her money. If they took the cost of cable-laying now and compared it with the cost before the "Tutanekai " was acquired, then they would see there was a large profit now. For the balance of the time she was utilised to the best possible advantage for Government work. With regard to the trip to the Macquarie Islands, he took the responsibility of that, and at any time while he was Minister, if he found people in danger of losing their lives, he would send a boat to them. At that time the "Hinemoa " was on her island trip, and was halfway to the Macquarie, and the cost of the trip was not any- thing like the sum mentioned by the honour- able member for Wellington City. He had had a similar case at the East Cape lately, where a passing vessel was signalled that a doctor was urgently wanted. There was only one way to get a doctor, and that was to send him from Gisborne, and he had done so ; and he did not think there were half a dozen members in the House who, in like circumstances, would not have done as he did in each case. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) wished to 9.0. know definitely the conditions on which members of the House could travel on the Government steamers. Could the Premier or any other member of the Ministry, or any member of the House, use the "Tutanekai" without payment, or were they required to pay? He would also like to know if a mem- ber of the Ministry could take his friends with him without payment. Mr.

HALL-JONES said that when Ministers were engaged on the work of the colony they were entitled to use the boat, and they very properly did so. Mr. J. ALLEN asked, Without cost ? Mr. HALL-JONES said, Yes, without cost. When members travelled there was a scale of charges-7s. 6d. per day. For out-of-the-way trips the charge for private persons was 10s. a day, and for trips on the coast the usual coastal rates. For Civil servants the cost was 7s. 6d. a day. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said there was a slight inaccuracy in the Minister's state- ment, in that there was no question of life in- volved in the last trip of the "Hinemoa" to the South Seas. He agreed with the Minister that the two steamers were absolutely necessary for the work of the colony. The "Hinemoa " had her special work, and if she did no other work than visit the lighthouses of the colony she would amply repay all her expense. She was almost exclusively employed on that work, and, that being so, there was plenty of other work for the "Tutanekai." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the present

<page:291>

Government steamers as previous Administra- tions. With regard to his trip in the Govern- ment steamer to the Islands, he desired to say, in reply to a remark made by the member for Ashley, that there were only three persons on board the steamer besides his own relatives and his Secretaries and the officials. As for the use of the Government steamers at other times, he wished to say that at any time he travelled about the colony on a Union boat the colony paid the steamer-fare. That was the rule, and it was a legitimate expense. That being right, then no objection could be taken if, instead of travelling on the Union

boats, the trip was made on one of the Government steamers. He would also like to say that, if members of Parliament or their families were in ill-health, they were entitled to consideration, and Ministers had not withheld the use of the Government boats, and he did not think the people of the colony would raise the least objection as long as it was kept within reasonable bounds. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said there was no question but the expenses of the Government steamers now were something like four times what they were under any previous Administration. There was too much use being made of the Government steamers when the ordinary steamers could be used. The cost of taking a trip to Lyttelton or to the West Coast was something like twenty times as much as the passage-money of the ordinary steamer would be. He moved, That the item be reduced by £5, for the purpose of showing the opinion of the Committee that too much money was being spent in connection with the Government steamers. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said that the steamers were laid up for a portion of the years 1887-88, and during those years large sums had to be paid to private firms or companies for the carriage of sleepers and other railway material, and a large amount for cable-repairing was also paid to the Eastern Extension Company. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said that, owing to the utter unsuitableness of the "Stella," she was frequently laid up, and was regarded as being absolutely unsafe for visiting the Auckland, Campbell, and Macquarie Islands. It was that fact that led to the order to build the "Tutanekai." He might mention that on one occasion Captain Fairchild objected to taking the "Stella" to those islands, because he said she was unsafe. He (Mr. Fisher) thought there was abundant work for the "Tutanekai" and "Hinemoa." He thought the two steamers were necessary. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) said that nobody would deny that two steamers were necessary; but the two Government steamers were costing more than they did a few years ago. From the official figures he made out that the vessels had earned during last year nearly \$1,500 less than during the year before, and they had cost £2,000 more to be worked. It also appeared to him that the Government of by Ministers for semi-private purposes. Mr. HALL-JONES, in reply to the honourable member for Palmerston, said it must be remembered that in 1887 the "Hinemoa" was laid up in Wellington for eleven months out of the twelve, and consequently her expense was almost nil, and the following year she was not used for twelve months. On several occasions both the "Hinemoa" and "Stella" were not in commission. Then, again, the Government used to have to pay £5,000, £6,000, and £7,000 every time cables required to be repaired, which they had not to do now; but credit was not taken for these amounts. Surely the amount should fairly be added to the cost of the steamers in previous years. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) said, In making a comparison of the cost of these steamers, members must recollect that between 1885 and 1901 the number of lighthouses had been increased by at least 33 per cent. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said it was not possible to make a comparison with a previous Administration, because the same steamers were not running. The only comparison that was of any use was a comparison of the cost under the present Administration last year and this year. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) said they had the fact that the maintenance of these vessels cost £2,000 more this year than the year before, and that they earned £1,800 less, which latter fact the Minister said was owing to the vessels being laid up for repairs. He hoped the Minister would explain how it came about that when the vessels were laid up the expenditure for maintenance had increased rather than diminished. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) thought the Minister ought to give information as to the recoveries, just as he did about contingencies, and he hoped that they would be shown in B.-1 when it came down. He also hoped that the services rendered by the "Tutanekai" outside the colony would be shown in B.-1 under a separate heading, as they were last year, so that they might know how much was spent on real work and how much on pleasure-trips. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said, If honourable members saw the real work which was done by these steamers when visiting lighthouses and the depots at the Bounty, Snares, Antipodes, and other islands they would not object to this vote, and would reduce the severity of some of the statements that have been made. While members represented every-

thing on the ornamental side of the question, as one might call it, it was only right and fair that the other side of the picture should be put. He should feel he was wanting in his duty if he did not, from the experience he had gained of the work done by these steamers, add his tribute to the value of the work they performed and their usefulness to the country. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) would like the Minister to give a statement of the refund of expenses paid by those who accompanied the Premier and his family in the "Tutanekai" to the South Sea Islands.

<page:292>

the details the honourable gentleman asked for. Amendment to reduce vote by £5 negatived. Vote, £13,500, agreed to. Marine : Miscellaneous services, £3,575. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked for the details of the vote for "Contingencies, \$300." Mr. HALL-JONES said the list was as follows :- Rent, cleaning offices, &c., for Superintendents of Mercantile Marine 123 .. Travelling expenses .. Westport Load-line Inspector Hire of steamer to search for wreckage from H.M.S. "Mildura" Telephones Code-lists (Mercantile Navy) .. Cleaning Nautical Adviser's office .. Two ensigns Expenses of prosecutions for breaches of Shipping and Seamen's Act .. Water-jars for depots for castaways .. Stamps, carbon papers, &c. .. Revising Mr. Ayson's report .. Sundries .. \$299 Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) mentioned the matter of the erection of boat conveniences for the fishermen at Port Moeraki. It was a work of great urgency. Mr. HALL-JONES said it would be considered when dealing with the public works estimates. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) referred to the item, "Removing wreck of 'Waipara,' £280." He understood a sum of £72 was expended on the same work last year. Mr. HALL-JONES :- That was so. He would like to explain that the "Waipara" was owned by some men of small means-in fact, all their means were invested in the steamer. When the steamer was wrecked she drifted into the fairway of the river, and in the interest of the settlers the Government had to remove the wreck. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said that last session he brought under the notice of the Minister the question of the erection of a light on the Kaikoura Peninsula. Mr. HALL-JONES said that question came under the public works estimates. Vote, £3,575, agreed to. CLASS VII .- STAMPS AND DEEDS DEPARTMENT. Stamp Department, £8,235. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) asked the Minister for the details of the item, "Contingencies, €139." Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) referred to the item, "Engraving 12d. die and plate, £105." He presumed that was the horrible dream, the 1)d. stamp-the "khaki." For the credit of the colony he thought it would be advisable to call in any of these stamps that were now out. He would like to know if the engraving was done in the department or outside. said it was engraved in England. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) referred to the item for the penny stamp. He would like to know from the Minister by whom that plate was engraved. Mr. CARROLL said it was engraved by Waterlow. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) said that in certain towns of the colony there were Deputy Commissioners of Stamps, and there were other towns where stamp offices should be established. 54 He might point out that documents which had 25 to be stamped had to be sent to the chief town of the provincial district in which the Deputy 25 Commissioner's office was established. For instance, on the West Coast documents had to be 13 sent from Greymouth, Reefton, and Westport 7 to Hokitika, and a great deal of delay was thus 6 caused. He would urge that the Postmaster in each of the larger towns should have authority 7 to stamp such documents. 5 Mr. CARROLL said, if they granted a concession in one particular case they would have 2 to do the same in other cases. If any reform 7 could be effected such as the honourable gentleman suggested, he would look carefully into the matter. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said it seemed to him very unfair that the department would not receive documents by post for stamping. An agent had to present the documents for stamping. Mr. CARROLL said it was not necessary to employ an agent in every case. Mr. PIRANI asked if the office would receive documents for stamping from anybody, or must the documents be presented by a member of the legal profession. Mr. CARROLL :- From any one. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) said there was another matter which sharebrokers and others complained of. Where

there were large numbers of share transactions, if you wanted to have the transfer stamped-or, in fact, any deed or instrument-you had to send a requisition in a duplicate form through an agent to the Deputy Commissioner's office, or else send it by post. That involved a great deal of trouble and delay, which might be avoided. He thought that on the presentation of the document it ought to be stamped. Mr. CARROLL said he would look into the matter. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) asked for an explanation of the item "Remission of duty on estates of deceased members of contingents, £100." He supposed that in the ordinary way a remission meant simply that duty was not charged. How, then, could it appear as something the Government paid out? An Hon. MEMBER. - The duty had to be charged, and then paid back. Mr. BARCLAY. - Did he understand the position to be that the Minister had no power to remit the duty under the Act. Mr. CARROLL. - Yes. Vote, £8,235, agreed to.

<page:293>

Lands and Deeds Registry, £18,644 Mr. BOLLARD (Eden) drew attention to the salary received by the Deputy Registrar of Deeds and Chief Clerk at Auckland, £265. This officer had been a long time in the service, and he had not received an increase in his salary for the last ten years. For some time he had practically been doing two men's work, and he (Mr. Bollard) thought, considering this officer's length of service and the amount of work he did, that he had been badly treated. The Examiner of Titles at Wellington received £350, and yet nearly twice the amount of work was done in the Auckland office. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) indorsed what had been said by the member for Eden with reference to the Deputy Registrar of Deeds and Chief Clerk at Auckland. The two officers in the Auckland office were doing extra work, and yet they were receiving smaller salaries than were paid to officers holding similar positions in other parts of the colony. He hoped the Minister would see that justice was done. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) said the Examiner of Titles in Wellington was a man of wide experience, and a barrister and solicitor, and he hoped the Government would some day appoint him to be a Stipendiary Magistrate. He was a most capable man, thoroughly up to his work, and all who had business dealings with him were treated with courtesy and attention. Mr. CARROLL said, Under the Act the Deputy Registrar could not possibly take the office of Examiner of Titles. Only a professional man could fill that position. All the Deputy Registrars were on the same footing. He might point out that the work in the Wellington office was nearly twice as much as that in the Auckland office. Wellington was the most important land district in the colony, and the amount of business which went to the office exceeded that done in any other office. The Deputy Registrar of Deeds in Auckland (Mr. Holloway) was not getting less than other officers holding a similar position. He admitted that the officer in question was an exceedingly good man, and he admitted also that these men should be considered, and it was a matter that he would lay before his colleagues with a view of considering the point as to an increase in their salaries. He could not, however, single out Mr. Holloway for special treatment. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) wished to allude to one point. He did not think it right that, when a vacancy occurred in the Deeds Registration Office in Auckland, the junior officers in the department should be overlooked. Some little time ago a vacancy in the recording branch had been filled up by a clerk from Gisborne. This had caused great dissatisfaction in Auckland. The administration of the department in Auckland was very satisfactory, and the staff had done their work exceedingly well; but a cause for dissatisfaction, both to the legal profession and the general public, was that nothing could be decided locally, everything having to be referred to Wellington, and this caused unreasonable delay in cases of letters of administration and probate. Mr. CARROLL said he would consider the application of the officer to whom the member for Eden had referred, together with others. In reply to the member for Auckland City (Mr. Napier), he might say no officer was sent up specially from the Gisborne office to Auckland. Vote, £18,644, agreed to. CLASS VIII. - EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. Head Office, £4,982. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) hoped the Minister would give the details of these "contingencies." Mr. HALL-JONES said he would give the "Contingencies" for the whole class.

Under "Head Office," the amount expended was £27, made up as follows :- £ 8. d. Publications 10 19 9 . . New Zealand Times 0 19 6 .. 1 17 Despatch-bag .. 6 . . . Postages on letters 0 11 5 .. Typewriter repairs 0 6 3 . . Tools, hinges, &c. 1 6 7 Mathematical instruments 0 13 4 Calico for copying-press 1 1 1 Clock 8 0 2 Cab-hire 2 16 6 .. Plans of desks . . 0 12 6 .. Meals for extra clerks 0 4 0 .. Advertising 0 10 0 £27 0 8 Under the head of "Public Schools," the amount expended was £267, made up as follows :- s. d. Educational Conference, allowance for travelling-expenses 3 11 Cost of bequest of Ahaura School 22 0 site .. Setting papers for pupil-teachers' 7 10 0 examinations Fares for school - cadettes and teachers, Sydenham School to Lyttelton 1 7 9 £267 3 8 Under the head of "Native Schools," the amount expended was £58, made up as follows : £ B. d. Flags, New Zealand Ensign (truck 0 4 6 and halyard) .. 31 5 9 Musical instruments Contingent Canterbury Times, 0 2 number Rain-gauge and thermometers 0 17 4 .. Cutting down and topping trees . . 0 17 6 Carriage of desks 0 4 0 . . 2 4 0 Latrines Inspector Visiting Whirinaki on outbreak of influenza (doctor) 6 0 0 Burning dead horse 0 0 8 .. Sweeping school chimney 0 0 2 Grant for school cleaning and fuel 0 0 2 Matriculation examination-papers 6 1 0

<page:294>

Te Makarini scholarship 5 0 . 4 10 Allowance to teacher for board .. 1 14 0 Despatch-bag ... £57 13 7 Under the head "Industrial Schools," the amount expended was £110, made up as follows :- £ 8. Travelling, staff and officers 99 1 Costs re lease of Christchurch Receiving-Home 3 3 .. Publications, reports, &c. 8 4 .. Stationery (envelopes) 0 14 ... Typewriting, reports 1 1 ... Despatch-bag .. 1 10 ... £109 18 2 And under the head of "Technical Instruction," the amount expended was £189, made up as follows :- £ s. d. Examinations, Science and Art 78 12 Department Examinations, City and Guilds of London Institute 23 13 Insurance on plasticene, &c. 0 6 Publications, reports, &c. 26 7 .. Freight, &c., on goods .. 13 2 .. Framing works of art 10 15 .. Expenses of Mr. McLeod re appointment of technical instructors .. Advertising 25 15 11 Making boxes for students' works 0 16 1 10 Despatch-bag .. £188 12 0 Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) wished the Minister to give him some information with regard to two items. Under "Head Office" there was the item "Clerk, also Assistant Inspector of Industrial Schools, \$260"; and then, under the head of "Industrial Schools," there was the item "Assistant Inspector, £250." Was that one and the same individual? Mr. HALL-JONES said there were two Inspectors. One was an Inspector pure and simple, and the other was Clerk and Inspector. There were two Assistant Inspectors of Industrial Schools. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) wished to point out the large increase there was in the administration of the Education Department. Almost every item showed an increase. The vote was £662 over the vote of last year, and \$900 over the sum expended last year. What reason was there for such an enormous increase? He was aware that on account of technical education and other matters the work of the department had increased, but this wholesale and general increase of almost every officer in the Head Office struck him as being a very surprising thing. The number of officers had also increased from sixteen to twenty. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) referred to the continual rises in salaries which the officers of this Mr. Hall-Jones regretting that, with the exception of this year, 000 the number of scholars attending the schools of the colony was gradually getting less. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said the number of children on whom capitation was paid in 1895 was 104,500, and this year it was 113,800, showing an increase of 9,300. In 1894-95 the number of officers was eight, and now it was twenty. The expenses of the Head Office in d. 1894-95 were £2,472, but for the current year 2 they were £4,980, or £2,500 in excess of the expenses of 1894-95. It was marvellous that, while the attendance had increased by only 69,300, the expenses had increased by the large sum of \$2,500. There was something decidedly wrong in connection with the administration of the department-either the Inspector was wrong or the Minister was wrong; and if such a state of things was to be allowed to go on the expenditure would become abnormally swollen year by year. He considered that the present state of things called for the most careful attention on the part of honourable members. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) said there was 2 a feeling

inside and outside the House that the Minister in charge of the Education Department should be a member of the Lower House. 3 All previous Ministers of Education had been 3 members of the House. It was not desirable, 7 in view of the very important departments 5 administered by the Minister, that he should be a member of another Chamber; and, in order to test the feeling of the House as to whether the position should be occupied by a member of the House or not, he would move a 0 reduction of the vote by £1. 0 Mr. TANNER (Avon) moved to reduce the item " Assistant Secretary, £425," by £25. It was time the House rose to a sense of its re- sponsibility in increasing salaries in all depart- ments ; but he thought, of all the departmental increases proposed or granted, this was the most striking case, not to say the most scandalous. The expenditure of the Education Department had practically doubled of late years, and the number of children in attendance at the schools of the colony was about the same. When salaries were piled up in this way one could readily understand why it was that reasonable and necessary appointments were resisted by the Head Office. The member for Selwyn, if he were in his place, could unfold a tale to the House in connection with an appointment to a certain institution that would cast discredit on the Education Department. If the honourable gentleman did not do so he (Mr. Tanner) would narrate the facts to the House himself. It was a question of an appointment at a salary of €100 or #150, but it was not to be made because the department pleaded that it could not afford it ; but it could afford to double its own depart- mental expenditure. Mr. HALL-JONES said the changes that had been made during the past few years had thrown an increased amount of work on the Head Office. For instance, with respect to manual and tech- nical instruction, changes in the administra- tion of industrial and reformatory schools, the

<page:295>

establishment of receiving homes, and many other items elsewhere, there had been a complete and new departure involving a large amount of extra work, and the increased work meant in- creased expense. With respect to Sir Edward Gibbs, he was an officer who had been in the department for over thirty years, and he did not think any one who knew the work done by that gentleman would say that the salary was too large. If they did not recognise the services of their officers, it would mean that the best officers would be induced to take positions in the other colonies. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) said he would have preferred if the honourable member for Avon had moved that all the increases be struck off. This department seemed to stand in the way of the Education Boards. There was considerable friction. He could not understand why there was a continual addition to the expense of the department. He felt inclined to support a re- duction of the whole of the proposed increases. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch) wished the honourable member for Avon had moved a resolution to the effect that the total vote be decreased by one-half. It had been pointed out that in the last five or six years the ex- penses of the Head Office had more than doubled. The school-teachers had failed to participate in any degree in the increased prosperity of the colony, and instead of their salaries increasing they have decreased. He thought it was a monstrous thing that, while the teachers' salaries had decreased, there should have been this large increase in the Head Office. He would like to see this vote reduced, if only as a protest against raising the salaries of departmental officers until the teachers' salaries had been put on a better footing. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) objected to the unnecessary interference on the part of the department with the Education Boards, and instanced a flagrant case in Central Otago. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) pointed out, with regard to the increase in expenditure, although the Education Department had, ac- cording to the Minister, over half a million to administer, yet it passed nearly the whole of it over to the Boards, in whose hands the real administration lay. To make a comparison between the year 1896-97 and the year just ended, the appropriations for the former under the heading of "Education " were £428,000, and for the latter £445,000, an increase of only £17,000. Under " Lunacy and charitable aid " the amount for the former year was \$55,000, and for the latter £63,000. In the Head Office the amount for the former year

was £2,225, and for this year £4,982, while the number of officers had risen from eight to twenty. He did not desire to impair the efficiency of the department, but he thought some explanation should be given of how it had grown to such disproportionate dimensions. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) thought it was unfortunate that the Minister in charge of the estimates in the House was not the Minister in charge of the department. He was as anxious as any man for the well-being of the Education Department, but it was growing beyond their means, and he protested against the unwarrantable manner in which departmental expenses were piled up year after year. Mr. HALL-JONES would like to point out to honourable members the great amount of work carried out by the Education Department and the small cost of administering it. The Native schools in the past had largely increased, and were more closely attended to now than in former years. Then, the House decided to have a change in regard to the inspection of industrial schools, which had been gradually carried out by the Education Department. Provision had also been recently made for technical instruction, and members must recognise they could not do increased work without increased expenditure. He had heard a lot about the falling-off of the school attendance, but he would like to point out that, so far from this being the case, the attendance for the last quarter constituted a record for the colony. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said, in regard to the amendment, that he did not like attacking individual cases, because in many instances he believed the increases were well deserved. But he must say he did not approve of the wholesale increases proposed in connection with the Education Department, which were altogether out of proportion to the amount of work being done. He would suggest to the honourable member for Avon that, instead of attacking one salary, he should move to reduce the vote by about one-half the amount of the increases-£300-and he would have great pleasure in supporting him. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) would support the reduction, and his reason was that, as a country member, he knew many teachers who were harder worked than these officers, yet only received £100 a year. He would support any proposed reduction until more equitable salaries were given to the teachers of small schools among the country settlers. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) was not in favour of a reduction, because he thought the salary of the Assistant Secretary, compared with men in the same position in other departments, was miserably low. He thought his length of service and efficiency entitled him to an increase of double the amount. At the same time he must say this department sadly wanted what it was trying to provide for the teachers-some classification. They seemed to be setting loose in the country an army of Inspectors and lecturers who would be better at Home doing some decent work. But what he objected to was the encroachment of a department on the work of local bodies. He thought that if the Education Boards were to be abolished, let them be so by all means, but not in the manner at present adopted. In regard to technical education, he was of opinion that the money would be far more usefully expended if the department handed it over to the Education Boards. Mr. HALL-JONES would point out to the honourable gentleman that the officer who gave the lecture on plasticene was requested to visit

<page:296>

that subject and one or two others. He might also point out that the administration expenses of two Education Boards in New Zealand for 1900 amounted to £4,790 ; and he said that those members who begrudged £4,000 for administering the various details of the Education Department, where was an expenditure of £500,000 per annum, were no friends of our present system of education. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) thought the Minister of Education should be a member of the House of Representatives. It was an anomaly that the Minister of Education was a member of the Legislative Council, and had no responsibility to this House and to the country. The increase in the number of officers and in the salaries of the officers of the Head Office was regrettable. This was largely owing to too much red-tape by the Secretary in the Head Office in Wellington. In reference to some remarks that had been made about the Boards, he wished to say that, if the work of the central department was only done half as well as the work of the School Committees and the Education Boards, the system would be much more satisfactory

than it was. When the late Mr. Habens was at the head of the department the number of officers was kept down, and the ex- penses were reduced to the lowest point consis- tent with efficiency ; but since that gentleman's . decease there had been, as all members who were connected with Education Boards would know, very strained relations existing between the Boards of the colony and the central de- partment. He hoped the amendment moved by the member for Franklin would be carried. If he was in order, however, he would move, That the vote be reduced by the total sum of the increases which it was proposed to grant. namely, £662. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said the honour- able member would not be in order in moving the amendment, as there was already an amend- ment before the Committee, which must first be disposed of. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) did not know where the Minister got his figures when he said that the administration of two Boards cost £4,900; but if he would look at the depart- mental returns he would see that the whole of the Boards in the colony spent slightly over £14,000 for their administration. What he objected to was that, while under the legislation of the colony the administration of educational matters was vested in the Education Boards, within the last two years they had had such in- terference by the head of the Education Depart- ment as no member who had any respect for himself as a member of an Education Board would tolerate. He thought, if the central de- partment would carry out their own particular work, and allow the Education Boards to do the work that properly fell to their lot, the expenses of the Head Office would not be nearly so heavy as they were. It was the overlapping of the work of the head department and the work of the Education Boards that was causing increases in the administration expenses; and Mr. Hall. Jones that, before very long, the House would demand that the respective functions of the Education Boards and the central department should be defined better than they were at the present time. It was the manner in which en- croachments were going on by the head of the department that most complaint was made about. The men who had borne the heat and burden of the educational work of their particu- lar districts really knew more about the wants of their schools than any of the officers of the central department, or even the Minister him- self. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said there was an impression throughout the colony and amongst most of the Boards that the In- spector-General of Schools was thirsting for power-that he desired absolutism, and to get rid of the Boards ; and, judging from the manner in which some of the Boards were treated, and the trouble they had with the Head Office, it seemed as if they were being in process of being worried out of existence. When the Commis- sion was appointed to draw up a classification scheme it might fairly have been expected that the Inspector-General would have produced a scale of salaries approximately like that which would have been adopted by the Commission. As far as he was able to gather, several scales were produced by the Inspector-General; but the Commissioners had to remodel them all. It was said by members of Education Boards that things were not working so smoothly now as they were a few years ago, when Mr. Habens was in office. He trusted that changes would take place, and that all causes of friction and discontent would be removed. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) said the Inspector-General submitted a scale to the Com- mission, and had materially assisted the Com- mission, and, as the evidence developed, the Inspector General endeavoured to meet the re- quirements. Amendment, to reduce the vote by £25, nega- tived. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) proposed, That the vote be reduced by £300. The Committee divided. AYES, 17. McLachlan Arnold Hall Barclay Herries Monk Bennet Russell, G. W. Hogg Buddo Hornsby Tellers. Meredith Collins Massey Ell Mackenzie, T. Tanner. NOES, 27. Allen, E. G. Kaihau Stevens Laurenson Carroll Symes Colvin Lawry Ward Duncan McGowan Wilford Field Mckenzie, R. Willis Fisher McNab Witheford. Fowlds Mills Tellers. Hall-Jones Napier Carncross Hardy Parata O'Meara. Heke Majority against, 10.

<page:297>

agreed to. Public schools, £448,850. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) desired to draw attention to the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee with respect to Miss Annett. He would like the

Minister to say whether he would put a sum on the supplementary estimates for the purpose. He might add that the Otago Education Board and the Public Petitions Committee recommended £70 being paid, and advised authority being given to the Board to pay it ; but he thought it would be better for the Minister to add the amount to the supplementary estimates. Mr. HALL-JONES said, in reply to the member for Waihemo, that the recommendation of the Committee would be considered with other recommendations later on, in the recess. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) drew the Minister's attention to a petition he was going to present from the women teachers of the Wellington District, protesting against that portion of the recommendation of the Commissioners which provided that neither girls' schools nor departments should be recognised, and he hoped the Government would take that point into consideration. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) wished to draw attention to the fact that the total sum put down for the training of teachers was £1,000. The cost of this in North Canterbury came to from \$1,400 to £1,600, and with a grant of even \$500 there would be a considerable shortage. He would like to know what the intention of the department was in regard to these training-schools. Then, there was the question of enabling country school - children to obtain Seventh Standard education without extra expense. A suggestion had been made that an extra teacher should be allowed where the number of Seventh Standard children exceeded ten. This would not cost very much, while affording a valuable addition to the education of those children in country districts. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) wanted to ask how it was that the teachers attending training classes at Stratford from the outlying districts were unable to get any satisfactory reply as to railway passes from either the Education or Railway Departments ? And the same thing applied to children attending the District High School, Stratford. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) wished to bring under the notice of the Minister the question of the issue of free railway passes to Fifth and Sixth Standard children where they desired to attend district high schools. He thought country children should be afforded the same facilities as those in the large centres. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) drew attention to the small amount of land set apart as endowments for primary schools. The revenue estimated from reserves at present was only \$39,000. Referring to 1891, he found the revenue of the reserves was estimated at £33,500, and in 1896-97 at £37,000. The position, therefore, was that in ten years they only got an reserves. Now, if members remembered the large area of land administered, and the large area sold and finally parted with, it must be admitted that the Government had been exceedingly lax in setting aside endowments for the purpose of primary education. He thought in a country like this the policy should be to ease the burden of taxation by means of these endowments ; and one of the first duties of the Government should be to set aside endowments for primary as well as higher education, particularly in the North Island, where they still held large tracts of land. He hoped there would be an improvement in this direction. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) would like to ask the Minister whether the time had not arrived when something should be done to assist the Education Boards of the colony, who at the present time were absolutely crippled for want of funds. The public school, for instance, at the Lower Hutt was in a disgraceful condition, but the Board could do nothing for want of funds. He hoped the Minister would attend to this matter. Mr. HALL-JONES would point out to the honourable member that this question would be dealt with under the head of the vote for " School Buildings," in Class XIII. He hoped to-night that members would not go into the question of teachers' classification and salaries, which would be much better discussed when dealing with the Bill now before the House. In reply to the member for Egmont, he might say there was no reason for teachers or children paying their fares, because if proper application were made the passes would be supplied. With regard to the question of the member for Ashley, he held the same opinion that he did last year: that the children of primary schools who had passed the Sixth Standard, to obtain the advantage of higher education, should be given free passes to the nearest high school. It had been decided to give passes to the holders of scholarships, and to scholars attending the nearest district high school, and regulations were now being drafted in that

direction. With regard to the question of the member for Riccarton, he was entirely with him in saying there should be numerous reserves set aside for primary education. And, although they would not actually decrease the cost of education, still they would know there were certain lands which would assist in finding money to carry on the work of education. He would bring the matter under the notice of his colleague. With regard to training-schools, he only knew of one at Christchurch and one at Dunedin, and last year, in accordance with his promise, the vote was increased from £600 to £1,000, which was evenly divided between the two schools. Mr. TANNER (Avon) wished to call the attention of the Committee to the extraordinary item, " Addition to Statutory Capitation : Teachers' salaries only, as directed by Minister of Education, £28,450." The Minister had just told them that they had better not discuss the classification question and public school

<page:298>

for the Bill ; but he believed that if the House consented to this vote to-night members would hear no more of the Teachers' Salaries Bill, because this vote placed a sum of money in the hands of the Minister at his absolute discretion. And when members looked back to the circulars the Minister distributed last year among the Education Boards of the colony, relative to the £8,000 then voted, they knew how much discretion he possessed. There would be no need whatever for the Bill if this vote were passed ; and the friends of education in the House seemed to have lost sight of the fact that all the difficulties of the past year would be repeated. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said, If the Minister would agree to strike out the words " as directed by the Minister of Education " the objections of honourable members would be removed. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN explained, as a matter of order, that no alteration could be made in the wording of the vote by the Committee. The Committee must accept or reject the item as worded. An amendment of the wording could only be submitted by Governor's message. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said that, under the Public School Teachers Act of last year, any grant in addition to the statutory capitation could only be expended after consultation with the several Education Boards, and in such a manner as the Minister and the Boards agreed. If the Boards did not agree with the Minister under the Act the Minister had no power to spend the money. Mr. HALL-JONES said, the Act of last year was not for one year only, and he hoped the Public School Teachers' Salaries Bill would pass this session ; but should that or any other Bill be passed, the distribution of this amount must be in accordance with that Act, which over-rode the estimates. Mr. MASSEY .- That is the point : Does it : Mr. HALL-JONES said the honourable member would soon see what the Auditor-General had to say about it. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said there was not a word about direction in the original Act. As the thing appeared now, there seemed to be a desire to take the power out of the hands of the Boards and put it in the hands of the Inspector-General. Mr. HALL-JONES said, he would undertake to say that, if the measure now on the Order Paper did not pass, and the Act of last session was not repealed, the distribution would be made in accordance with the Act of last session. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) said the extra vote for teachers' salaries, granted by the House last year, had not yet been distributed as far as the Otago Board was concerned. The department desired to give a portion of the extra money to the high-salaried teachers, but the Board thought that the larger portion of the sum should be given to country teachers Mr. Tanner contended was the intention of the House when the Act was passed last year. In connection with the petition presented by the member for Wellington Suburbs, he wished to say that, where separate schools had existed for many years in some districts, it had been thought better to amalgamate the boys' and girls' classes. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) was willing to accept the Minister's statement that, in the event of the Bill on the Order Paper not passing this session, the money would be distributed in accordance with the Act of last year. He might say he did not think the Bill would pass in its present form, because it was not satisfactory either to the country teachers or to the people in the country districts. Vote, £19,590, agreed to. Industrial Schools, £16,182. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said there were only four of these schools.

Did it require two Inspectors to inspect these four schools ? Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) said there was a vote for the maintenance of private industrial schools, and he would like to know why the Minister had not seen his way to assist the Anglican Orphanage, established by Bishop Neville, in Dunedin. It was doing useful and valuable work, and ought to come within the generosity of the Government as other private institutions did. No reasons could be given why Saint Mary's should be refused. Mr. HALL-JONES could not give a definite reply to the honourable gentleman, but believed there was a difficulty about the institution not conforming with the regulations of the department. He would, however, look further into the matter. Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked, If they were willing to come within the scope of the regulations, would the Government grant them assistance ? Mr. HALL-JONES said, If application were made the case would then be considered. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) wished to ask the Minister where the home for weak-minded and epileptic children was situated. Mr. HALL-JONES said this was a new departure. It had not been started yet. Mr. ELL hoped the institution would be started as soon as possible, especially when he told the honourable gentleman that there were children of eight years of age in the lunatic-asylums at the present day. Mr. HALL-JONES said the object was to relieve the asylums of these children. Vote, £16,182, agreed to. Vote, School for Deaf-mutes, £3,503, agreed to. School for Blind, £410. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) would like to ask the Minister if he thought it was probable that any sum would be placed on the supplementary estimates to assist the Auckland Institution for the Blind in the direction of building fireproof buildings ? Efforts were being made to raise funds to erect such a building for the blind in that city, and it was very desirable-

<page:299>

the Government. The inmates were at present housed in a wooden building. Mr. HALL-JONES said he had made a note of the request. He believed a grant was made some time ago, but not sufficient to enable a start to be made. He would look further into the matter. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) trusted the Minister would consider this not as an Auckland, but as a colonial business. It was absolutely necessary that a fireproof building should be erected, and he hoped that a substantial sum would be placed on the supplementary estimates to assist private generosity. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) said the building was needed. Was the Minister prepared to put a sum on the estimates for the purpose ? Mr. HALL-JONES said he was not prepared at present to say that that would be done. Mr. ELL thought the House could find the money for the purpose. It was a most desirable object. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said, At present the blind people were housed in a wooden building, and if a fire occurred it could be easily imagined what would happen. The people of Auckland had done wonders in connection with this institution, and the Government should assist. Mr. HALL-JONES said the institution had been subsidised by the colony ; and the Manager had a considerable sum collected for the new building. Mr. MASSEY thought the House felt that the Government ought to do something to supplement the efforts which had already been made by private enterprise. Vote, £410, agreed to. Technical instruction, £13,950. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) said he must enter his protest against this vote. He believed in technical education ; but under the present system this was simply so much expenditure for class purposes wasted. Under the existing law not a farthing of this money would go to the benefit of children in the country districts, for such children would not have a chance of acquiring a trade if they desired to do so. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) hoped the Boards of Education would arrange the manual and technical instruction expenditure in such a manner that the benefit would reach the country children, and that technical instruction would be extended to country districts. He might mention that the North Canterbury Education Board had started several technical schools. After much consideration they decided to acquire a central site in the City of Christchurch, and build, under the provisions of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, a building that would meet the requirements of the city. After giving permission to the Board to sell a disused school-site, with instructions that the money should be applied to the purchase of a central technical school-site, that

permission was withdrawn by the Education Department. The North Canterbury Education Board now wanted to know what the Government proposed sufficient to purchase a central site, and take over the South Belt ground and building for other public purposes, or was it intended to force the Board to carry on their manual and technical school on the Town Belt, away from the centre of the city, and inconvenient for pupils ? He hoped that the Minister would give him an explanation of the position. Mr. HALL-JONES said the permission had been withdrawn on account of representations having been made that the site was undesirable. The matter had been referred to Cabinet, and would be duly considered. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) would like to ask if it would not be much better to reduce the vote, and increase the salaries of teachers in country schools. If they passed the Bill which would bring the teachers' salaries scheme into force they would have a large number of schools in which the teachers would only have salaries of from £60 to £70 a year. Mr. HALL-JONES said the organization of these technical schools had only just been started, and even now the effects of the new system were becoming far-reaching. He believed that, with the assistance of the Boards, they would make such a system as would be for the general good, and what was desired by the House. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) would like some information with regard to the two Inspectors at £350 each-as to their qualifications and where they came from ? Mr. HALL-JONES said their qualifications were very satisfactory. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) moved to report progress. The Committee divided. AYES, 11. Barclay Massey Tanner. Meredith Collins Tellers. . Herries Monk Buddo Hornsby Russell, G. W. Hardy. NOES, 29. Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Mills Arnold Heke O'Meara Bennet Kaihau Palmer Laurensen Carroll Stevens Colvin Lawry Symes Ward Duncan McGowan Mackenzie, T. Witheford. Ell Fisher Tellers. McKenzie, R. Carncross McLachlan Fowlds Hall McNab Wilford. Majority against, 18. Motion negatived. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) wished for information in regard to the two Inspectors. Mr. HALL-JONES said their names were Mr. Isaacs and Mr. Brown : one was educated at Edinburgh University and the other at the London University ; they were both practical men, and one was an engineer-Mr. Isaacs. Mr. MASSEY asked if it was not a fact that Mr. Isaacs was a Nonconformist minister, and

<page:300>

tion. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said, All the information he had been able to glean about this gentleman was that he had been a clergy- man and had augmented his income by teaching drawing in a school ; at one time he had been an engineer on a boat, and he was pretty good in modelling in clay. He had endeavoured to obtain employment under the Wellington Board, but had not succeeded. Mr. HALL-JONES said the honourable gentleman could see the gentleman's testimonials at his office-he did not carry them about with him. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said the Minister's answer was not satisfactory in regard to these Inspectors. He said they were qualified men : in what way were they qualified ? He thought they were entitled to more information in regard to these Inspectors. It seemed to him they ought not to blindly vote £350 each to two gentlemen of whose qualifications they had a most vague idea. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said, In regard to the proposal to sell the site of the South Belt School, he protested against the alienation of this very valuable education endowment in Christchurch. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said they had all the information the Minister felt inclined to give about the Rev. Mr. Isaacs, but they had no information in regard to Mr. Brown, and he thought they were entitled to it. He had been informed that Mr. Brown had not had the very slightest technical experience, or any experience in any way connected with mechanical matters. It was not the slightest use voting money for technical education unless they had good men to administer the department. Mr. HALL-JONES said he had special experience in the London University. Mr. MCLACHLAN (Ashburton) said, If the South Belt School was absolutely useless for school purposes, and if the Education Board saw fit to sell the site and use the money for technical education purposes, what reason could there possibly be for complaint? Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) must say that the Minister had given an unsatisfactory reply in regard to these

two Inspectors. It seemed to him, if this was the result of a concentration of Inspectors in the hands of the central body, it was a very poor start, because apparently the two men appointed were but indifferently qualified. He said if they were going to do the work that had got to be done in connection with technical education, they must select men who were highly qualified and properly trained ; and if this was an indication of the class of appointments the central department were going to make it was a very bad beginning indeed, if what had been stated in the House regarding these Inspectors was at all correct. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) would not say another word about those two Inspectors if the Minister would promise to take the earliest opportunity of laying on the table a copy of Mr. Massey the accompanying testimonials. Mr. HALL - JONES said, Mr. Brown won honours in the London University in science, and was second in scientific education. He had won certificates at South Kensington for drawing, and during the whole of these years had been teaching technical education, and recently in one of the high schools of the South. Mr. Isaacs was a civil engineer, and some years ago, when the Imperial Government set up a Commission to visit the Continent to inquire into technical education, Mr. Isaacs was one of the members of that Commission, and surely that showed he had qualifications for the positions. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said, To say that because a man was appointed to a Commission that went to the Continent to inquire into technical education was evidence of his fitness as a highly skilled technical teacher, was an argument he hardly thought the Minister would use. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) would like to supplement the request of the honourable member, that the applications and testimonials of these two Inspectors should be laid on the table of the House, so that they might know the qualifications of these men. He said that the whole success of the Technical Education Department depended on having efficient Inspectors. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) would like to know whether the two officers were advertised for in the usual way. Mr. HALL-JONES said, Yes; and they were selected as the best qualified. Vote, \$13,950, agreed to. Miscellaneous Services, \$5,052. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) said he wanted to take that opportunity of eliciting the opinion of members as to whether the Minister of Education should be a member of the Lower House or not, and with that view he would move a reduction of the vote by the sum of #1. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) wanted the Minister to give him some information about the item, "Flags for public schools, £1,500." Very few of the country districts in Auckland received these flags. Some schools made application, and were told they were not ready. Mr. HALL-JONES said it was not possible to get them in time, but they could be supplied now. The contracts were given to different firms, who had a difficulty in filling the orders, as there was a scarcity of material. It would be necessary for the schools to apply to the Education Boards for the flags. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) supported the proposal of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. ELL). If there was any department in the public service that required a real live man, and that the House required to be in touch with, it was the Education Department. He had nothing to say against the Hon. Mr. Walker, except that the portfolio of Justice, or Mines, or some other department, might be given to him in place of Education. Mr. HALL-JONES said the same difficulty would crop up, no matter what department was taken by the Hon. Mr. Walker.

<page:301>

scholar, and a man of considerable ability ; but at the same time he held that the portfolio of Education should be in the hands of a member of the Lower House. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) agreed with the motion moved by the member for Christchurch City. The present position was a serious blot on the system of representative government. The post of Minister of Education was held by a member of the nominated Chamber-a member who represented, not the people of the country, but the Government who nominated him. If the Hon. Mr. Walker was a member of the Lower House he would say there was no gentleman who was better fitted for the position ; but, under the circumstances he had stated, it was not right he should hold this portfolio. As to the flags for the public schools, he would like to know if they would be

New Zealand flags, and when they would be handed over to the schools. Mr. HALL-JONES said, Yes, they would be New Zealand flags, and they would be handed over very soon. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said he would support the motion of the honourable member for Christchurch. The Minister - he presumed through his not being the Minister of Education - was not acquainted with the facts. An uneasy feeling would be created when it became known that the Minister declined to give the information asked for, as to the two Inspectors. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said it could not be contended that the Education Department was being administered in the way it ought to be administered while the head of the department occupied a seat in the Upper House. In former years the affairs of the department were never allowed to float about as they were now. He said emphatically that the Minister of Education ought to have a seat in the House. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) said the fact that this same matter was brought up year after year on these estimates showed how difficult the Ministry must find it to carry on the business of the department without having the Minister of Education in this House. He thought that some change should take place in the portfolios. The Committee divided. AYES, 17. Arnold Monk Hornsby Buddo Russell, G. W. Laurensen Collins Tanner. Massey Mackenzie, T. Fisher Tellers. Hardy Barclay McLachlan Meredith Herries Ell. NOES, 23. Palmer Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Heke Bennet Stevens Carcross Kaihau Symes McGowan Carroll Ward Mckenzie, R. Witheford. Colvin Duncan McNab Tellers. Mills Lawry Fowlds Hall O'Meara Wilford. Majority against, 6. Vote, £5,052, agreed to. Vote, Lunacy and Charitable Department : Lunatic Asylums, £60,976, agreed to. Vote, Charitable, £8,194, agreed to. Progress reported. The House adjourned at twenty minutes past three o'clock a.m. (Wednesday). #