

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Tuesday, 29th October, 1901. First Reading-Second Readings -- Third Reading- Trustee Amendment Bill-Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill-Maori Councils Bill- Old-age Pensions Bill-Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill-Public-school Teachers' Salaries Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Aid to Public Works and Land Settlement Bill. # SECOND READINGS. Coal - mines Bill, Pariroa Native Reserves Bill, Local Bodies' Goldfields Public Works and Loans Bill. # THIRD READING. Evidence Further Amendment Bill. TRUSTEE AMENDMENT BILL. Consideration of the following reason of the House of Representatives for disagreeing to new clause 6A :-- "The House disagrees with new clause 6A, for without some restriction it means an undesirable extension of the existing law ; but if the clause was so amended by having provision made for obtaining the consent of a Judge of the Supreme Court or a District Court Judge to the registration of any share, in that case there would be no objection." . The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said, as this clause was one moved by the Hon. Mr. Bolt, perhaps that honourable gentleman would indicate what he desired with regard to the objection taken by the other House. The Hon. Mr. BOLT said the intention of this clause was to limit the liability of trustees from a deceased person. It was intended that the liability of the trustee should be limited to the liability of the deceased had he been alive, and the clause provided that the trustee should get the consent of the directors of the company before he got registration ; and in the event of the deceased being only legally entitled to the shares on the ground that he had bought them from some other person who was the registered holder, then the trustee should get the consent of that other person. The exception taken to the clause by the House was certainly very peculiar and very indefinite. It simply said it meant an undesirable extension of the existing law. He failed to see, provided the directors or the registered holder, as the case might be, gave consent to the registration, why there should be any objection to the claim. However, he had no objection to falling in with the wishes of the House in regard to the matter. and if he were allowed a little time he would have

the clause redrafted and transmitted to the House with a view of obtaining their consent. The Hon. the SPEAKER .- That cannot be done. The Hon. Mr. BOLT would, then, move, That the Council insist on the clause as originally drawn. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said, in his opinion, there was a good deal more in this clause than some people imagined. The Bill was a very important one, and at this period of the session one did not like to risk the loss of the measure for the sake of this clause. This had been a very debatable point for a long time, and he did not know that it was wise, without a good many restrictions, to give further powers than were already given. He thought the clause should not be insisted on. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY said, if the Hon. Mr. McLean's suggestion were adopted the clause would be lost, although the Council desired a change in the law. Why should the trustee of a deceased person be liable for the whole of the debts of a deceased person with regard to calls made by companies ? An Hon. MEMBER .- They are not liable. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY understood that was the law at the present time; otherwise he did not see the necessity for the clause. He thought it would be best to draw up reasons for insisting on the clause, with a view of having a Conference with the other House. The Hon. Colonel PITT hoped the Council would insist on the clause, because, if a Conference were held with the other House, there should be very little difficulty in coming to an arrangement to meet the case. The law at present was that the executor, unless he registered as the owner of the shares, was not liable. The shares went to him not by transfer, but by transmission, and he was entitled to sell them and have some other person, nominated by himself, registered as the purchaser. If he allowed himself to be put on the register as the owner of the shares he would be liable for calls. The sole object of this clause was to allow him

<page:869>

to be put on the register with the consent of the directors, but with no greater liability than he would have if he were not registered. If the directors consented to that, one would have thought that ought to be enough. The other Chamber suggested that probably if the consent of a Judge of the Supreme Court were obtained there would be no objection; but he (Colonel Pitt) thought that would be an expensive process which was not necessary. He believed, if a Conference were held with the other Chamber, there would be very little difficulty in coming to a settlement of the matter. Motion agreed to. The Hon. Mr. BOLT moved, That the Hon. Colonel Pitt, the Hon. Mr. T. Kelly, and himself be appointed Managers to

draw up reasons for insisting on this clause. Motion agreed to. Subsequently, The Hon. Mr. BOLT brought up the following reasons for insisting on the retention of the clause :- "1. That, under the law as it now stands, any person becoming entitled to a share in a company in any other way than by transfer may elect to have some person to be named by him registered as a transferee of such share. "2. That the effect of new clause 6A is only to allow a trustee or executor to be placed on the share-register of a company in respect of any share, but with no greater exemption from liability than he has now whilst not registered as owner of any such share. "3. That, inasmuch as the new clause 6A provides for the consent of the directors being necessary to the registration of any such trustee or executor as the proprietor of any share, the expense of an application for an order of a Judge of the Supreme Court or of a District Court Judge should not be required." Reasons agreed to. INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said, As he had not yet seen a correct copy of this Bill, he would ask that it be postponed until after the consideration of order of the day No. 12. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY said that if the Bill was put down to after No. 12 it would be a question whether it would ever come up again. Business was coming in very rapidly from the other branch of the Legislature, and this Bill, which was carried by a large majority, would be sub-merged by other Bills. He would like to know when the Minister proposed to bring the Bill up for third reading. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he would bring it up when he had had an opportunity of seeing it. When he saw the Bill he would know what to do. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY asked if members were to understand that as soon as the corrected copy was received the Minister would inform the House, and the third reading then be taken. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER. - With every consideration for other business. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY trusted the Minister would not put too great a strain on honourable members, who would regret very much having to go against him. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said, if the Minister did not intend to proceed with the Bill, he would give notice of his intention to take it up and move the third reading. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought the honourable gentleman should not put the Bill so far down on the Order Paper. He had no objections to it going down below No. 5. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he must have it below No. 9-Public-school Teachers' Salaries Bill-as he wished to move that Bill that evening. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he did not think the third reading would take very long, and he would therefore propose, as an amendment, that it be placed down after order of the day No. 5. He did not know why the Bill was not there and distributed before the Council sat. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said that, as a compromise, he would put it after No. 9. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said that that Bill -Public-school Teachers' Salaries Bill-would raise a very large discussion, and there was no saying how long it would take. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY suggested, as a compromise, the honourable gentleman should alter his amendment to after No. 7. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he had no objections to that, and he would move his amendment accordingly. The Council divided on the question, "That the word ' twelve' stand part of the question." AYES, 15. Smith, A. L. Arkwright Jones Smith, W. C. Barnicoat Kelly, W. Bolt Reeves Taiaroa Tomoana Harris Rigg Walker, W. C. Scotland Jenkinson NOES, 18. Pitt Feldwick Louisson Shrimski Gourley McLean Swanson Jennings Montgomery Johnston Ormond Twomey Walker, L. Kelly, T. Peacock Williams. Pinkerton Kenny Majority against, 3. Words struck out. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, That the word "nine " be inserted in lieu of " seven." The Hon. Mr. RIGG thought the request of the Minister very reasonable-namely, that he should have time to consult with his chief to consider the amendments made in the Bill. So far as his experience of the Council went, this was the first time the request of the Minister had been treated in such a discourteous manner. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he must confess he considered it-he would not say

<page:870>

should not be allowed to consult his chief, who had introduced the Bill into the Lower House, with a corrected copy of the Bill in his hand. He had not yet got that corrected copy. Honourable members would

recognise that his time was pretty well occupied just now, and Mr. Seddon's time was also pretty well occupied. He did ask the Council to be reasonable, and to allow him to have an opportunity of discussing with his chief the measure as it had passed the Council. He might have to ask the Council to recommit the Bill—he did not say to destroy what had been put in, but possibly to put in some other clause which might occur to the Minister in charge of the department. It was unreasonable and inconsiderate of the Council to refuse to him what he had never known to be refused to a Minister before. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said it was with no discourtesy to the Minister that he had proposed the amendment. He was known to have a very great dislike to the Bill, and it was very reasonable that the Council should know what he was going to do with it. The amendment he had moved would have the effect of taking the business of the Council over the five o'clock adjournment, and that would give the Minister plenty of time to consult his colleagues. The Bill was in the hands of the Council, and he had known a Bill before to-day taken out of the Minister's hands and carried through the Council in spite of him. That had occurred two or three times. If he had intended any discourtesy to the Minister he would have moved that the Bill be immediately proceeded with. If the honourable gentleman put it up as the first order of the day for Wednesday it would be all right. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he could not do that, as it was private members' day. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Well, Thursday, then. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY thought the best way to deal with the matter would be to ask the Council to allow the third reading to be postponed till the following day; but, if this course was not adopted, he must oppose the proposal of the Hon. the Minister of Education to place this Bill below No. 12 on the Order Paper. If placed in that position it might never rise to the surface again. While that doubt remained it was necessary to take care that the Bill arrived at such a stage that it would go back to the other House and in due time receive the assent of the Governor. The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND said he had been member of the Council for thirty years, and had never known a question of this sort to be raised before. The invariable practice had been for the Minister representing the Government to take the Bills in such order as was most convenient to himself; and he thought the Council would be wanting in courtesy in raising any opposition to the Minister postponing this or any other Bill if it suited his convenience. He was responsible for the conduct of public business in the Council, and no Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker doing in postponing the third reading of the Bill, for which he, no doubt, had a sufficient reason. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON asked the Minister if he would give the Council something like a guarantee that the Bill would be brought up again this session. He wished to know whether the Minister was pandering to a small minority in the Council and to two or three individuals outside. If he would give such a guarantee he did not mind the order being postponed, but he did not want the Bill to be killed in this way. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said he was in somewhat of a difficulty. He would like to answer the honourable gentleman, but after the words he had used as regards his possible action he did not feel inclined to do so. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON said the proper course would be for some honourable member to take the Bill up and carry it through. The Hon. Colonel PITT thought the better plan would be for the Minister to ask that the Bill be made the first order of the day for the following day. Private members would have plenty of time to get their Bills through afterwards. The Hon. Mr. ARKWRIGHT objected to such a course, as he did not wish to imperil a Bill of which he had charge by having it put down after a measure the consideration of which was likely to occupy a whole day. The Hon. Mr. W. KELLY thought the Bill should be made the first order of the day for Thursday. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said the Hon. Mr. McLean, in moving his motion, had given a promise that, as soon as this order was reached, if put down after No. 7, the Council would reconsider whether the Minister wanted more time. He did not think the Minister was reasonable in the way he was treating the Council. He could bring forward the Bill on the following day if he so desired. The Bill had few amendments in it, and he would have plenty of time, and there was no necessity for putting this Bill down in the manner the honourable gentleman proposed. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND disclaimed any desire to treat the honourable

gentleman with any degree of discourtesy, and he would be very sorry to do so. He would suggest to the Minister that he should simply say that if he got the Bill in time he would consult his colleagues and bring it on that evening. That would give him all the time he wished, and get rid of the very unpleasant position in which they all were at the present time, and would enable them all to feel more satisfied with the course that was being adopted. The Bill now was not the property of the Government --- it was the property of the Council ; and it was not reasonable to ask members to agree to any course which would unduly put the measure out of its proper time and opportunity for consideration. The Council divided on the question, "That the word ' seven ' stand part of the question."

<page:871>

Shrimski Louisson Feldwick Swanson McLean Gourley Taiaroa Montgomery Jennings Ormond Twomey Johnston Walker, L. Kelly, T. Peacock Kelly, W. Williams. Pinkerton Pitt Kenny NOES, 13. Smith, A. L. Arkwright Jones Smith, W. C. Reeves Barnicoat Tomoana Rigg Bolt Walker, W. C. Scotland Harris Jenkinson Majority for, Consideration of Bill postponed until after order of the day No. 7. MAORI COUNCILS BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- It will be remembered that last year we passed the Maori Councils Act, which we all hoped was going to do a great deal of good for the Maori race, and assist them in dealing for themselves in the matter of local government. I dare say many members of the Council have watched with great interest the way in which the Natives have endeavoured to cope with the questions that have risen up from time to time. They have been perfectly sincere, so far as I know, in every part of the colony in doing their best to elect their Councils and give those Councils that moral support without which it would be impossible for them to do any good to their dwellings and kaingas. More than that, it was not considered sufficiently necessary or so important to the South Island that the Natives there should elect a Council, owing to the fact that the Natives live very much more among Europeans and in very much smaller numbers than they live anywhere else in the colony, and there they have perceptibly acquired more of the habits of health than the Natives who have lived in the larger and older settlements in the North Island. Yet these Natives in the South Island have been urging the Government that steps should be taken in order to provide them with the necessary machinery for electing Councils and governing themselves, which all points to the fact that the Natives are quite alive to the beneficial purpose of the Act passed last year, and desire to make it a reality for their own benefit. Then, of course, during the last year there has been, not a schoolmaster, but there has been a doctor abroad, and he has been putting his nose into all sorts of places, and finding out what is wrong in the way of smells and unpleasant conditions. The Department of Public Health has been exceedingly fortunate in getting the services of a young Maori who went to America and passed his examinations there as a doctor, and has now come back to practise among his own people in this country. That doctor has been able to use a great deal of influence on the Natives in the North Island to live in a better sanitary condition than they did before, so that it is all very encouraging. The be studied and fostered as far as possible, and the most important clause in this Bill gives the Councils power to carry out their by-laws. By an omission last year, though the Council had power to make by-laws, the power of enforcing them was not inserted. Honourable members will be glad to know that the Act of last year was productive of much good, and I trust they will sympathize with the spirit of the Bill, and be pleased to pass the second reading of this amending Bill. The Hon. Mr. RIGG .- Sir, I intend to support this Bill, but I rise to call attention to what I consider a matter that deserves some consideration at the hands of Parliament- that is, that the Registration of Births and Deaths Act is not enforced as regards the Native race. I am told by a high authority in Native matters that the Maori Councils Act of last session provided some means of enforcing the registration, but I have been unable to find provisions in the law dealing with the subject. Now, what is the position at the present time in regard to the Maori race? Children are born into the world without the attendance of a medical man, and they die and are buried without any medical certificate; and the same

thing also occurs as regards adult persons of the Native race. It seems to me that this is a very serious matter, and one that should have been dealt with long ago by the Legislature. It has been reported, as a result of the last census, that the population of the Native race is increasing in the colony. Well, I have conversed with those in a position to know, and I am informed that the increase is due more to the fact that there was better enumeration than in the past, and that there have also been cases where Natives have been enumerated by the enumerators of Europeans and also by the enumerators of Maoris. This has occurred in the case of half-castes, and helps to support the contention that the Native race is not increasing as shown by the last census, but, on the other hand, it has been decreasing. But I have noticed in the Maori Councils Act that, while there is no provision to enforce the registration of the births and deaths of human beings, there is specific provision for the registration of dogs. It was seen that there was a certain amount of revenue to be derived from that source, and this was considered a more important matter than that to which I have referred. Then we come to the question of Maori marriages, and under the Maori Councils Act it is provided, -- "Nothing contained or implied in this Act shall be deemed to prejudicially affect any marriage of a Maori to a Maori according to Maori custom or usage contracted or solemnised prior to the passing of this Act, or the rights of any issue of any such marriage." The Native custom produces a state of affairs which, if it occurred in any European community, would be regarded as grossly immoral. Maori men can take a wife during their pleasure and discharge her when tired of her, and they are not limited to one wife. In some cases

<page:872>

think that in our civilisation we should justify polygamy. In any case, if it is bad for our own race that there should be promiscuous marriage, it is wrong for the Maori. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- Sir, I should like to say a word in support of the Bill which has just been circulated. In my opinion, it is fraught with a great deal of importance to the North Island particularly. But I have often wondered when there is going to be any finality to amending Bills regarding Maoris and Maori lands. For the past forty years there has been some attempt made by Parliament to deal with the Maoris and their lands. I think the Maori Councils, set up with a Board composed partly of Europeans, will have a very good effect. The matter were left to the Maoris they would do nothing, but when a number of Europeans are included on the Councils it will be found that progress will be made in regard to the settlement of lands and improving their social condition generally, and that justice will also be done to this fine race, and they will not be left without resources. I should be only too pleased if this Bill conferred powers in regard to the Government taking some strong step in regard to seeing that the Maori Councils were carried out without any further delay. I trust the Bill will have the effect its promoters desire. The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA .- I rose to speak on account of the remarks of the last speaker. I think he is mistaking the Bill now before the Council. It is not a Bill in reference to Native lands ; it is the Maori Councils Bill. It makes provision for the management of their homes. There were two Bills introduced last session and passed into law, and both refer to Native Councils ; but one Bill deals only with titles #cc-zero to land, the other deals with their social and sanitary conditions. It is the latter Bill which is proposed to be amended by the Bill before us. It seems to me that this Bill does not in any way amend the Act of last year, but only gives a little further power to the Committee to carry out their rules and regulations. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY. - This Bill contains simply a few slight amendments to the Maori Councils Act of last session which experience has pointed out as necessary. These Acts provide the means by which the Maori people may by their own exertions, under the guidance and authority of the law, raise themselves socially, both physically and morally, to a higher standard in their village communities. Maoris are not a lawless people. Their social regulations and laws are no doubt different from ours, and it will take a considerable period of time before a full assimilation of European law and custom will be made by the Maoris generally. We must exercise patience, and not force on an amiable and law-abiding race social rules and regulations which they do not yet see an urgent

necessity for. My honourable friend Mr. Rigg has referred to the necessity of more rigid insistence on registering births and deaths, and to the system of Maori marriage, which would with Europeans be described as shockingly immoral. Hon. Mr. Rigg regulations are a matter of climate and custom, and the Maori custom has been what may be described as patriarchal. And if the Maoris are immoral in their sexual relations, so were the Jewish kings and lawgivers. The Maori chiefs and leaders I have found to be men of their word, and, as a rule, very agreeable neighbours. I hope the Maori Councils will have the effect of gradually merging the Maori mind with our ideas of true morality, and raise a desire for healthful living and a sense of responsibility for the social and physical condition of their people. Bill read the second time. If OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, this is simply a Bill to remedy defects which have been discovered by experience to exist in the Old-age Pensions Act of 1898. I am sure any one who has studied the administration of the Act must have been astonished at the wonderful way it worked, and at its getting through such an enormous amount of work and dealing with so many applications in a satisfactory way. But still, Sir, it is only reasonable to suppose that after two years' working the officers and the department would be able to find out certain defects and propose remedies for them. Clause 2 simply provides that the Clerk of the Court must notify the Deputy Registrar of the fact, and of the date fixed for the hearing. of an application under this Act. It is purely technical. Then, the Magistrate may adjourn the hearing from time to time at the request of the Deputy Registrar, and the Deputy Registrar, or some person appointed by him, is to have the right to appear at the hearing and to examine and cross-examine the applicant. Clause 3 is as follows :- " (1.) It shall be the duty of every person to make true answers to all questions concerning any applicant for a pension or renewal, or any of the statements contained in any application for a pension or renewal certificate put to him by the Deputy Registrar, or any officer authorised in that behalf by the Deputy Registrar. "(2.) Every person commits an offence who - "(a.) Refuses to answer any such question ; or " (b.) Makes any answer knowing the same to be untrue. "(3.) This section shall apply to any officer of any bank or other corporation carrying on business in New Zealand, and to any officer of the Post-Office Savings-Bank and of any other Government department which receives investments of money from the public." Clause 4 provides that, if a Magistrate finds that any real or personal property has been transferred by the applicant to any person, he may inquire into such transfer, and refuse the application or grant a reduced pension. Of course, it is quite necessary that such powers should be given, because we have heard that certain old people strip themselves of their properties, hand them over to their relatives, and then claim the old-age pension.

Clause 5

<page:873>

the Magistrate to deal with a case during the currency of a pension. The Magistrate, on the application of the Deputy Registrar, can deal with the case on its merits, and reduce or cancel the pension. On the other hand, should the extraordinary increase of income cease, the pension shall again be restored to the original amount. The next clause-No. 6 - gives power to the Crown and the Government to deal with the case in which, on the death of a pensioner. or the wife or husband of a pensioner, it is found they have died possessed of property which showed they were not properly entitled to a pension. The clause enables the Crown to claim a refund not only of what has been taken by pensioners, but double the amount they received is to be paid as a debt due to the Crown in consideration of the frauds perpetrated. Clause 7 simply deals with persons who receive money for procurement of pensions or of renewal certificates. It is a general penalty clause. Clause 9 refers to Maori pensions, and it gives the Magistrate the option, if he chooses, to order that Natives may get an allowance under the Civil List in lieu of getting a pension. I think this Bill has been required for the last two years. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- I think the Bill is all right so far as it goes, but it does not go near far enough. It is to be regretted that this Bill did not form part of the original measure, for if it had it would have saved the colony a large sum of

money. It is notorious that there are numbers of people doing away with their money and properties in order to get these pensions, and transferring their property right and left in order to secure the pension. Sir, there is one clause missing from this Bill that I think was supposed to be in it. What I refer to is the Destitute Persons Bill. In my opinion, it is ridiculous that well-to-do sons who are very well able to support their parents should allow their fathers and mothers to have the name of drawing the pension ; and, Sir, I think it is very unwise that this has not been put into the Bill. I do not know how we can get it in, but I think it should be put in before this Bill passes the Council -that the Destitute Persons Bill should apply to this Bill. Under that Bill you go further than saying that the sons must support their parents - you say they have to support persons other than their parents. Why that Bill should be put out of the way, and not be put into force with the Pensions Bill, I cannot understand. This question has been submitted over and over again to the Government, and in discussions on this Bill it has been said that pensions should not come out of the colony where there are sons well able to support the parents. The parents have educated the sons, and done every- thing for them up to a certain period of their lives, when they were unable to do for them- selves, and in turn they should do something for the parents, and not allow them to be burdens on the colony. It is evident that it was meant to put that into this Bill, because there is a side-note to clause 4 as follows: " Circumstances of relatives may be con- cumstances of relatives considered in that clause ? The clause simply says, - "4. On the hearing of any application for a pension or renewal certificate, if the Magistrate finds that any real or personal property has been transferred by the applicant to any person he may inquire into such transfer and refuse the application, or grant a reduced pension." That does not carry out the side-note to that clause ; and I would like to ask the Minister to bring down a clause making the Destitute Persons Bill apply to this Bill, and have it in- serted in Committee. I know of many cases myself where persons have got pensions who have no more right to the pension than I have. In fact, in some of the cases I know it to have been a disadvantage, and not a bit of good, because it has kept the recipients at the public- house; and for that class of people I do not think there should be a pension. No one objects to decent people getting a pension. They have come down in the world, and every one is glad to see them acquire the pension. But we should not allow these "pointers" to come in and get pensions to which they have no just right. The Hon. Mr. JONES .-- With a great deal the honourable gentleman has said I fully agree. It is a pity that the provisions that are contained in this Bill were not incorporated in the original measure, for if they had been, as the honourable gentleman has said, the colony would have been saved a considerable sum of money. But, of course, we can all be wise after the fact. The original measure was a very good one, considering the difficulty under which the Legislature was placed in dealing with quite a new subject. But there can be no question that in many instances parents of wealthy children are receiving this dole from the State, and that is, in my opinion, a very improper thing; and if those well-to-do children have not sufficient self-respect and honour to maintain their parents after what their parents have done for them, instead of foisting them on the State or leaving the State to give this dole, then I say they ought to be taught to accept their proper responsibilities. I quite agree with what the honourable gentleman said in that respect. I hope that, notwithstanding that the session is in its last stage, the Council will take some little time to endeavour to amend the Bill in this direction, so as to make those capable of supporting their parents do so. The Hon. Mr. RIGG .- Sir, I rise for the pur- pose of calling attention to one clause that has not received the consideration that I think it is entitled to. I refer to clause 7. If honourable gentlemen will read the clause they will see that a licensed Native interpreter is not allowed to charge any fees in connection with the work he does in enabling Natives to receive a pen- sion. It seems to me that the effect of that clause would be to prevent many Natives from ever obtaining a pension. There are only a certain number of people in the colony com- petent to fill in a claim for a Native, and it is not to be expected that these people, who



<page:874>

paid a fee for so doing according to scale under the Land Court Act, are going to do that work for nothing for the Maoris. I can quite conceive that many an old Native who is now receiving a pension is doing so as a result of the efforts of the Native interpreters. It is true there has been an inducement to cause the Native interpreters to take the trouble to inform these Natives that they had a claim under the law ; but still I believe the result has been beneficial, and many Natives would never have received a pension except for the efforts of the interpreter. I do not believe in people charging a Maori for merely procuring a pension ; that, I think, is wrong ; but where an interpreter does that for which he could claim payment if the work were done for a European he should be placed in the position of charging for similar services rendered to the Native. In Committee I shall endeavour to amend the Bill in such a way as to meet the case I have stated, and trust I shall have the support of the Council. Bill read the second time. # INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I feel sure, Sir, the Council will agree to further postpone the consideration of this measure, as I have not yet had an opportunity of going through the Bill as amended in Committee. If they will do so I will promise to make the third reading the first order of the day for Thursday next. I move, That the third reading of the Bill be postponed till Thursday next. Motion agreed to. ## PUBLIC-SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I feel it difficult to express my satisfaction that the measure has reached its present stage, because it has been in my mind for several years. Twelve months ago I could hardly have hoped that I should ever have had the chance of proposing this measure on the floor of the Council. It is a measure that has been at my heart for a long time, and I am happy to say-because I could not have done it unless I had been backed up by my colleagues-it is a measure that my colleagues also have supported in Cabinet and out of Cabinet, and have done their best to help through the House. Now, there is one matter which is perhaps personal, although it is at the same time official, and it also relates to the Legislative Council. I do not wish to refer in any way whatever reprehensively to any honourable member of another Chamber who may have reflected upon the inconvenience of departments such as the Education Department not being represented there. I admit, of course, so far as members in another place are concerned, that it would be very much more to their benefit and to their satisfaction if they were face to face with the Minister and could get from him his mind and his replies, and Hon. Mr. Rigg may wish to bring before him. But I would point out that the same might be said with equal force as regards any Minister administering any department of the public service. I admit that it is a disadvantage not only to the body politic but to the Minister himself not to be able to meet his opponents in the gate ; and, in spite of the able way in which my colleague replies for me, and of my being well supported and well represented by my colleague in the other Chamber, still, at the same time, there is a human feeling which makes me think very often that I would sooner answer those questions and meet my parliamentary critics myself personally if I was enabled to do so ; so that I quite sympathize with those who state it is a matter of regret that the Minister of Education is not present in the Lower Chamber to defend his measures or to propose his reforms. On the other hand, however, I say that would apply to any other portfolio which exists at the present time. And I do not think, perhaps, it is altogether unfortunate that a portfolio like that of education should be, so to speak, taken out of the hurly-burly of party strife-not that I wish to avoid it, because I am always quite ready and willing to discuss these matters with persons who have live opinions to give on such subjects ; but still I admit it is unfortunate, perhaps, in some ways. especially as the time has arrived when it is necessary for us to make changes. Ever since I have been Minister I have felt there are certain things to be done to make our education a live system. I was able to bring about the first large departure since I became a Minister simply by an Order in Council. That was the matter of classification. I was able to do away with that, and I consider that was a very great improvement on what was going on before, and it was simply following up

the experience of the Old Country and other countries in the matter of classification. But when I was face to face with this large question of a colonial scale of salaries I really did feel I had a very large task to perform ; but still it was a task that was imposed upon me simply by the nature of the position. From the day I came into office as Minister-and that is some six years ago now-every year I have had put before me by members of different Boards-I might say members of almost every Board up and down the colony-applications, either personally or by letter, pointing out particular reasons why that Board should get special consideration in certain directions. The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY .- It was a matter of money. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I can assure the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, who knows a good deal about education, that there was always something to be said in favour of every application that came before me, because each Board could show a special reason why that particular Board was in difficulties, or had a difficulty to overcome ; and therefore the more I thought of it the more I came to the conclusion that for a colonial system it was

<page:875>

the Boards so established that they would be above difficulties; and I have been endeavouring ever since to place Boards in such a position of satisfactory finance that they shall never again be obliged to resort to such methods as they have been driven to in the past. Of course, I do not refer to rich Boards such as the Hon. Mr. Montgomery used to preside over- the North Canterbury Board-nor to the Otago Board, because those Boards were enabled to assure themselves of their own finance. Because of the number of large schools they had they were able to absolutely make money out of the existing capitation of £3 15s. ; whereas if you went across the straits to Marlborough or down the coast to Grey and Westland, where there are very good Boards, which work very well, or if you went to the District of Auckland, which I think is the most notable instance, there you would find the largest district in area, with the largest number of schools, and the largest number of scholars, and the fewest number of large schools in proportion, where their finance was always in difficulties, simply because they had not sufficient large schools to assist the work of the small schools. In Otago and North Canterbury it was different. There there were a sufficient number of large schools to enable the Board to save money on the large schools to enable them to support the small schools. That was a happy state of things, even looking at it from the point of view of finance. But when I came to look at it still further I found that this was operating in a way very detrimental to the teachers, to the children, and to the general welfare of the community. It meant that in certain districts of the colony they could only just afford to pay small salaries. Other districts paid large salaries, and, of course, they got the best teachers ; but, on the other hand, the districts that could not afford to pay large salaries were glad to get the leavings of other places ; and, without in any shape or form reflecting on the teachers who have been serving and doing their best in the poorer districts, still I say it is not good for any service such as an Education service ought to be to have any part of it labelled as anybody else's leavings. We want our children in every part of the colony to be equally well taught. We want every part of the colony to be able to pay equally good salaries to what any other part of the colony pays ; and, with that certainty which I think I hold in my hand if this Bill passes, every school in the colony ought to be taught by a man quite equal to hold his own in any school of the colony. Then, another unfortunate circumstance has occurred in the past, and that is that Boards sometimes got into trouble financially. Many other associations and institutions get into trouble financially, but most of them have to get out of the trouble at their own expense. Education Boards, however, had this peculiar compensating clause : that whenever they got into financial trouble they could always get out of it at the expense of the teachers. I do not think that is fair. The constable," and had overestimated something, and that they had to draw in one direction or another, the easiest way of drawing in was always to knock something off the teachers' salaries. I do not think that is right or fair. We know that has been done by a colonial Government on a previous occasion ; but I do not think that the Government that did it felt

very proud of its finance, nor do I think the Boards felt proud of having to do an action of that sort. It is because of these troubles that this reform has been brought in, and why I am very glad it has been brought in. I feel that this will do more to make our education system truly a national system than it has ever been before, because our teachers have been divided up between district and district, and there have been prejudices in certain districts as to the appointment of teachers from one part of the colony to another. I believe that will gradually disappear now that we have got all our teachers on one footing and on one establishment. Of course, the difficulty of dealing with this Bill is that the whole gist of the matter is in the schedule; but I think the Council may rest assured that the schedule has been very carefully studied and very carefully prepared. The Government, feeling sure that this was a question which should be settled as soon as possible, and required to be settled in a manner which would convince even those who were perhaps opposed to it, adopted the reasonable expedient of appointing a Royal Commission to go into it. They did their best to select representative men from every part of the colony, and I can only here in my place in the Council express my exceeding gratitude for the way in which those gentlemen performed their duties. I think they did their duties remarkably well. They spared no time and no trouble; they went right up and down the colony; they gave every education district in the colony an opportunity of being heard; and the amount of evidence they collected is most instructive and, I think, conclusive: and the result is this Bill. Not only this Bill in the shape which it meets us to-day is the result, because the tables attached to the schedules, if not compiled, were approved by the Commission; but I feel quite certain that if it had not been for the work of the Commission this Bill would not have had so easy a passage in another place. I can only ask the Council to give the Bill every consideration; in fact, I know I need not ask the Council to do that, because they are sure to do it by reason of the importance of the question. And I trust there are enough members of this Council anxious that the true interests of education should be fostered and encouraged in this colony to enable this Bill to go through. It goes without saying that if this Bill passes I shall be a very proud man. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill. Bill read the second time. The Council adjourned at twenty minutes to five o'clock p.m.

<page:876>

Tuesday, 29th October, 1901. First Reading-Food Trusts Bill-Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill-Registration of Births Extension Bill-Local Bills-Imported Rolling-stock-Imprest Supply Bill (No. 5)-Trustee Bill-Supply. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Maori Councils Bill. FOOD TRUSTS BILL. On the motion, That leave be given to introduce this Bill, Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) rose to oppose the introduction of this Bill. He did so as a protest against the method adopted of introducing so many measures at the end of the session of Parliament, when members were both mentally and physically exhausted. During the first six weeks of the session the valuable time of the House was wasted over a number of comparatively trivial measures, measures of no real importance to the colony. On last Friday afternoon no less than nineteen Bills passed their second reading, were forced through Committee, and read a third time, occupying on an average seven minutes for each Bill to pass through all its stages. Such being the case, he thought the time had arrived when the members of the House ought to take a stand. At the present time, under the head of "Government measures," there were no less than thirty-three measures on the Order Paper, and many of the measures included amongst the thirty-three were measures of very great importance. There were the Victoria College Site Bill, the Maori Lands Administration Bill, and the Licensing Bill, for instance. Why, the Licensing Bill alone would take the next four weeks to carefully consider the provisions that might be introduced into it with the view of bringing about an effective and equitable administration of the licensing law of the colony. He therefore rose and protested against the introduction of this Bill, and he would ask for a division. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) had no objection to the Bills coming down provided that the Premier was prepared to give a reasonable amount of time to consider them, and not

rush them through as he did-nineteen Bills in one hour and forty minutes, as was done the other day. Rather than that should be done he would prefer to throw them out altogether. Mr. SEDDON said it was a very reasonable request that honourable gentlemen should have time to consider the Bill. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) did not think it was fair to the House that a wrong impression should be created by what was stated by the last speaker as well as the honourable member for Ashley. Every one of the local Bills which had been referred to was carefully considered by the Local Bills Committee. In fact, even the Committee, not only as to whether his Bill was in accordance with the Standing Orders, but as to the merits of the Bill itself. He thought, when Bills were dealt with so thoroughly as were these Bills by that Committee it was hardly fair to say that Bills were put through without consideration. He would like to ask the Premier if it was correct that there was to be another opportunity given to consider the rest of the local Bills on the Order Paper. Some honourable members were under that impression, and it was just as well they should know whether further opportunity was to be given. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) said it was not the fact that Bills were put through without consideration that he had to complain of just now, but he had a local Bill which had had no opportunity of coming before the House. Before he gave his consent to passing another series of Government measures he wanted to know whether the Premier would give them an opportunity of dealing with their local Bills and doing justice to their constituencies. He was willing to admit the local Bills were carefully considered by the Local Bills Committee. The Bill in which he was interested had been closely looked into by that Committee, and had been submitted to the House, and he wished to know if the Government would give an opportunity of proceeding further with the measure. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) said the member for Palmerston had stated that the local Bills had been carefully considered by the Local Bills Committee, wishing it to be inferred, no doubt, that the members of that Committee had mastered the contents of the measures. Why, the members of the Committee did not understand the contents of the Bills any more than did the man in the moon. There was one Bill that had passed the Committee that he was sure not one member of the Committee could explain. If one attended the meetings of the Committee and watched the perfunctory manner in which the Committee carried on its work, he would be quite entitled to challenge the statement of any member who had the hardihood to say that the Bills received careful consideration on the Local Bills Committee. There was one measure in which he was interested the far-reaching effects of which not one member of the Committee understood. The members of the House were in an equal state of ignorance as to the provisions of the Bill ; and in his position he found the difficulty that, notwithstanding that he understood every point of the subject, he had had the greatest difficulty in impressing the true facts of the case on other members. Although the member for Palmerston had said the Bills had been carefully considered by the Committee, he (Mr. Fisher) undertook to say that the members of the House who had not seen the Bill knew more about it than the members of the Local Bills Committee, who had seen it. Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) hoped the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) was more accurate in the statements he was accustomed

<page:877>

he had just given. It was to be hoped, too, that he generally knew more about subjects he was talking upon than he knew on the present occasion. This honourable gentleman, who professed to know all about the work of the Local Bills Committee, he (Mr. Graham) had not seen present at a single meeting of the Committee during the present session, or, as far as he remembered, at any meeting in any previous session. Mr. FISHER .- You were absent when I was there. Mr. GRAHAM said he was never absent from the meetings of the Committee. The local Bills, no doubt, went through the House at racehorse speed, but it was by no means correct to say that the Committee did not go into the merits of each measure. Every clause in each Bill was fully investigated, and often they were very keenly criticized. He heard honourable members who had had local Bills before the Committee say, " Hear, hear." These members knew

from personal experience that what he was saying was correct. Therefore, although local Bills went through the House at a greater speed than most other Bills, it could not be truthfully said they did not receive full and mature consideration at the hands of the Committee before being reported to the House. He had known local Bills take two or three days to deal with. He had often felt amused at the facility with which the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) discoursed on many subjects, and in this instance he had done so on a subject he knew nothing whatever about. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) said it was only fair to the House that members should know something about the provisions of the Bill, and, as & division was to be called for, he trusted that to enable members to vote intelligently the Premier would explain the aim of the Bill. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) wished to add his testimony to that of those members who had already spoken of the careful manner in which the Local Bills Committee did their work. In his short experience of some six sessions of Parliament he had had charge every year of one or more local Bills, and he would rather submit to the ordeal of any other Committee of the House than go before the Local Bills Committee with a weak or faulty Bill. That Committee recognised that local Bills did not receive exhaustive treatment in the Committee of the House, and therefore did their best to supply the deficiency. He had sometimes thought of raising the point at the Committee that it was not their duty to investigate every clause of the Bill. He had found that Bills in which he was interested had occupied a great deal of time in the scrutiny the Committee gave them : they had been most thoroughly investigated in every respect. The Committee, it seemed to him, made a point of ascertaining the whole of the policy of a measure. He was interested in a local Bill which the House so far had not dealt with, and he claimed that, like other members, he was entitled to have the the House. If in the wisdom of the House the Bill was rejected he would accept the decision, but he would certainly object to have the Bill smothered. He would use every endeavour he could, and every endeavour the forms of the House allowed, to assert his rights to have the Bill considered in a fair and square way, and either passed or rejected. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he desired to introduce this Bill because it was already in another form on the Order Paper, but not under its proper designation. He referred to the Prevention of Combines Bill. This Bill confined its operations simply to foods. He felt there would be a difficulty in getting a Bill through dealing with the larger questions, but he thought they would get a Bill through simply dealing with the prevention of combines in regard to the food of the people. Now, members of the House would see by the morning paper that a lawsuit was pending in this connection, and they would see there an account of a combination and the objects of the combination. The whole thing was exposed in the public Press. Of course, no law the House would pass would or could interfere with any matters now before the Courts, where the question as to the legality of a combination for such a purpose was being tested. At all events, this was a most important matter, and it was one we should not deal with lightly. He thought, probably, if a Bill was introduced and members had time to consider it, if objection was taken to the Bill proceeding this session he would not press it. He said, where we had all the millers combining, and the bakers combining with the millers, the question was where the consumer was going to come in by-and-by. If they raised the price of food on the workmen, then the workmen combined to get the price of their labour raised. An Hon. MEMBER .- The workmen started it. Mr. SEDDON said, No ; their combination did not affect the food question. At all events, he should ask the attention of the House to another phase of the question, as members took an interest in country matters. He wanted to know where the farmers came in. If there was only one buyer in the colony it would probably have an influence on the producer. He knew districts where there were only a couple of buyers of sheep, and members knew the effect that had on the sheep-farmers. At all events, he thought from what had fallen from members that the matter was of sufficient importance to justify doing something to bring it under consideration. Now he came to the question of local Bills-although he did not know why that question had been introduced. Very generously the Government gave a day of its own time for local Bills, and what was the result? On the

first day a struggle took place between the member for the Taieri and the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) on a Dunedin Bill. He thought a majority of the members of the House was against the member for the Taieri, and said he had no right to strenuously oppose the

<page:878>

a vote the Bill would have gone through. However, the next day information came from the promoters of the Bill, and they asked to have two-thirds of the clauses struck out. The objection taken by the member for the Taieri was found to be valid, and the Council's own engineer reported against the proposal. If that Bill had gone through and had been found to be defective, and trouble had arisen, members would all have had to take their share of the responsibility. However, no further business was done that day. He then gave another afternoon, and, as he was not aware that the cause of the trouble between the member for the Taieri and the member for Dunedin City had been removed, he said he would make a selection of the Bills and put in one class the unopposed Bills and in another the opposed Bills. He thought the result of that was in the interests of the House, because they had some nineteen Bills passed, and nineteen districts had had their requirements met. If that course had not been followed all these nineteen districts would have been without their requirements, because these two or three Bills were blocking the way. Now, because he had arranged business to give a chance to these unopposed Bills he was accused of using his position against the City of Wellington. He could only say that any statement of that kind was absolutely without foundation. Then, the member for Wellington City to-day said what he would do if he did not get his way, and did not get a chance with his Bill. Now, the honourable member knew as well as he did that the Standing Orders gave a certain number of days each session for local Bills, and the honourable gentleman knew as well as he did-and there was no use burking the fact-that the Bill had no more show of going through than he had of flying across the Straits. The honourable gentleman was now only posing before his constituents as a martyr in order to engender some sympathy. He could not, at this stage of the session, give the honourable member preference over other members, and it would not be right for him to do so. He was quite prepared to give the other local Bills, that were unopposed, an opportunity to go through, and if the honourable member could make a satisfactory arrangement in regard to this Bill, the same as was done in the case of the Dunedin Bill, so that the Bill might become practically an unopposed Bill, it would not take five minutes to go through. He would ask the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) to adjourn for a short time with his colleague Mr. Fisher, and see if they could come to an arrangement, because if the Bill was no longer opposed he would be very glad to give the honourable gentleman an opportunity to put it through. Mr. FISHER.- You will not be troubled. Mr. SEDDON said he would be quite prepared to give an opportunity to the honourable gentleman if the Bill was unopposed. So far as the Bill was concerned, he had stated his opinion of it, and he was still of that opinion. He could not understand how the value of the I should apply, and I said that it was not Mr. Seddon said the value was not in the property. This value was not in it at the time the owners wanted to sell it to the Government ; and he could not understand the Council taking an option over the property before consulting the ratepayers. There was something about the transaction he did not like. However, he could not stop all other business for the sake of having a fight between the two members for Wellington City over one Bill, and he did not think members would blame him for refusing to give that opportunity. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) wished to make a personal explanation. He objected to the introduction of the Bill on the ground that a sheaf of new Bills was being introduced in the last days of the session, when there were so many Bills on the Order Paper which had not yet been dealt with. The House divided. AYES, 36. Palmer Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Parata Arnold Hogg Pirani Bennet Houston Buddo Kaihau Stevens Steward Carncross Lang Carroll Tanner Lawry Thompson, R. Collins McGowan Wilford Colvin McGuire Willis. McNab Duncan Tellers. Millar Ell Field Flatman Mills O'Meara Gilfedder Hornsby. Graham NOES, 18. Russell, W. R. Hardy Allen, J. Smith, G. J. Herries Atkinson Thomson, J. W.

Bollard Hutcheson Fisher Tellers. Massey Meredith Fowlds Monk Russell, G. W. Fraser, A. L. D. Rhodes Fraser, W. Majority for, 18. Leave granted, Bill introduced, and read a first time. # WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENTS BILL. In moving for leave to introduce this Bill, Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, -I would like to call members' attention to the English law upon this subject-the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act. This is the Act of 1900. Mr. J. ALLEN .- It has been altered this year. Mr. SEDDON .- The Act came into force on the 1st July this year, but it was passed last year. I contended all through the piece last year that in the 4th clause of our Act the words "industrial employment" did not apply to farmers, and it was moved when the Bill was in Committee that the Act should not apply to persons engaged in agriculture. An Hon. MEMBER .- It was moved that it should apply, and you opposed it. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes, it was moved that it

<page:879>

yond the English Act." There is just one word in subsection (2) of clause 4, and the provision alludes to "quarrying, mining," and so on, "and other hazardous employments." It has been contended that the words "hazardous employments" would apply to persons engaged in bushfelling and in attending to dangerous machinery. I have been again advised on that point, and the advice is that the words "mining, quarrying, and other hazardous employments" - that the words "other hazardous employments" are governed by the preceding words-that they are the "hazardous employments" alluded to. In subsection (2), as I stated, "In mining, quarrying, engineering, building, or other hazardous work carried on on behalf of an employer, whether as part of his trade or business or not." Very well, the other section alluded to "any industrial, commercial, or manufacturing work carried on on behalf of an employer as part of his trade or business." Both refer to trade or business. The one is industrial-it is to mining, engineering, building. It would be a stretch, I think, and a big stretch, if it was interpreted that this applied to persons engaged in agriculture, except you read that "hazardous employment" was to be read and construed outside the other employment mentioned. At all events, suppose it did. It would go to the Supreme Court, and from the Supreme Court to the Privy Council, and, as I said earlier in the session, the thing is to make the law clear and so there can be no doubt about it. Very well, of course I knew that I did not propose for a single moment to go back upon the existing legislation. I am not going back upon it. I believe, myself, that the workers in our city-the workers whose engagement in dangerous employments is covered by the present law-should not be interfered with. I think it is a most humane Act. There are other reasons which have been the cause of trouble in the country districts; but now, to show that I am right in my contention, I find this proviso in clause 2 of the English Act :-- "Provided that where a contractor provides and uses machinery driven by mechanical power for the purpose of threshing, ploughing, or other agricultural work, he, and he alone, shall be liable under this Act to pay compensation to any workmen employed by him on such work." Now, farmers have asked, if a threshing-machine comes to their farm to thresh there, they shall not be liable to have their farms taken away if an accident happens. There is reason in what they ask, and there is the English law which says that the man who brings the machine, and who is the employer of the men working the machinery in ploughing, threshing, or other work -- that he, and he alone, shall be responsible as the employer, and not the farmer. I say, that being the case, and that being the English law, and as there is a doubt about our law, why not put in that provision in our Act? I say it is reasonable and just to everybody-absolutely just. Now, that is what my Bill is going to do. far as the English Act, and include agricultural labourers? Mr. SEDDON .- I am not going to enact the English Act, but I am going to make clear in this case that the English law shall apply. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- You are not going to stand to your promise of a year ago. Mr. SEDDON .- I have been quite consistent in all I have done and said; but where you have this constant friction and doubt as to the interpretation of the law, rather than have our money frittered away in Courts of law, it is surely better to get the doubt cleared away; and that is what the Bill is for. I am not going to depart from its

principle. I now introduce the Bill. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) .- Sir, I have listened very carefully to the speech of the Premier, and cannot for the life of me understand what the proposals of the Bill are. Mr. HERRIES .- He might alter it now before it is printed. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- I think probably he will after he has heard what I have to say. Last year, when the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill was going through Committee, I moved that the word "agricultural " be inserted in order to bring in the agricultural labourers. The Premier opposed the inclusion of the word, and the voting was 26 to 20. The agricultural labourers were thus not included. In his speech on the third reading of the Bill he said,- "I invited the Committee to take the same course as was followed in Great Britain, where, when the Bill was first passed, it did not apply to agricultural labourers. I also told the Committee that a Bill was before the Imperial Parliament, and that it required a large number of clauses to make the Bill apply to agricultural labourers with safety, because it would appear to me that unless we had the Bill carefully safeguarded the result would have been some. what dangerous." Then, a little further down in the same speech the Premier says, " I had nothing whatever against the agricultural labourers being included," but he would not include them. He continues : - " We had to take what we could get for the time being, and I promised the House that, if that was not sufficient, we would follow in the footsteps of the Imperial Parliament- that we would pass it as it is now, the same as they passed their Act originally ; and later on I will take the opportunity of going into the question, with the advantage of having the Imperial Act before us, in respect to agricultural labourers, and then place it before the House in such a way that there will be a prospect of its being passed." Now, I hold in my hands the Imperial Act which the Premier referred to. It was passed by the Imperial Parliament on the 30th July, 1900. As a matter of fact, at the time the Premier made the speech I have quoted the Act had been passed, though it had not reached the colony. The honourable gentleman pro-

<page:880>

the inclusion of " agricultural labourers " last year, he would this year bring down the Imperial Act and have it incorporated in our legislation for the purpose of extending the benefits of the Act to agricultural labourers in New Zealand. Mr. SEDDON .- I did not say so. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. - Here it is-Chapter 22 :- " An Act to extend the Benefits of 'The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897,' to Work- "[30th July, 1900. men in Agriculture. " Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows : - "1. (1.) From and after the commencement of this Act, 'The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897,' shall apply to the employment of workmen in agriculture by any employer who habitually employs one or more workmen in such employment. " (2.) Where any such employer agrees with a contractor for the execution by or under that contractor of any work in agriculture, section four of 'The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897,' shall apply in respect of any workman employed in such work as if that employer were an undertaker within the meaning of that Act : " Provided that where the contractor provides and uses machinery driven by mechanical power for the purpose of threshing, ploughing, or other agricultural work, he, and he alone, shall be liable under this Act to pay compensation to any workman employed by him on such work. #cc-zero " (3.) Where any workman is employed by the same employer mainly in agricultural but partly or occasionally in other work, this Act shall apply also to the employment of the workman in such other work "The expression 'agriculture' includes horti- culture, forestry, and the use of land for any purpose of husbandry, inclusive of the keeping or breeding of live-stock, poultry, or bees, and the growth of fruit and vegetables. "2. This Act may be cited as 'The Work- men's Compensation Act, 1900,' and shall be read as one with 'The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897,' and that Act and this Act may be cited together as . The Workmen's Compensation Acts, 1897 and 1900.' "3. This Act shall come into operation on the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and one." This, Sir, is the whole English Act, and I have taken the opportunity of



reading it in order that there may be no misunderstanding throughout the colony as to what the English law is. If words mean anything at all, the Premier promised that, after it had passed through the Imperial Parliament, he would be prepared to have the Act extending the Workers' Compensation Act to agricultural labourers re-enacted by our Parliament in this session. Mr. G. W. Russell Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- It is no use the honourable gentleman saying "No," for his speech is on record, and honourable members. who heard him give the promise, like myself, will remember perfectly the position the honourable gentleman took up. He pledged himself as surely as any man could do that he would bring down legislation on the lines of the Imperial Act this session for the purpose of affirming the principle, if the Imperial authorities included agricultural labourers in their proposal. Now, I suppose we have all noticed that. the Farmers' Union at Ashburton the other day passed a resolution that the inclusion of agricultural labourers was not desirable; and what is now the effect? This very courageous Premier, who is not an opportunist at all, runs away from his guns at the very first shot fired by the enemy. He has no objection whatever to bring in an Act applying the principle of workmen's compensation to the cities, the factories, and so on. All these classes in the community are to be brought under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act, and the Premier has nothing to say to that; but when slow-going, Conservative England passes a law in favour of bringing the agricultural labourers under the operation of the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act, then, simply because during the last few weeks a Farmers' Union was set up, our great, brave, courageous, but opportunist Premier scuttles away from his guns and leaves the agricultural labourers to look after themselves as best they can. All I can say is I should be very sorry to occupy the position the Premier occupies after the absolute promise he gave in that speech of last session. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) .- I would like the Premier, when he is replying, to state whether it is his intention to amend the principal Act so as to give the mortgagee first preference. It is rumoured that the proposal of the Government was to bring down a Bill to amend the principal Act, so that the mortgagee should have first claim under the clauses of that Act. I would ask the Premier, therefore, whether it is his intention to amend the Act as at present. At the present time it is the widow of the man who really has the first claim on the property. Under the alleged amendment it is proposed to give the mortgagee a prior claim. I would like to know, therefore, whether that is so or not. Mr. TANNER (Avon) .- We have often seen the Premier in a difficult position, but now he is in a cleft stick. If my ears are to be trusted, and I trust to them rather than to any printed report, the Premier said in this House in August last that it was intended that the Act should apply to farm-labourers. Here are the words - I am not quoting from Hansard of this session : "It will be our duty to alter the law and make it consistent with what we intended." "Will you do it ?" asked an honourable member, and Mr. Seddon replied, "I will, certainly." Surely we can go back twelve months ago, to the night of the

<page:881>

place : When the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill was under discussion in the House, Mr. G. W. Russell moved, in Committee, to insert 'agricultural' after 'industrial' in a given subsection-that is, giving the agricultural labourers the benefit of the Act. This was opposed by Mr. Seddon, and, of course, was defeated, Mr. Seddon promising at the same time that this session he would bring in an extended Bill, giving agricultural labourers compensation for accidents. That, I say, was the true inference from the words used by the Premier on that occasion. He did not use the words in that specific order in which they are here set down ; but, so far as concerns the impression conveyed to the House and given to the country, and the impression that was intended to be conveyed to the country, there is no question about that. Now, the Premier says it was never intended to apply to farm-labourers. Then, I ask, what necessity was there for passing the Act of last year ? because, if it was to have the restricted application the Premier now says in regard to farm-labourers, it would be just as well not to have placed it on the statute-book. The farm-labourers constitute the largest body of labour in this colony. They outnumber

the seamen, they outnumber the factory workers, and, in fact, they constitute the greater mass of our industrial population ; and yet they are declared not to be included in the terms of the Act. If I understand the Premier aright now-but it is rather difficult to understand what the Premier really does mean ; it is not always to be gathered from what he says- An Hon. MEMBER .- Have you seen the Bill ? Mr. TANNER .- We have not seen the Bill, and we have not seen its terms ; I admit that. It may be that the Bill is intended to make clear the scope and application of last year's Act. It is not to be supposed, after what the Premier pledged himself to-or is reported to have pledged himself to-at a recent caucus, it is intended to make it clear and unmistakable that farm-labourers are to be included under its provisions. My own impression of the Act passed last year is that it does distinctly include agricultural labourers, and it ought so to include them. If the Premier is on the horns of a dilemma he has himself to blame for it. I am not asking for any new departure from last year's Act ; I am satisfied with the Act as it stands. But there are members in this House who are afraid of the Farmers' Union, and some of them are men sitting on this side of the House. It is quite right somebody should tell the truth here sometimes. There are men who call themselves Government supporters in this House who were simply dragged with the flowing tide in 1894 against their wishes in support of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act. They have waited for any subsequent opportunity to deal that Act a vital stab, in which they were very nearly successful this session, and they have not yet relinquished the hope of emasculating or sweeping it off the statute-book, though they are compelled to be very VOL. CXIX .- 55. was followed by the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill in 1899 and 1900 these men hoped it might not be made to apply to those engaged in agricultural pursuits. Why it should not do so passes the wit of Socrates and Solomon and even the skill of a Philadelphia lawyer, to conceive. These men engaged in agriculture have as much right to the protection of the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act as any men in the colony, for amongst them, in the course of their employment, have occurred some of the most pitiable instances of men's lives being cut short, and the prospects of their wives and children being absolutely blasted in consequence, that have occurred in any country. But it is not done in a wholesale way, as in a colliery disaster in the Old Country, for instance, where hundreds of lives are swept out of existence together; but when one enumerates from the newspapers the number of lives sacrificed in this colony in the pursuit known as agriculture, with all its branches included, he will find that it constitutes a formidable proportion of those annually killed. What proportion that bears to the number of lives that are lost in the course of the twelve months I rather hesitate to say, in the absence of accurate statistics, but I believe it is equal to the number of lives lost in all the other occupations, on account of the numerical pre-dominance of the agricultural labourers. And yet these are to be excluded by the Bill now introduced, if we gather rightly what has been stated. I like to support the honourable gentleman when I can, but I can give him my assurance my vote does not go with him in any such proposal as this, not if my political existence depended on it-and I do not think it does -but I shall oppose it most strenuously at every point. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- Sir, I think we ought to accept the literal recital of what the member for Avon says in regard to the statements of the Premier last year, for the honourable gentleman says he is not quoting from Hansard, but from something more reliable and convincing, which must be a note of his own taken at the time. He says that when the Premier was asked to do a certain thing in regard to the agricultural labourers the Premier replied, " Hi will, certain." That reminds me of an incident relating to Sir George Grey. On one occasion Mr. E. M. Smith, the member for New Plymouth, warned Sir George Grey of a trap that was being laid for him, when Sir George, according to the version of Mr. Smith, replied in his courtly way, " Look here, Smith, I ain't a goin' to be 'ad that way." So I want the Premier, when answering these questions in regard to the agricultural labourer -he seems to have got the Premier into a terrible tangle, like the mortgagee and the poor widow-to give us that further explanation demanded of him by a recent deputation in regard to the casual labourer. The casual labourer seems to be the most troublesome customer of all. Mr.

HUTCHESON (Wellington City). - I

<page:882>

tural and pastoral labourers, and I wish to take the House back a little further-to 1899 when the member for Wellington City(Mr. Hutcheson) moved for the inclusion of agricultural and The Committee divided on pastoral labourers. the question, and those who voted against the inclusion of the agricultural and pastoral labourers were :- Messrs. E. G. Allen, Bollard, Cadman, Carroll, Duncan, Fisher, Gilfedder, Graham, Hall-Jones, Hogg, Holland, Hous- ton, Lang, Lawry, McGowan, M. J. S. Macken- zie, R. Mckenzie, McNab, Massey, Meredith, Millar, Mills, Moore, Morrison, O'Meara, O'Regan, Parata, Pere, Rolleston, Seddon, Stevens, Steward, Symes, J. W. Thomson ; tellers -Flatman, G. Hutchison. Now do you see where the hide-bound Tories are. And the Bill was dropped, but it served as a rallying cry, and the Premier did his best to incite an infuriated mob in Wellington to the belief that I was the man who killed the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill. Mr. TANNER .- Give us the list of those who voted the other way. Mr. HUTCHESON .- The "Noes " were 21 and the " Ayes" were 36. The " Noes " were : Messrs. J. Allen, Brown, Buchanan, Carson, Crowther, Heke, Herries, Hunter, J. Hut- cheson, Joyce, Kelly, Lethbridge, Lewis, McLean, Montgomery, Russell, Sligo, Smith, Tanner; tellers -- Carncross, Taylor. Pairs: For - Field, Kaihau, J. Mckenzie, Ward; against - Pirani, Rawlins, Wright, McGuire Now, I admit that at that time the Imperial Parliament had not seen fit to include the agri- cultural and pastoral labourers, but it had been announced as their intention at the next session of Parliament to deal with the agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and to include them. Now, we are always prating that we are leading the world, and that the great inventive genius of our Premier evolved from his inner conscious- ness all these beneficent measures, and I do not think it was too much to expect of him that he should again lead the world and include agricul- tural and pastoral labourers in our legislation. We had a stormy scene on that night-a scene I do not care to revert to-but I must say that the principal opponents to the inclusion of the agricultural labourers under the Workers' Com- pensation for Accidents Bill were those repre- senting the small farmers, who sat mostly on the opposite side of the House. The Premier appealed, that, knowing his followers better than any other member of the House could do, it would be impossible to get the Bill through, and that it must be lost if it was sought to include these labourers. That is why he put it in the mouths of my opponents at the general election of 1899 that I was the man who killed the Bill. I had no such intention, and I am pleased now, if I am right in prognosticating, that the Premier intends to include the agri- cultural and pastoral labourers, for the reason that it is only bare honesty to the farmers to say whether they are or are not in the Bill, and to let them know how they stand, so that, if necessary, they may take steps to insure their Mr. Hutcheson tion clause, I would say that the very fact of a man being injured in any pursuit was prima facie evidence that he had been engaged in a dangerous pursuit, and, as the Bill in the inter- pretation clause says "any," it seems to my mind to cover all hazardous employments, and therefore I interpret the Bill as applicable to farmers. Legal luminaries may say it is limited in its application by the context ; and that may or may not be the case, but to me it seems the farmers' position is defined ; and, speaking with a full sense of my ignorance of a farmer's life, I say it would only be a fair and equitable thing to do for the farmers to specifically include them, so that they may take advantage of the Act and free them- selves from all anxiety and care as to injuries to their employés by insuring those employés for a reasonable sum. On every occasion when a labour Bill has been before the Committee this session I have dropped the lead over the side and told the honourable gentleman when he was getting into shoal water, and I tell him now he will not get this Bill through if he gives mortgagees preference over the claims of the injured workman, or, in event of his death, of the claims of his relatives. You can insure the mortgagee. It is the man who is borrowing the money who, no doubt, will have to pay the cost of insuring the mortgagee. Again, if he does not go circumspectly in respect to the exclusion of casual labourers-it is a difficult matter to define what is and what is not casual labour-he will

again be in shoal water. These are two points that will be strongly debated in the House. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) .- I distinctly understood from the Premier last session that a Bill would be introduced dealing with agricultural labourers and making the necessary provision. The farmers understand they are in it, and they are asking that they should be removed from the obligations of the Act. Now, if the Right Hon. the Premier is going to have this out fair and square, and is going to introduce any clause into this Bill that will remove agricultural labourers, I say the Bill is not going through this session. If there is one class of workers in this country whose family needs the benefits of the Workers' Compensation Act it is the low-paid and intermittently employed farm-labourer. The town workers usually get a much higher rate of pay, and their work is more regular than the agricultural labourers, who receive a lower rate of pay and have more slack times, and who have no opportunity for making provision for their families that those in the towns have. I hope the Premier will make that quite clear when he is replying-that he is not going to make any attempt in his amending Bill to absolutely exempt farm-labourers from the operation of the Act, because farmers clearly understand they are under it. It is well known that the agents of these insurance offices are canvassing for business amongst the farmers. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) .- I am not interested in the question as to whether the Premier has

<page:883>

pensation for Accidents Act since 1899 or not. The question, to my mind, is whether in this proposal we are to have the English Act of last year enacted here, or is the farmer to be still in a doubtful position with regard to the Act, or is this proposal to exempt them from the operations of the Act when it comes to a question of employing machinery on the farm? I think this is a matter that ought to be made clear. If it is left in the present unsatisfactory position it will still be a debatable question as to whether the farmer is under the Act or not. The employers are not exactly sure of their position, although a number of them are in- I think the House suring their workmen. demands this information when the Premier replies : "Are we to have the English Act? " I say, if we are not to have the English Act let us remain where we are. I would like to go into this matter pretty fully. I do not see why the Government should not take up the question of insurance. At the present time the Government Life Insurance rate is 10s. per cent. on wages, and no consideration for finding employes. should be done for farmers at 6s. per cent., and no loss made by the department ; indeed, I think it will be profitable business. farmers are not adverse to insuring the same as other employers, but they resent being in a position of not knowing whether they are liable or not under the Workers' Compensation Act. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) .- I would like to express myself somewhat similar to what has been said by the last speaker. We ought to have the English Act in its entirety and not adopt a portion of it. My name has been mentioned by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) as one who voted against bringing agricultural labourers under the operation of the Act of 1899. I certainly did that, and had my reasons for doing so. At that time the Commissioner of the Government Insurance Office was behind the chair, and I walked across and asked him if any rates had been prepared to cover farm-labourers, and the answer was in the negative. I concluded that we were going blindfold in bringing people under a bond to insure when there were no rates prepared to meet the case, and I thought at that time there should have been a schedule prepared so that we might know what we were voting on. That was my reason for opposing the Bill at that time, but I believe myself that if farm-labourers are brought under the operation of the Bill they will be thankful for it, after they have had experience of it and know exactly how far it reaches. I trust the Premier will adopt the whole of the English Act. Surely, if England can follow that Act this colony can. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka) .- I wish to make a few remarks. I agree with the member for Kaiapoi. If the English Act is brought down the farmers will not have the slightest objection to it. As the Bill stood before, if a man was injured when threshing, or doing any contract to satisfy the claim the farmer would be liable, and, if he could not do so, then the mortgagee was also responsible. A farmer could not work under such

circumstances as that. If the English Act is passed, I think the Government might take up the insurance themselves. Then there will be no difficulty at all. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) would like the House to believe that farm-servants are the worst-used and worst-paid people in the colony, and as if they got only a few days' work at a time; but he knows nothing about it. The honourable member always talks about matters that he knows nothing about. I have a man on my place now who has been with me years, and others for a shorter time, and I say they are better off and better paid than town labourers. I know they can save double the money in the year that town labourers can. If a Bill was brought in in the way I suggest it would satisfy the farmers, and I guarantee there will be no objection to it. But they must know exactly what they are doing, and not be left in the uncertain manner they are in at the present time. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) .- As one who has taken a deep interest in this measure, and who has been instrumental in urging the Government to bring down an amending Bill this session, I purpose saying a very few words. I am mainly induced to speak by the statement of the honourable member for Kaiapoi. He says it is better not to have any Bill at all this session if that Bill is not a copy of the English Act. I agree with him that it will be better to have a Bill framed exactly, or almost exactly, on the lines of the English Bill; but I disagree with him in saying we cannot have a satisfactory amendment framed on our own Act of last year that will answer the purpose. I think we should make it quite plain that agricultural labourers are to be included in this Act, if it is suitably amended, as they are in the case of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. They have just as much right to be included as any other labourers in the colony. Then, there is also the question of the casual labourer -- the swagger, and so forth. There is a very strong feeling in the country districts that this class of labourer should not derive any benefit from the Act, because it is a matter of impossibility almost in every case for the farmer to protect himself by a policy of accident insurance when employing a casual labourer. At the same time, I am quite sure that farmers will not object to come into line with other employers of the colony and pay their insurances like other employers, so long as the measure is within the same scope as the English Act, and is restricted to work of a character which it would be proper to include within the provisions of the Act. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) .- The honourable member for Avon just now stated that the number of persons employed in agricultural operations exceeded those employed in any other industry in the colony, and I believe he is quite correct there. But he might have gone a little further and told the House that-

<page:884>

gaged in agricultural operations are small farmers and their sons, and not employés. Now, speaking as a farmer, on behalf of the farming community, I say I have no objection whatever to the English Act so far as it affects permanent hands. We are prepared to accept all responsibility under the Workers' Compensation Act, but where the present Act places farmers in an awkward position is that it does not define their position. It is very unfair to call upon a farmer to be responsible for accidents to those only employed for a little time at harvesting, or in connection with threshing, or shearing, or men occasionally taken on to work on the farm. Or it may be a man comes along with a swag on his back, and the farmer knows nothing about him. If this man is employed for only a day or two, and meets with an accident, the farmer is liable-in fact, the man may go to the farmer intentionally to get him into trouble. When the farmer employs a permanent hand he selects a man whose character he knows, and he is perfectly satisfied that the man will act honourably, and in the case of an accident to that workman the farmer is prepared to take the responsibility. It has been said that farm-labourers are not so highly paid as labourers in the centres of population. It is quite true that those engaged in the various occupations in the cities receive higher wages than the labourers working in the country, and the tendency is for workers to come into the towns in consequence of the increased wages and shorter hours. I think honourable members will admit that this is to be deplored. We ought to try and induce the people in the towns to go into the country districts and settle on the land. The whole trend, however, of things is in the opposite

direction, and our legislation hitherto has been in the same direction. If the Premier will bring down a Bill embodying the clause in the English Act read by the member for Riccarton, I am prepared to accept it so far as it refers to permanent hands employed on farms, but not to casual labourers. Mr. WILLIS (Wanganui). - When the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill was brought down last session I have a very distinct recollection that, when a question was asked with regard to farm-labourers, the Premier replied that there was no time at that late period of the session to deal with the matter, but that he would bring down a measure this session to deal with the question. I think that the feeling of the House is that it is only fair that compensation for accidents should apply with regard to country workers the same as it applies to workers in towns. The amount of money required to insure the men is small, and I do not think that employers would have any objection to that insurance being paid. I think the Premier should say what he intends to do in reference to making the English Act apply, as it is only fair it should apply alike to town and country. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City). - I may very often ask a question as between the widow and the mortgagor. I have refrained from speaking before Mr. Meredith as far as possible, reserve my strength and time for helping through a local Bill in which I am greatly interested, but since that Bill has been smothered-not knocked out in fair fight, but smothered or stabbed in the back-I have no further interest in the Bill, and the gag is removed from me with regard to the question now before the House. There are two very important matters in connection with the Bill now before the House, on one of which I have a little knowledge, and which I shall briefly refer to. One is the question of making the Act apply to country districts, and the other is the point raised by the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) and Mr. Hutcheson as to whether section 18 of the principal Act, which gives a workman's claim under the Act preference even over a bona fide registered mortgage, should not be amended. As the first question has been debated most fully this afternoon-and debated by those who have much more special knowledge of the country than I have, and also by those who have more knowledge of the details of previous Bills and of the attitude of the Premier with regard to them, and to the various amendments proposed-I do not propose to devote any time to the consideration of that question, but will reserve myself for the second reading of the Bill, when we shall have an opportunity of seeing exactly what it is that the Premier proposes to do. I should just like, however, to say a word on this question as to the claims under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act having priority over a bona fide and properly registered mortgage. It is a very extraordinary thing that such a hard-headed man as the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) should talk of the contrast between the widow and the mortgagor. Only two or three hours ago I was discussing this very point with a labourer making, I suppose, £3 a week, who had got a property worth £100, and wanted to build a house valued at \$200 upon it, and to raise the money on mortgage. He was going through the various items, but the final thing was that it would cost him 10s. to insure against accident, and he said he did not want to insure against accident. Of course, he was told that was a liability imposed on the property, and no mortgagor would take a security subject to that liability unless it was insured as far as practicable. The result of it was, of course, the addition of 10 per cent. to the interest, and it amounted to just the same thing whether it was called interest or premium. There was the extra money, and the working-man had to pay it, and I will undertake to say the average man employed in the building trade would be in just as sound position financially as this man who had to insure against his fellow-labourers' risk. My colleague, Mr. Hutcheson, and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) will surely admit, when they consider a case like that, that we are not solely concerned in a matter as between the widow and the mortgagor. It is one working-man and the widow of another.

<page:885>

himself, he ought to be prepared to give the benefit to his fellow-workers. Mr. ATKINSON. - So long as that is understood the point is fairly arguable. I only wanted to set out that it was not fairly put in the contrast drawn between the widow and the mortgagor. It is just as improper a distinction as that between

manhood and, in various political controversies, property-for, of course, the man of property also represents manhood. It is the same with regard to taxation, when the land-tax is compared with the Customs revenue, to the disparagement of the land-owner, in forgetfulness of the fact that the man who owns land is also paying indirect taxation through the Customs. These general statements that are assumed to be based on principle often prove to rest upon fallacies. I reserve for full discussion these matters for the second reading of the Bill, merely speaking now with a view to encouraging the Premier to give effect to a promise previously given that this section 18 shall be amended. Of course, I appreciate perfectly the motives of the objection of my honourable colleague, and of the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar), but I would point out that it is not in the least necessary to repeal the section absolutely in order to give all honest claims validity. For instance, I know the point has been raised as to how far by a bogus mortgage the workman's claim might be ousted. Well, it would not need any great ingenuity of draftsmanship to provide against that. It would be quite easy to set up some test, for instance, as to the proportion of the mortgage-loan to the value of the security. That, of course, is a test that is applied by every prudent mortgagee before he lends, and that might be made a test under the Act. For instance, we might protect the mortgage up to a certain proportion of the value of the security, or the Court might be empowered to exercise a closer scrutiny in any of these cases when the mortgage had been executed within a short while before the contract under which the accident happened had been entered into. There are these considerations, and we might very easily, it appears to me, find a way out of the difficulty without absolutely repealing the whole of section 18. There is another point I would like honourable members to consider, and that is the liability for insurance, as the Act as it stands presses most heavily upon those least able to bear it, and upon those who are just as much entitled to consideration, and who, indeed, belong to the very same class as those on whose behalf the section is put into the statute. Supposing you are dealing with thousands instead of hundreds. A property is worth \$6,000, and has a mortgage of \$4,000 on it : there is a margin of \$2,000, and the maximum claim under the Act is £400. To the mortgagee this would be a comparatively small matter, and also to the land owner. But if you are dealing with hundreds instead of thousands, you would see at once the £400 would consume the greater part of the security, and involve upon the borrower a liability equal to the value of his property. Taking the figures property at £600 and the mortgage at £400, there would be a margin of £200 left. In such a case a workman's claim of \$400 would take up two-thirds of the security, leave £200 to the mortgagee, and leave a liability outstanding of the same amount on the part of the mortgagor. The liability is thus a ruinous one for the poor man, though a slight matter for the wealthy. I do suggest that at present we have really passed class legislation of a very unfair character, and that it will have an effect opposite to what was intended, because it will penalise the poor man and it does not hit the rich man at all severely. It really puts the burden on the class from whose shoulders it was proposed to lift it altogether. These observations, I submit, are entitled to consideration. I hope the Premier will see his way, in the Bill, to do something to deal with the evil, and something to remove this very unjust risk on what has hitherto been the best form of security. I do not propose to discuss the matter more fully now, and I hope that even at this stage of the session the Bill will be made a workable measure. I can now speak perfectly freely on the matter without fear of monopolising the time of the House to the exclusion of other measures, which I should like to see receive a fair share of attention from the House. Mr. SEDDON. - I little thought this afternoon when I asked leave of the House to introduce the Bill that there was to be this prolonged debate. Sir, debates sometimes do good. The fact of the last honourable member taking up so long a time to deliver his remarks upon the question will be received with great pleasure by his colleague, the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher). Four members have signified to me their intention, owing to the honourable member's protracted remarks on this Bill-which looks very much like stonewalling - if the Wellington Bill comes up this session, they will take some time to discuss it. There are

four friends more which the honourable member has called to Mr. Fisher's aid. I am sure the honourable member will be pleased to hear that. I told the House the intention of the Government was to remove misapprehension and difficulty. I told the House that the English legislation had caused a great deal of trouble and friction, because if they got people to thresh their corn or to mow their grain they were liable under the present Act ; and this has been one of the matters that have caused a lot of friction. Now, the new English Act has made the matter very clear-namely, that where the contractor provides and uses machinery driven by mechanical power for the purpose of threshing, ploughing, or other agricultural work, he, and he alone, shall be liable to pay compensation. I intend to put that in our law, and to make it clear that where a person brings machinery on to a farm to thresh a stack, the farmer shall not be liable to lose his farm if an accident happened to the men engaged on the machines threshing the grain. That is only right and reasonable. The man who owns a foundry and

<page:886>

dents to his workmen; and why are we going to give double security, making the farmers as well as the owners of the machinery responsible ? An Hon. MEMBER .- There is double security given in town. Mr. SEDDON .- Then, I told the House what it was I intended doing. I am met with many queries, and one query with which I shall deal now was made by the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar), who wants to know whether it is intended to remove the present security for the worker and give the preference to the mortgagee. The honourable gentleman asked me that question. Well, Sir, under the existing law subsection (3) of section 18 is as follows : - " Subject to the provisions of the last preceding subsection every such charge shall have priority over all existing or subsequent charges or encumbrances, howsoever created, other than charges or encumbrances lawfully existing at the time of the commencement of this Act." I do not ask the House to repeal that. I said I would not do it. I say if the mortgagee has a security before the passing of this Act, he should not be interfered with. After the passing of this Act, then the worker has the first charge, and no alteration of the law as to that was intended, and I cannot understand how it is that various bodies, as, for instance, the Trades and Labour Council here in Wellington, have got a contrary impression. At any rate, a paragraph appeared in one of the local papers stating that the Premier was bringing down a Bill to remove the present security, and then another paragraph appeared saying a resolution had been passed by that body, and that they used very strong language. However, I had an interview the other day with the members of this Trades and Labour Council, who said that no such resolution was brought down. And yet the paragraphs had currency for the time being ; some mischief was created, and these rumours got afloat, and there are those who are assiduously endeavouring to create misunderstanding and cause friction between those in the town and those in the country. If they think that that is conducive to the good of the country I consider they are making a mistake, and that common-sense will reign supreme. The interests of town and country are bound together, and whoever tries to cause mischief and trouble, and play the one off against the other, is not a true New-Zealander, and is no friend to our colony and no friend to either the worker or the employer. He is no friend of those in the country or of those in the towns. This state of ferment wants to be set at rest. It wants to be removed at once, because there has been a misapprehension. What is the effect ? I know that men are insuring who should not insure at all. I know that both parties are insuring at the present time-the farmer who brings the threshing-machine on his farm, and the man who is the owner and works the machinery. Both parties insure the men employed, and the only ones who are reaping a very rich harvest are these accident Mr. Seddon insuring the same people, and spreading about all sorts of fictitious stories, keeping up the ferment, and in the meantime making large sums of money for themselves. It is my place, and it is the duty of members of Parliament, when you find people trading on the ignorance of the law of any section of the people, to stop the thing, and put the law in such a way that people will know what they are doing. That is what I am doing. Then, I come to the question of the



agricultural labourer, and I cannot understand the statements that some honour- able members have made on this matter. No- thing can be clearer than the course I have taken, and, whether I am right or wrong, I have been consistent. Now, the Bill I brought down in 1899 had in its first section this :- " " Worker ' means any person of any age or either sex who, under contract with an em- ployer, whether made before or after the com- ing into operation of this Act, and whether oral or in writing, expressed or implied, is engaged to do any work or manual labour of any kind, whether technical, skilled, or unskilled, and whether on land, or on any ship or other vessel (of whatsoever kind and howsoever propelled) in any navigable or other waters within New Zea- land or the jurisdiction thereof; but does not include- " (1.) Persons employed in or about agricul- tural or pastoral pursuits." Now, what is the use of beating about the bush, and saying I intended one thing or an- other. There is the Bill as I introduced it in 1899, and I have not been in this respect playing fast and loose. It is there. Now, what was effected in 1899? The effect was that that clause was struck out. I said, "the result will be that if it goes to another place you will lose the Bill." Well, we lost the Bill. I ask, Who lost the Bill ? I say the whole question was raised ; it was useless, so far as I saw, to pro- ceed, and the Bill was lost because of the action of those who at that time were the professed friends of the workers in the towns. "Workers " included in its definition the workers in dan- gerous and hazardous trades ; and the great point they wanted was to include the agricul- tural labourers. My own opinion is, and I have never varied from it, that it was done simply to kill the Bill, and not with a view of giving a boon to those engaged in dangerous trades and industries in the colony. Now, I want to prove that. We come, then, down to 1900, and the member for Riccarton very astutely made certain quotations from Hansard of that year ; but there are certain quotations which he did not make. If he will take his book he will find this :- Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- What page ? Mr. SEDDON .- Page 78 :- " When the Bill was in another place, this same question was raised as to whether it should be made to apply to agricultural la- bourers, with the result that there was a considerable majority against it in the Legis- lative Council. It makes one doubt the sin- cerity of members, when they know that to be

<page:887>

they seek to put into the Bill amendments knowing that the Bill will have to go back to another place to be met there with opposition. In my opinion, if this Bill were made applicable to agricultural labourers you would probably have had no Bill again this session, and the benefits that otherwise would be conferred on those engaged in skilled trades, and trades where machinery is employed, and other em- ployments where there is danger, would have been denied to them, simply because there are a considerable number of labourers in the honourable gentleman's district." I alluded, Sir, to the member for Riccarton. Then - " Do honourable members know this : that if a man had been coming from the train, and engaged a cabman to convey him to his hotel, if the cabman had a collision and killed him or maimed him he would be regarded for the time being as a contractor- as the servant of the person who used the cab-and you would have had the wife and family of the person killed thrown on your hands ? " Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- You have left out twenty lines. Mr. SEDDON .- I am just coming to what you left out. Now, I ended by saying .- " The one reason that stopped this Bill being passed in this House was the amendment in regard to making it include everybody, and the result was that for twelve months the people have been denied the advantage of this legis- lation : that was, the question of including the agricultural labourers. And I might say that the member for Riccarton, while he has a large section of agricultural labourers in his district, must not forget that he has also a large section of people who are engaged in dangerous trades, and who would receive the advantage of this legislation : and, in the face of my promise that next session I would bring down a Bill extend- ing its application, he might have refrained from pressing his amendment. However, the House in its wisdom rejected it, and I must compliment honourable members who have been anxious and sincere to secure the placing of this measure upon the statute-book." The member for Riccarton was not satisfied and made a personal explanation, and I replied to him in these

words :- "This question of personal explanation is being considerably abused. I say, Sir, the honourable member deliberately moved the amendment, and he knew at the time it had been refused in the Legislative Council. I told him so, and said that, in respect to agricultural labourers, it could not be put in the Bill without having it safeguarded. "An Hon. MEMBER .- Is this another personal explanation ? "Mr. SEDDON .- I am simply repeating what I said before, and my belief is now that the amendment was moved knowing that had it been carried it would have had the same effect as if the motion had been, 'That the Bill be read this day six months.'" statement was entirely untrue. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes ; the honourable member misbehaved himself, and was called upon to withdraw his expression. Then, I went on to remark that the honourable member had been guilty of gross misconduct and ought to have expressed his regret. Taking it altogether, it seems to me that the matter has been rankling in the honourable gentleman's mind ever since. He does not forget the reproof Mr. Speaker administered to him for his misbehaviour, and as he had the opportunity of reading the report to-day I think it was only my place as it was my duty to call attention to what occurred. However, as regards the English Act, it only came into force last July. We have had no experience of its working as applied to the agricultural labourer, and I repeat what I said in 1899, and what I said last session when the Bill was going through the House, that we should see how it works in England, and prot by their experience, and then move in the matter. At the present time what is before us ? The English Act has carefully safeguarded those who come under it and imposes certain necessary conditions : and it seems to me if we allow our law to remain in the present unsatisfactory state we are doing a great injustice that may work injury and ruin to some innocent person who does not know that the law does not apply to him, and to whom it would mean ruination if it did apply. The Government are prepared to remove that difficulty. We have heard the opinions of a number of members on the matter to-day. Well, I wanted to have the opinions of members on the various points, and I think I have done very well. In the debate it seems to me this fact has been proved : if you take the list of names of those who voted for Mr. Hutcheson's motion and for Mr. G. W. Russell's motion it will be found that 50 per cent. of them, when they went to the people, were put out of Parliament. Take the names as given by Mr. Hutcheson of those who voted for his amendment, and take those who voted against it, and it will be found that those who voted against it are in Parliament to-day, but those who voted for it are away where all politicians go. That is the result. I think the honourable member read the list to the House as a warning. Now, the statement has been made that the Premier is afraid of the Farmers' Union. Well, if there is one member of the House who is afraid of the Farmers' Union, and who, as the days and weeks roll on and he gets nearer his constituents, is getting paler and fading almost to the vanishing point, it is the member for Riccarton ; it is not the Premier. The member for Riccarton thinks he must bring this question up regarding the agricultural labourers, as I told him when the Bill was before the House last year there would be a division in his district. When the Bill was first brought down with this clause in it, it was thrown out by the Legislative Council ; and, if it had been sent back to the Council with the clause in it, it would have been thrown out again,

<page:888>

farmers in an uncertain state, and do not give them the relief the English. Act affords with regard to persons using machinery, and those who mow, sow, plough, and thresh, you should include the agricultural labourers in the Bill, and the measure will go no further. My opinion has never varied on the question. It have expressed the same views at all times. is always my wish to be just in any legislation, and at the present time there is an uncertainty that ought to be removed. As to casuals-well, you get on to dangerous ground at once, and I never touch casual labour by legislation. It is not necessary. But what are the latest judgments in the cases brought in England ? The latest judgment was this: The Appeal Court in England decided that on a daily wage you could not define the average, and, therefore, legally or equitably, fix the amount payable. The case went to the Privy Council, which reversed the decision of the

Lower Court and said it was as easy to take a day's wage and from that day's wage to strike an average as it was to strike an average from the week. Consequently, you may follow that out, and say that the average is as easily ascertained for an hour as for a day. At the same time, there are such cases as that of a person employing a cab to drive him to and fro, or an express to take his luggage. There is a contractor and a contractee, but it has never been intended that our law should apply in a case of that kind, and if there are doubts existing on the point the sooner they are removed the better. If a case were to be tried to-morrow, the result would be just as I have indicated. However, my desire is to perfect the law and to remove difficulties that I feel exist. If the House is not prepared to assist me, and the matter is made a bone of contention as between town and country, then there will be no alteration of the law; but I wish to say to my friends representing the workers in the towns that they will be wise if they follow the lead I am now giving them in respect to the matter, and bring the country people with them. They will not do any injury or take away any privilege from any one in the country, but the result of the present position is that there is friction and ill-feeling engendered, and the people of the country miss no opportunity of waging war with the workers in the towns. And there is no corresponding advantage at all. I therefore say to the workers in the towns and to the friends of this law, " You have got this law, hold fast to it, and I will help you "; but where there is a doubt as to the interpretation of the law in respect to others, and there is friction, I say remove this friction in the interests of all concerned. That is what this Bill is intended to do.

Mr. HUTCHESON .- I rise to make a personal explanation. The right honourable gentleman accused me inferentially of having been untrue to the trust of the workers in the cities, and with a malicious intent to introduce an amendment at that time to make the Bill so unacceptable to another place that it could not pass the Bill; and then he said, in answer to the member for Wakatipu, who asked him whether he meant to drop the Bill, "Yes." And the Premier did drop the Bill, and the Bill never went out of Committee of this House, and never went beyond clause 3 or 4. It never went back to the other House at all.

Mr. SEDDON .- The same Bill was introduced by the Hon. Mr. Walker in the Legislative Council, and the very clause the honourable member alludes to, to include the agricultural labourers, was thrown out. The Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council. The honourable member is again wrong. Leave granted, and Bill read a first time.

# REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS EXTENSION BILL. On the question, That leave be granted to introduce this Bill, Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) asked if the right honourable gentleman would tell the House the object of this Bill and the necessity for introducing it. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said this was a Bill introduced periodically-at about intervals of ten years, he believed -to enable people who had failed to register their children within the statutory limit to register them. Leave granted, and Bill read a first time.

# LOCAL BILLS. On the question, That the House resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means to consider a resolution in connection with Imprest Supply Bill (No. 5), Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said he wished to move as an amendment, That, before the House resolves itself into Committee of Ways and Means, it is desirable that a day should be set apart for the consideration of local Bills on the Order Paper. He regretted very much that the Premier had forced this course of action to be taken in regard to local Bills on such a measure as an Imprest Supply Bill, but there was no opportunity given to the House to assert itself against the will of the Premier except on a motion such as this. So far as the majority of the local Bills on the Order Paper were concerned, he knew the members of the House thought it was desirable that an opportunity should be given to those in charge of the Bills to bring them before the House in a constitutional way. What had been designated, with very great truth, the "dodgery " of the Premier had prevented -

Mr. ATKINSON wished to ask, as a point of order, if the honourable gentleman was in order in using the term "dodgery" as applied to a member of the House ?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER did not think it was a desirable word to use, and should be withdrawn. Mr. PIRANI said he would withdraw the word, and would substitute the word " dickery," a word which the Premier suggested a member should use the other day instead of " dodgery,"

<page:889>

the part of the Premier." He regretted that by that means a great deal of support which would have been given to many local Bills had practically been withdrawn. It was nonsense for the Premier to say that he had already given two days for the discussion of the Bills, because all that he had done had been to play into the hands of certain obstructionists. If these Bills had been given a fair opportunity for consideration, and if a day had been given without any limit to the time in which the House would be obliged to discontinue the consideration of the Bills, it would have been very soon evident that the majority of the Bills left on the Order Paper could have withstood anything like a siege. He felt that the present was an occasion when they should take a vote of the House as to whether the course proposed by the Premier, in refusing to give a further opportunity for discussing local Bills, should be accepted, or whether a further opportunity should be given. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) begged to second the amendment. He might state that he was interested in one of the Bills that the Premier by his well known mastery of the art of "dickery" had succeeded in placing nearly at the bottom of the Order Paper. Some weeks ago the Premier indicated to a deputation that it was his determination to prevent the Bill, of which he (Mr. Hutcheson) had charge, seeing the light of day. He (Mr. Hutcheson) undertook to say, however, that the Premier would not entirely succeed in his scheme. It would be hard indeed if the Premier could succeed in preventing legislation passing which merely enabled the ratepayers of Wellington to record their wishes. In answer to an interjection of the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) he might state that if the honourable member felt strongly opposed to the Bill he could vote against it, or could propose to amend it in Committee. As he had already stated, he (Mr. Hutcheson) would accept the verdict of the House without protest. The right of private members of the House had been whittled away until nothing but the shadow remained. They were led like sheep to the slaughter. One man in the House had usurped every right of private members, and every function of private members was now an appanage of the right honourable gentleman, who had succeeded in establishing the very worst form of tyranny-the tyranny of an elected despot; because he did it all in the name of the people, and the people took the burden of it, and he, by his devices, made it to appear as though it was the wish of the people. He felt himself almost inclined to become a fatalist, and, living in the atmosphere of the House, to say "what will be, will be." His colleague for the city had succinctly put the case. What did it avail if they could succeed in convincing the majority of members so long as they did not succeed in convincing the right honourable gentleman. There was the whole thing in a nutshell. If the right honourable gentleman was capable of realising his great responsibility, and what was due to the colony, to know that it was his duty to allow any self-governing community in the colony governed by a local body-in this special case the most important local governing body of the colony-to say what they require for the good of their own district in conformity with the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act. Yet the fact remained that the Premier had determinedly opposed for years past everything that made for the progress and welfare of the City of Wellington. For instance, he had done everything in his power to harass and impede the freedom of action of admittedly the best managed local governing body of the whole colony-the Wellington Harbour Board. He had restricted, hindered, and impaired that body at every opportunity. He had even denounced their legislation and had sought to instill into the minds of the people a poisonous distrust in the honesty of purpose of that body. He had accused them of corruption, which, were they capable of, they would not have been deserving of the title of citizens of Wellington. He had sought to interfere with the rights of private individuals in the city, and in the establishment of the Middle District College had set himself against the concrete opinion of the citizens of Wellington. Another instance of the honourable gentleman's hostility to the city was to be found in the fact that he had said to a public deputation that this Bill should not pass. Now, why should not the Bill receive the consideration of Parliament? He (Mr. Hutcheson) did not make bold to say that the Bill ought to pass; but why should it not receive the consideration of

Parliament ? If that were permitted there was no fear as to what the result would be. His colleague (Mr. Fisher) had asserted that scarcely a single member of the House understood the provisions, and that no one knew the inwardness of the Bill. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the honourable member must not discuss a Bill on the Order Paper or explain its provisions. Mr. HUTCHESON would not say more respecting it than that it was a Bill the citizens of Wellington, through their popularly elected local-governing body, had desired to have the imprimatur of the Legislature affixed to. Mr. FISHER said four-fifths of the rate-payers were bitterly opposed to it. Mr. HUTCHESON replied, that if only a bare majority of the ratepayers voted against the proposals contained in it, as they would undoubtedly be entitled to do, that would settle the Bill most effectually, and it would become absolutely waste paper. The citizens, however, ought to have an opportunity of declaring against it, as they would have if the Bill was passed, since it was thoroughly safeguarded by the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act of last year. Let the citizens, then, say " Yea " or " Nay " to the proposals, but it was not right for a minority of the House to deny to the citizens the right to vote on that question. He desired to show every consideration for his fellow-members, the great majority of whom were anxious to close the business of Parlia-

<page:890>

this respect, but he could not divest himself of the charge of the conduct of this Bill, and he must sacrifice his own feelings and must ruthlessly disregard his feelings to consult the wishes of his fellow-members who desired to proceed with the business of Parliament. In this matter he must be a slave to duty. It was his duty to appeal to members of the House that they would give fair consideration for a few moments to this measure in his charge. It was not difficult to understand, because the preamble disclosed the whole of its purport. There was no hidden meaning in it, and after it passed through Parliament it was to be subjected to the intelligent scrutiny of the burgesses of the city. He had not lost hope yet with regard to it. They had come to that period of the session when an honourable member must be conciliatory and humble, and appeal to the right honourable gentleman who tyrannized over this House to be merciful in his great strength, and give them a few minutes for the consideration of this Bill. While there was life there was hope, and they were not without hope that there would be time even yet to give consideration to the Bill this session. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City) was sorry that as a new member he should find himself in a very important position. He had hoped some members of more experience would have asserted the rights of the House, because after all it was the rights of the House, and not the rights of any locality that were really at stake in the motion they were now considering. He could not emulate the eloquence, the research, and the wide experience of the mover and seconder of the motion, but he hoped he would not transgress the rules of the House like the honourable member for Palmerston, whom he had been the means of calling to order for accusing the Premier of "dodgery," and like his senior colleague (Mr. Hutcheson), who had incurred the censure of the chair for attempting with obvious impropriety to discuss on this motion the details of a local Bill. There were ten local Bills still remaining on the Order Paper, and the House was entitled to insist, even at this late stage, that the Local Bills should receive fair consideration, or, at any rate, should be put to the vote. With regard to the local Bills, the position was that every one of them had been before a special tribunal-a special tribunal of experts, presided over by the honourable member for Nelson- and every inquiry had been made into them. It would be an insult to the grey hairs of the venerable Chairman of the Local Bills Committee to treat the local Bills as proposed by the Premier, and therefore in the name, not of the parish pump, but of humanity, he called upon the House to support the amendment. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) did not quite understand the position taken up by the member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson). If the honourable gentleman wanted to give his Bill a chance he should allow the House to take Mr. Hutcheson for the consideration of local Bills, in accordance with the Standing Orders, and since then the Government had given two other extra days for their consideration. It was certainly not the fault of the Government that the Wellington Bill had not

come on. Under the circumstances the honourable member had no right to say the Premier had not given the House an opportunity of discussing the Bill. He thought the member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) had chosen his ground badly in attacking the Premier, because he declined to render further assistance to pass the Wellington City Recreation-ground Bill. The Premier had given every facility for the passing of local Bills this session, and had given two extra days, and yet he had received no thanks for extending to those honourable members so much consideration. On the other hand the Premier was now charged by the member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson) with being the sworn enemy of Wellington ; but in this particular case he (Mr. Fisher) said the Premier was the sworn friend of Wellington, because he was in a position to say that four-fifths of the ratepayers of Wellington did not want this Bill passed, and they had asked this House by petition not to pass it. Let him call the attention of the House to the fact that this question of the purchase of Miramar had been before the people of Wellington for five years past. On one occasion it was fully ventilated and discussed at a large meeting held in the Skating Rink, at which the proposal was publicly denounced in language without measure ; and here, again, on this second attempt to pass this proposal through the House, he was asked by a petition of 573 petitioners to oppose it, and he challenged any man to question the genuineness of any one of these signatures. Why should the House be asked to pay \$75,000 for a property which was valued on the first occasion for taxation purposes at £25,000, and on the second valuation for land-tax purposes at \$36,000? What he wanted was that the people should have a further opportunity of discussing and scrutinising this question for the purpose of discovering one thing only-and he believed the honourable gentleman could not tell them that-namely, who was going to get the difference between the £36,000, at which the property was valued. and the \$75,000 which the Corporation had contracted to buy it at. He would like to ask whether a city like Wellington, which at the present time paid rates to the extent of 3s. 6d. in the pound, and which would shortly spend £350,000 on electric trams, should be asked to expend £75,000 on a purchase of this sort which would confer a very questionable benefit on the city. He had shown that when this Bill came before the House earlier in the session the votes on division were equal, and the Speaker gave his casting-vote in favour of the Bill proceeding. In the face of that, could it be said that there was any strong desire on the part of the House for the passing of this Bill? There certainly

<page:891>

was not any desire on the part of the city. Then, when they looked into this colony the difference in the ascertained and tract, which had been reluctantly extracted from estimated cost ? the honourable member, and which now constituted Paper H .- 28 of this session, they found Difference in cost, #196 each. inclusive of freight, that this contract for the purchasing of this insurance, and erection charges." estate disclosed the extraordinary fact that the £196 more or £196 less than the cost of colonial- Corporation was buying up private options. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the question made carriages. He wanted to know would the before the House was the date for the consideration- honourable gentleman allow the return to be tion of local Bills, and the discussion must be amended so that it might state that the £196 for the imported article was more, as he understood to that. Mr. FISHER said the object of the amendment was the case, than the cost of the cars ment was this: these gentlemen knew that would be if made in our own workshops ? they could not trench further on the kindness of the Premier, and so they charged the Premier- the honourable gentleman would recognise that minister with standing in the light of the interests in giving a return to the order of the House the of Wellington. It was clear he did nothing of Minister concerned could only comply with the the kind, but that he was doing what the order as made by the House, and this particular people of Wellington by petition asked Parliament return was exactly as required by the honourable member to do. The people were anxious that the member for Masterton, who moved for the re- question should be decided, not by Parliament turn. He had previously

stated himself that but by the people immediately concerned. He would in the colony make our carriages would suggest a means by which the question cheaper than we could import them. and our might be decided by the people. In April next work in the colony was not second in any there would be the annual contest for the election respect to that made out of the colony. He then of the Mayor ; then the question of the had stated before that they were ordered out- purchase of Miramar could come before the side the colony because the necessities of the situation demanded that should be done. He whole people. On that occasion it was most probable that he would be a candidate. Let could not alter the return. his opponent advocate the purchase ; he would oppose it, and he would beat his opponent by two to one. The House divided on the question, That the the Governor transmitting a copy of this Bill, and asking the House to make provision accordingly words proposed to be omitted be retained. ingly. AYES, 34. Heke Allen, E. G. Parata Committee of Ways and Means to consider His Seddon Arnold Hogg Excellency's message, Houston Bennet Stevens Thompson, R. Kaihau Carncross noticed that £100,000 was to be transferred to Ward Carroll Lawry the Public Works Fund out of the Consolidated Wilford Colvin McGowan Fund, and he trusted that the Minister would Mckenzie, R. Willis Duncan give the House an assurance that the work on Field Witheford. McNab the Main Trunk Railway was going to be conducted Fraser, A. L. D. Meredith ducted with more rapidity than had been the Mills Gilfedder Tellers. case in the past. The Minister had admitted O'Meara Fisher Graham that a number of workmen on this line had recently been discharged, and he trusted the Minister- NOES, 20. Herries Atkinson Russell, G. W. Russell, W. R. Bollard Lang Buddo Smith, G. J. Massey Mackenzie, T. Tanner. Collins Tellers. Millar Ell There had been some very disquieting rumours Fowlds Monk Hutcheson Rhodes Pirani. Hardy dismissal and reduction of men, and all through Majority for, 14. Amendment negatived. IMPORTED ROLLING-STOCK. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) wished to ask the Minister for Railways, without notice, Whether he would make a slight alteration in a return that was laid on the table to-day, before it was printed? The return referred to railway- debate; but he had noticed in the paper a carriages that had been imported, and the portion to which he referred read,- "If similar carriages can be made in the colony. But the return did not show whether it was Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 5). A message was received from His Excellency On the question, That the House go into Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said he would give an assurance that after the transfer of the £100,000 from the Public Works Fund the work on all the roads and railways would be carried on with renewed rapidity and zeal. He hoped he would give the House the assurance that the works would not be neglected. going about the country with regard to the the country there seemed to be a slackening-off of public works. Now that this amount was to be transferred, he trusted that matters would be readjusted, and that the Minister for Public Works would be able to show that the rumours were without foundation. He wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer a question with regard to the quarter-of-a-million loan- he could not allude to what had been said in a previous statement made by the Premier that he did not

<page:892>

the public works estimates or the supplementary estimates-that was, that he did not intend to allocate it. Now, the House would be wanting in its duty if it allowed the Premier to have a large sum like a quarter of a million of money without allocating it on the estimates. It was said there was no one who would be satisfied with the allocation, so far as roads were concerned, unless the allocation was increased on the supplementary estimates by the sum of £50,000 out of the new quarter of a million, which the Bill passed last night alluded to. He could not understand how the Colonial Treasurer could spend money unless it went into the the Appropriation Bill and through the Committee of Ways and Means by means of the estimates. He trusted some explanation would be given of what was to be done with this quarter of a million. The Minister for Railways wanted £100,000 for rolling-stock, but if the money was not going through the estimates that could not be spent, unless, indeed, it could be practically spent by drawing

against it after the 31st March. It seemed to him wrong in principle for the House to permit the Premier to borrow to the extent of a quarter of a million, and yet not to allocate it by the ordinary process of Ways and Means, and through an Appropriation Bill. No Government ought to have power to borrow unless the House distinctly allocated in what way it was to be spent. He trusted the Premier would give some information as to how this extra quarter of a million was to be spent. Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into Committee of Ways and Means. On the question that the resolutions be agreed to, Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) said there was one point in connection with the First Schedule of the Bill to which he desired to direct the attention of the Committee. It was a small sum that was down for Land for Settlements Account : only £1.000. Now, in connection with this he desired to refer to two purchases which had been made by the Land for Settlements Department within the last few months in the district he had the honour to represent. They were called Kapuatohe and Kahimahi, and were bought for the purposes of workmen's hamlets near Christchurch. One of these settlements had been bought by the Government from Sir Westby Perceval, and was situated on the Harewood Road, about a mile and a half from Papanui Township. He believed on this block there was one of the finest crops of Californian thistle to be found in the whole Province of Canterbury ; and why the Government should buy land in this condition for workmen's homes he could not understand. The other settlement was not very far from the Belfast district, and lay to the north-east quarter of Christchurch. He held in his hand a newspaper which contained the result of the opening of these blocks to settlement. In the Kapuatohe Hamlet only one section was taken up ; in Kahimahi Hamlet one-half the sections only were taken up. Now, he submitted that the case had occurred on the boundaries of his Mr. Herries of this description, the member of the House for the district ought to be consulted, not with regard to the amount of the purchase, but as to whether the land that was proposed to be purchased was likely to be taken up, and whether there was any demand for land in that locality. As a matter of fact, in both these localities there was a large quantity of land available for purchase in the ordinary course, and he submitted, after the failure of these two settlements and of the one which was bought at the foot of the Port Hills, for which the Government paid \$90 an acre to Mr. Freeman, it was quite time there was a change in the purchase of land that was going on. It was quite clear the department, which was run by the Premier, was not competent to ascertain whether the lands that were offered them were suitable; and how the Government could recommend the purchase of land at \$90 an acre in a place right away from the railway service of the colony was what he could not understand. He asked the reason of these two purchases he had indicated, and he wished his constituents to understand that he had had nothing whatever to do with either of them. The Government must take the whole responsibility upon themselves. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the purchases were made on the recommendation of the Land Purchase Inspector, and it was on his advice, and on the evidence adduced by him, that the Land Purchase Board recommended it. Of course, if their advice was not conducive to settlement, and if the land was taken at too high a price, or in localities where it should not be taken, the responsibility must fall on the right shoulders. It was for the Government to follow the advice of its officers, as the Legislature had clearly laid it down that the Government had no option in the matter, and had nothing whatever to do with it. They took the land as recommended, and these purchases were made on the recommendation of the proper officers. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said, It was all very well for the Premier to attempt to lay down the dictum that the Government took no responsibility in regard to these purchases. Only the other day, after the Assessment Court decided the Government should pay so-much for certain lands acquired under the Land for Settlements Act, the Government asked the owner whether they would take the land back, and we: they were now told by the Government that. :: regard to a voluntary purchase - not a compulsory one-they must take the advice of their responsible officers. If the Government would not take the advice of a Court, presided over by a Supreme Court Judge, that the land was of certain value, but attempted to



back out of the bargain which was made - and he did not see they were not right in that attempt-if they would do that, surely, in regard to this voluntary purchase, there ought to be a little more attention paid to the merits of the contract under which the land was being purchased. A

<page:893>

the finance of the country, and it seemed to own district where the Government actually him it would have been wiser if the passing of could not get sufficient applicants to take up the land they had purchased under the Land the Imprest Bill were postponed to enable the for Settlements Act, and they had given one ap- Government to bring down their Appropriation Bill and to get the authorisation of the expending - plicant the right to take up land although he was not qualified, because he held more than the share of the moneys in detail. Mr. STEVENS (Manawatu) would like to see area of land prescribed by the Act. But it was impossible for the land to be taken up in any correct manner the honourable gentleman who had just said other way; for the simple reason that, while at present in his reference to a settler who, at the time the Land Purchase Board inspected it alleges, was permitted to take up land illegally. it was splendid land to buy, but the Land Purchase Board forgot that in the winter time there the Land Board, and, happening to be a member were rains and floods. He quite agreed with the members of the Wellington Land Board, he knew honourable member for Riccarton that those who lived in the locality, and more especially positively that there was no selector who was those who represented the district, knew more permitted to take up any land other than of the circumstances all the year round in accordance strictly within the four corners of the law. regard to such land than any official who merely Therefore, the honourable gentleman's statement visited it for the purpose of inspection. statement was erroneous in that case. He had heard of persons who were capable of removing An Hon. MEMBER .-- You opposed members of Parliament being put on the Board. mountains, but here was a person capable of Mr. PIRANI still opposed it, but he thought removing a river. The honourable gentleman referred to the Greenaway Estate as being in the Government ought, at any rate, to give his district, and if it was in the honourable members an opportunity of opposing any undesirable land-purchase. He did not say that gentleman's district then he must have moved the Oroua River. land ought to be purchased on the recommendation of a member of Parliament, as that Mr. PIRANI .- It is in your district. would only open another avenue to what had Mr. STEVENS said, Quite so ; but if the honourable gentleman's first statement went been so strongly condemned in the past ; but if a member representing the district could show without contradiction, like many other statements made by him, it would lead the House to a reason why the land should not be acquired, suppose that the honourable gentleman's statement he should have an opportunity of doing so. statement in this respect was perfectly correct. With But, as a matter of fact, members of the House respect to the acquisition of land for settlement knew nothing about these land - purchases. They were done secretly, silently, and surreptitiously, let him say that, although he was not in any way connected with the Land Purchase Board in regard to lands not purchased by the Board, nor did he know anything about it belatedly ; and the first information about a transaction was the fact that the land had been acquired. In his own district there had one of the most independent valuers that could be a petition got up lately to ask the Government - he referred to Mr. Ewan Campbell, member to purchase an estate known as Mr. who could not be said to be in any degree what- Greenaway's Estate. It was a magnificent piece of rich land, and well worth the money ; ever connected with the Government politically. but if the Government purchased that land This gentleman was one of the most competent valuers that could be found ; although, of and thought they were going to put small settlers on it, they would find a great mistake had course, mistakes might be made by the Land Board when the floods began to arrive. Purchase Board as well as by private individuals - Under these circumstances the request of the individuals. With respect to the flood which honourable member for Riccarton was a very was

going to devastate this Greenaway Estate reasonable one -- that the Government before if purchased, let him say that, when the proper drainage was completed in all the finally concluding a purchase of the kind should tract of country which lies below, the estate consult somebody in the district who had been would be practically free from danger by resident there for some years, and who knew generally the circumstances. The Bill before flood, and, even supposing that there were the House was of rather an extraordinary periodical floods every two or three years, the nature. They were told that Parliament was quality of the land was such that it would going to end its session this week. Friday even bear still water lying upon it for several next was the exact day which had been fixed days without serious danger to the occupants. for the Appropriation Bill. Under these cir- He said, if such statements as were made by the honourable member for Palmerston were cumstances, as Friday was the first of the to influence in any way the Land Purchase month, he did not see any necessity for an Imprest Supply Bill at all. This was the fifth Board, then he was very sorry for the Land Imprest Supply Bill of the session, and the Purchase Board, because the whole of that result would be that practically the whole of country near Greenaway's Estate was suitable, the funds-three-fourths of the funds - placed in his opinion, to be cut up into 100-acre farms. at the disposal of the Government for the year With respect to the Morrison Estate, to which the honourable gentleman referred, admittedly would be at their disposal, irrespective alto- gether of the Appropriation Bill. He did not floods did go upon that, but every year the risk of flood was being lessened. think that was a proper method of carrying on

<page:894>

Mr. PIRANI said he was sorry the Govern- , not allow to go unchallenged the statement of ment Whip was so inaccurate in his statements. ! In the first place, he (Mr. Pirani) said that the land was on the boundary of his electorate. Mr. STEVENS said he did not hear the honourable gentleman say it was on the boundary. He said it was in his district. Mr. PIRANI said he did not say that the member for Manawatu did hear him ; and he regretted that the honourable member's hearing was defective. He said that Mr. Morrison's property was on the boundary of his electorate, and he did not refer to the geographical position of the Greenaway Estate at all. With regard to the floods, he said that the land was liable to flooding, and the honourable gentleman had corroborated that. As to taking up the land illegally, he said that one of the selectors could not comply with the conditions because he had more land than was allowed by the Act, and yet, when it was found that no one would take up the land, to enable it to be taken up he allowed this selector to take it. Mr. FLATMAN (Geraldine) said he was sorry to hear from the honourable member for Ric- carton that land which had lately been acquired for workmen's homes near Christchurch was a failure, and his argument showed that land of that description required very careful con- sideration before being bought by the Govern- ment. If the sections were not taken up when first offered, the expenses accumulated and the estate became a worse failure the longer it was unoccupied. When the Land for Settlements Act was first passed it was intended thereby to settle farmers on the land, but afterwards the town members thought no doubt that they had not got their just dues, and they agitated that land for workmen's homes should be purchased near the towns, and they found now, according to the speech of the honourable member for Riccarton, who ought to know something about these matters, that they were failures. sounded as a note of warning to the Govern- ment not to purchase this class of land, but to follow more on the lines of the original Land for Settlements Act, and procure land for farm settlements only. As to the estate mentioned by the honourable member for Manawatu, he understood that the price to be paid was some- where near £20 an acre, and that that land would require to be drained afterwards. If the Go- vernment pay \$20 an acre for land, and after- wards spend money in draining it, the outcome would be that settlers could not afford to pay a rent that would cover interest on the outlay. He thought honourable members should not bring pressure to bear to get land bought for settlement simply because it was in their elec- torate. Since he had been a member of the House he had taken up this attitude-that if

land could not be bought at a price that would enable a person to live on it comfortably, then buy none in his district. He did not believe in money being wasted, and the longer land was unoccupied after being acquired the more likely it was that discredit would be brought on our land for settlements scheme. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) said he could the honourable member for Geraldine that the settlements near the town were a failure. Mr. FLATMAN .- The member for Riccarton said so. Mr. ELL said the honourable member for Riccarton had called attention to failure on the part of the Land Purchase Board. There was one of these settlements at the foot of the Port Hills, near the mouth of the Tunnel, where there were a number of comfortable homesteads, and the settlers were doing well; and there were two others in his district, which were making splendid progress. In regard to the two mentioned by the member for Riccarton, he had mentioned them as cases where more judgment should have been exercised. Such blunders did harm to the policy, and the policy of purchasing land should not be condemned on one or two failures. He commended the policy of the Government in regard to the country, and buying blocks near the centres, as being an undoubted success. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) wished to explain, in reference to what had been said by the member for Geraldine, that he was not condemning all the workmen's homes and village settlements in his electorate ; because there were three there that were extremely successful, especially Wharenui and Braco. Mr. PIRANI said the colony was spending enormous sums of money in lands for settlement, and caution ought to be exercised so that the very best bargain should be made in the interest of the State. Before they spent money in acquiring agricultural land at from £15 to \$24 an acre, it ought to be remembered that there were many blocks of land belonging to the State which ought to be roaded. The honourable member for Manawatu would agree with him that the Greenaway Estate could not be improved to a much greater extent than it was at the present time. It contained some of the It richest land in the colony and was in a good state of cultivation. He did not think that it could be much improved except in the way of fencing and putting up buildings. He had never condemned the estate; but he thought that suitable land could be obtained at a much lower price, but not in that immediate vicinity. He had always held that the Government should be very circumspect in purchasing lands for settlement. They had had the spectacle in the Assessment Court the other day of the Chairman of the Land Purchase Board characterizing a statement of the Premier in the House of as " political license." He understood what poetical license meant- a vivid stretch of the imagination-so that, if political license was to be taken in the same sense, they had the Chairman of that Board, \- -- in regard to a transaction that the Premier thought he was giving the House reliable particulars of, characterizing the Premier's statement as giving rein to his imagination. He would not like to apply such a term as " political license " to the statement made by the Premier regarding the Forest Gate Estate, although the Premier had undoubtedly given

<page:895>

the House that the Government had offered £4 10s. per acre for the land. He believed the highest offer the Government had made was \$4. They found now that the Court had awarded \$5 10s. per acre. This would argue that the Assessment Court knew nothing of business, or was out of its reckoning to the extent of 25 per cent .; and, that being so, that it might be similarly out of its reckoning in connection with the purchase of land in other districts. He did not approve of the manner in which the land was being acquired at the present time by the Government for settlement when there were thousands of acres of good Crown land only waiting for proper roads and bridges to be made to insure very much better settlement than could be got by the purchase of estates. That was not a good policy or a wise policy in the interests of the colony. If the members of the Government would only spend a little of the time wasted in careering around the colony in going into the back blocks over the supposed roads, and studying the manner in which the land - settlement was being carried on under existing circumstances, he was sure that, instead of spending the amounts in the Imprest Supply Bill on public works, the money would be

spent in opening up lands for settlement by the construction of the necessary roads. As the honourable member for Egmont had said, the Ministers only went to these localities in summer ; but to that there was an exception in favour of the Minister of Lands, who last year made a valorous attempt to see something of these settlements, and who, when he (Mr. Pirani) saw him, was riding a horse that was endeavouring to carry him through what was, by courtesy, termed a road, but over which there was something like 3 ft. 6 in. to 4 ft. of mud. Resolution agreed to, and reported to the House. The Bill was then introduced and read a first, a second, and a third time. TRUSTEE BILL. A message was received from the Legislative Council insisting on their amendment in this Bill, and transmitting the following reasons for so insisting :- "1. That, under the law as it now stands, any person becoming entitled to a share in a company in any way other than by transfer, may elect to have some person, to be named by him, registered as a transferee of such share. "2. That the effect of new clause 6A is only to allow a trustee or executor to be placed on the share register of a company in respect of any share, but with no greater exemption from liability than he has now whilst not registered as owner of any such share. "3. That, inasmuch as the new clause 6A provides for the consent of the directors being necessary to the registration of any such trustee or executor as the proprietor of any share, the expense of an application for an order of a Judge of the Supreme Court or of a District Court Judge should not be required." Council did not seem to have struck the point the House had taken exception to-namely, that a trustee or an executor should not become a shareholder in this particular class of property. However, it was a somewhat remote contingency, and he did not know that it was worth while holding a Conference. He therefore moved, That the House do not insist on its reasons for disagreeing to the new clause. Motion agreed to. SUPPLY. IN COMMITTEE. PUBLIC WORKS FUND. CLASS XX .- PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENTAL. Public Works, Departmental, £13,250. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) presumed that on the first item a general discussion would be allowed on the public works estimates. The ACTING- CHAIRMAN said, No ; that rule only applied to the main estimates. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) asked whether the salaries of the persons engaged in the various centres were included under the heading of " Salaries " in this class. If so, he would like to know which was the salary of the Engineer on the Otago Central Railway. Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) said the salary of the 'Engineer on the Otago Central was not on the estimates. The salaries of officials in the head and district offices were in this class. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City) referred to the item " Extra clerical and drafting assistance, £2,000." That seemed to be a large expenditure. The salaries of the rest of the staff, excluding the Under-Secretaries and the Engineers, came to about \$4,000. Compared with that sum the amount for extra assistance appeared large. He also would like the Minister to give the items of the vote for contingencies. Mr. HALL-JONES said the extra clerks were employed in the head and district offices throughout the colony. The amount appeared large, but, when divided up among so many officers, the amount was reasonable. The items of the contingencies vote were :- 11 18 4 Cadette Periodicals and supplies for drafting 79 17 11 room Lands and Survey Department litho- 199 7 6 graphic work, &c. Telephone Exchange connections .. 60 14 5 31 12 Typewriters and requisites 0 .. 5 7 Freight 2 Payment to Chief Clerk for extra services during absence of Under Secretary in England .. 0 50 0 G. Fitzgerald, for removal expenses 30 0 0 Law expenses 0 7 7 Fee for attending inquiry, Inch Valley 1 1 0 .. 3 Sundry supplies 7 .. £481 8 11

<page:896>

the position of the Midland Railway, but without any intention of hampering the Government. The value of the works on this railway had been estimated at £1,108,268. After the Commission had gone carefully into the figures they were reduced to £674,784, and the Commission allocated to the bondholders £126,788, to the company nil, and to the Government £66,045. The result of a second Commission was that the sum of £664,784 was reduced to such a small amount that the Commissioner awarded the bondholders nothing, the company nothing, and the Government "scooped the pool." It appeared to him

impossible that works executed at a cost of over a million of money could have vanished out of existence as an asset. The bondholders had exhausted their legal remedy, but in equity they had a claim, and he under- stood they had approached the House by peti- tion, and that the petition had been referred to the Public Accounts Committee. He believed that the Government and the House were pre- pared to consider the claim and to do what was fair. He hoped the result of the inquiry would be in the direction of acting equitably with the bondholders, and that they would be dealt with in such a manner as to redound to the credit of the colony and the Government. Vote \$13,250 agreed to. CLASS XXI .- RAILWAYS. Railway Construction, including land and materials, £561,000. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) wanted to protest against the unfair proposals in connection with the North Island railways, and particularly with regard to the North Island Main Trunk Railway, and what was known as the Main Trunk Railway north of Auckland. For one it was now proposed to vote £160,000, and for the other the large sum of \$15,000. Comparing the votes for the railways in the North Island with those in the South Island, the amounts were : For the North Island, £243,300; and for the South, \$279,000-a much larger sum for the South Island than the North, though the last census showed the European population of the North Island was in excess of that of the South. The important point was, however, that the Public Works Statement for 1889 showed that the South Island in the matter of railway construction exceeded the North Island by about three millions sterling, and as far as mileage was concerned by over four hun- dred miles ; yet it was proposed actually to give less to the North Island than to the South Island. That was grossly unfair, and he could only hope that out of the \$250,000 extra proposed in the Bill a substantial sum would be appropriated for the purposes of the important lines mentioned, the North Island Main Trunk Railway and the main trunk line north of Auckland. He would like to know what had been done with the money received for land purchased by money borrowed for the purpose of the North Island route. During the last two years a sum of \$17,000 was received from this source, and he wanted to know what 1889, a separate account was to be kept, but that seemed to have disappeared, and he wanted to know where the money had gone. If it had gone to the ordinary Public Works Fund then it was contrary to the Act of 1889. He wished to know whether the money was used for the purposes of the North Island Trunk line, in addition to the money that was voted from year to year. That was what was intended by the Act of 1889, and he hoped the Minister would tell him what was being done with the money. Mr. LANG (Waikato) said reports had been circulated that a number of men were being dis- missed from the Main Trunk Railway, and that the work was generally slowing down. He would like the Minister to say if this was correct. Apart from these reports, he had been informed that men were being dismissed for trivial offences. A case had been brought under his notice in which a man-who had a wife and six children to provide for-had been dismissed after having been two years and nine months on the work, and had just expended \$20 in moving to another camp, although he had been promised twelve months' work. It seemed to him that it was a very serious matter if there was any slowing-down, because it would be very difficult to finish the line at the time indicated at the rate at which it had been going on, with- out any reduction of that speed. Mr. HOUSTON (Bay of Islands) wished to refer to the item, "Kawakawa-Grahamstown, £15,000," and would vote that it be reduced. He might explain that he should not propose it be reduced by much, and that he was taking this extreme course concerning a railway in which his district was interested for the purpose of bringing the matter before the Committee. In 1891 an agitation was got up to connect the railway between Whangarei and Kawakawa, and the then Minister for Public Works-the present Premier-had agreed to extend the line on certain conditions. That condition was that the Auckland members were unanimous in agreeing to forego the item, " Penrose Loop- line." After they were consulted they agreed to allow the money to be voted, so as to proceed with the work, and to extend the line from Kamo to a district called Hikurangi. The electors of his district were anxious that part of the money should be expended in completing the line between Whangarei and Kawakawa, and it was agreed that there should be no extension of the railway from

Whangarei southward until the connection from Whangarei to Kawakawa had been established. They would find in the Public Works Statement of 1891 these words :- " We therefore propose to provide this year for the extension of the line from Kamo to Hikurangi, and to devote to this purpose the money at present allocated to the doubling of the Auckland-Penrose line. We do not, however, propose to extend the line from Whangarei to Grahamstown. Any further extension of the railway that may be decided upon in the future should be in the direction of Kawakawa, with the view of connecting the Kamo and Kawa-  
<page:897>

deep water at Opua." The hope that this statement would be fulfilled had buoyed up his district for many years. At present there was a considerable gap between the present terminus at Hukerenui and Kawakawa to the extent of fifteen miles. Several extensions had been made since the time he referred to in the direction of Kawakawa, and now it was proposed, in violation of the assurance given in 1891, to extend the railway southwards from Whangarei to Grahamstown. The broken gap that existed from Hukerenui northwards towards Kawakawa left the line useless, while the extension southwards to Grahamstown would only benefit a few people living about the Township of Whangarei. For that benefit the whole of the people up north were to be deprived of the use of this railway. It was cruel treatment to break faith with them in this way. He moved, That the vote for this railway be reduced by £1, as a protest against the breach of faith in extending this line southwards from Whangarei before the connection with Kawakawa was completed. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) said the honourable member for the Bay of Islands was playing an extraordinary part, and had made some remarkable statements in connection with this railway. In the first place, the people at Whangarei made no agreement with the Minister for Public Works in 1891 that no further extension should be made from Whangarei southwards until the line was completed to Kawakawa. It was true the honourable member got the Minister for Public Works to insert in his Public Works Statement of that year the passage which the honourable member had quoted, but he (Mr. Thompson) was not consulted, nor were the people of Whangarei. All the honourable gentleman had said about the agreement was pure misapprehension or imagination on his part. He was also incorrect in his statement about the manner in which the vote for the Penrose Junction was transferred in 1891 to this railway. He (Mr. Thompson) secured that vote for the district with the assistance of Mr. Shera, the then member for Auckland City. All the other Auckland members were consulted, but Mr. Shera was the only one who agreed to the transfer. Twenty-two miles of the railway had been constructed from Whangarei northwards, but, unfortunately, the Railway Wharf at the Whangarei end was built on a mud bank which had only 4 ft. of water, and the result was the whole trade of the port was crippled, although the railway, which was one of the best paying lines in the colony, would yield double its present returns if it were extended to deep water at Grahamstown. In the interests of the railway itself, it was absolutely essential to make this Grahamstown extension, and until it was made the full benefit of that line would not be realised. Many of the constituents of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands were just as anxious for this extension to deep water at Grahamstown as the people of Whangarei were. VOL. OXIX .- 56. support the motion of the member for the Bay of Islands. The proposal involved in the extension of the railway from Whangarei to Grahamstown was one of the most outrageous ever made in the colony. If the line were completed for the fifteen miles from Whangarei to Kawakawa it would then be open right through to Opua, where the boats for Sydney used to call in for coal ; and the cost would not greatly exceed the cost of making the extension to Grahamstown. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) said the central line would never pay in the way that this extension would pay. Instead of this line being a swindle, it was a fact that many of the people in Auckland had lived for the past twenty years by swindling the people of that district. Mr. HALL-JONES said he did not think the member for the Bay of Islands was justified in moving for the reduction of this vote. In regard to the Whangarei-Kawakawa extension, eight miles was now under construction, and the work was making good progress. It would be unwise on a railway of that

class to take in hand more than eight miles at a time, because it would increase the cost of the material, which had to be carted to where it was required. That eight miles being finished, it would then be a question for the House next year to authorise another section being put in hand. This extension from Kawakawa to Grahamstown had been approved by almost every Minister for Public Works ; and, in fact, had it not been for the action of one Minister- who was not now living-it would by this time have been completed. A late Minister for Public Works, a member from Auckland Province, strongly advocated its completion to deep water. An alternate course had been suggested - namely, the dredging of a channel up to the wharf at Whangarei. That would necessitate a considerable cost in the first place, and also a continual cost in the way of dredging to keep the channel open. Common-sense would say that, if it was going to cost £14,000 or £15,000 to dredge a small channel, and also a continuous cost to keep that channel open, and that by an expenditure of double that amount a railway could be formed to touch the water where you would get a depth of 21 ft. at low water, the wisest course was to adopt the latter alternative-namely, construct the railway. Mr. HEKE (Northern Maori) said 11.0. it was very important that this line should be extended from Whangarei to Grahamstown, and then an adequate amount of money should be spent on both sides. If the line was constructed with more rapidity there was every hope that the back country inland from Kawakawa would be utilised in the near future, to the benefit of the districts, and of the colony as a whole. The Committee divided on the amendment, " That the item be reduced by £1." AYES, 29. Bollard Atkinson Allen, E. G. Collins Arnold Barclay

<page:898>

McNab Symes Gilfedder Millar Tanner Hardy Thomson, J. W O'Meara Herries Palmer Willis. Hornsby Parata Tellers. Hutcheson Rhodes Fowlds Kaihau Russell, W. R. Houston. Lethbridge NOES, 24. Hall Russell, G. W. Bennet Hall-Jones Seddon Buddo Stevens Heke Carncross Ward Carroll Hogg Wilford. McGowan Duncan Mackenzie, T. Tellers. Field Flatman Thompson, R. Meredith Fraser, A. L. D. Mills Witheford. Graham Majority for, 5. Amendment agreed to, and item reduced accordingly. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) asked what course the Minister proposed to take in view of the motion just carried. Did he propose to pursue the course indicated in the resolution just passed by the Committee ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) might inform the honourable gentleman that the Government were quite safe. Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) would take the opportunity, now that the amount was disposed of, to reply to the questions asked by the member for Franklin. The honourable gentleman's first question was as to the disparity of the votes between the North Island and the South Island. The honourable member was quite wrong. If he looked at the expenditure of last year as between the two Islands he would find that the North Island had the advantage to the extent of twenty thousand odd pounds, and, as usual, the bulk of the North Island expenditure was in the Auckland District. The North Island had received for roads last year £228,000, of which £92,000 was expended in the Auckland Province alone; while the expenditure in the whole of the South Island was only £78,000. No other province of the colony came within " coo-ee " of Auckland in this matter. He (Mr. Hall- Jones) was not responsible for what took place before the honourable member and himself had entered the House ; and, at any rate, they were trying to improve the position now, and year by year they were placing the North Island in a better position than it was before. The votes for Auckland this year were £175,600 for railways, and for roads a total of \$206.291. The honourable member had done Auckland wrong in compelling him to draw attention to this, and he hoped other honourable members would not take advantage of it to make an attack on the Auckland votes, for, although they were large, the allocation was a fair one, and a just one. Then, for public buildings the vote for Auckland alone was £36,174. With regard to the question about the moneys derived from the sale of Crown lands on the North Island Trunk line, all the charges in connection with the surveys and there had been a large staff of surveyors surveying that land. The cost of that had to be borne out of the proceeds of the land. It was a payment to the Lands and Survey Department. The

honourable member for Waikato had referred to some man whose services had been dispensed with, upon the North Island Main Trunk Railway. The man was discharged because he admitted he had been guilty of sly-grog selling, and he (Mr. Hall-Jones) was determined to put a stop to this practice. That accounted for the dismissal of several of the men who were dispensed with on the Main Trunk line. In connection with the vote for last year referred to by the member for Franklin, that vote was actually spent just to the amount voted. This year the vote was £51,000 in excess of what was spent last year. They spent #109,000 last year out of the ordinary vote for construction, and this year they were taking a vote for £160,000. That was as much as one could with reasonable economy use this year. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) asked, Was he to understand that the whole of this £160,000 allocated this year for the Main Trunk line was to be spent at the Auckland end, and that there was nothing to be spent at the southern end ? Mr. HALL-JONES said it did not look like it. He might also explain that it was mentioned in his Statement that he hoped to have the Makohine Viaduct opened by the 31st March next. He hoped to have it opened a month earlier than that. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said the honourable member for Rangitikei had knocked the arguments of the Minister into a cocked hat. He would like to know whether the money which was being received from the sale of lands set apart for the North Island Main Trunk Railway was being spent exclusively on the construction of the line-that was, of course, that portion which was not used up in the cost of surveys. If the money was not being exclusively used for the Main Trunk line, and was thrown into the Public Works Fund, then it was being improperly used. Mr. HALL-JONES said the money was paid into the Public Works Fund, and was properly used for the purposes for which it was assigned. Mr. MASSEY said he would like to have the assurance of the Minister that the money now being voted would be sufficient to carry along the line, so that it would be finished within the three years previously promised. Mr. HALL-JONES said, If Parliament gave him this money, and what would be required for next year and the following year, the work would be finished in three years. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) asked what steps were being taken to have the railway near Dunedin extended up the Kaikorai Valley. Mr. HALL - JONES said he had already promised that he would personally go over the route. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) asked whether the Minister could not see his way to expedite the progress of the Waipara-Cheviot line, even if it

<page:899>

rapid a rate of the Midland Railway line. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the following sums had been expended in the Auckland District for roads and bridges alone: In one electorate, £84,000 - new money, £36,000; in another district, £82,000 - new money, £37,000; in another district, £84,000 - new money, £33,000; in another district, £164,000 -new money, £47,000; in another district, £12,000-new money, £6,000; in another district, \$6,000-new money, \$2,000; in another district, #27,000 - new money, £15,000 ; in another district, £36,000-new money, £21,000. It was impossible to make this provision for roads and bridges and have money for railways in proportion. Mr. LANG (Waikato) said the Premier's figures were misleading, as the moneys expended had been expended on the Government's own property. He wished to know whether he had understood the Minister to say that the only men discharged from the north end of the Main Trunk Railway had been those convicted of drunkenness or connected with sly-grog selling. Mr. HALL-JONES said he would not say that all the men discharged had been convicted of drunkenness ; some of them may have completed their contracts. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) said there were apparently no hopes for railways or roads in Hawke's Bay. He would like to get some information in regard to the vote of £100,000 for the Midland Railway. They ought to know something more about the position of the railway before anything was voted. For instance, was a tunnel to be made, and, if so, how long would it be ; or was the whole traffic to be hauled over Arthur's Pass by the Abt system or some other system ? If they were going to have a tunnel it should be put in hand at once. If they were not going to have a tunnel he did not think it would be possible to carry the traffic



without loss. He was afraid that by no means could it be carried without loss. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) agreed with the last speaker that it would be unwise to proceed further with the work till they had more information as to its nature. It could not be considered a work of urgency, and he saw nothing to justify its prosecution. If a tunnel were constructed the railway could never compete with water carriage. He was sorry to see on the estimates a miserable \$500 for the Rimutaka deviation. Was it now proposed to break faith with Parliament and the people interested ? Two or three years ago \$5,000 had been placed on the estimates in connection with this work, and the settlers in the Wellington and Hawke's Bay Districts had been led to believe that it would be prosecuted. The dangerous nature of the incline, the discomfort of a trip through tunnels in which lights were extinguished and passengers and live-stock almost suffocated, and the large and profitable traffic, were all solid arguments why the deviation should be started at once. He wished to know whether it was really intended, when the £5,000 was placed on the estimates, because according to all appearance now it had never been so intended. Mr. HALL-JONES said, With reference to the Rimutaka survey, he thought it had been understood by the House that first of all a careful and exhaustive survey should be made. That survey from the Upper Hutt to Woodside had only been completed within the last two months. Details of the plans were not yet in hand, and if they had desired to start the work it could not have been done. The honourable member for Masterton had railway communication to this district that, with care, was as safe as any in the colony. The condition of that district contrasted very favourably with the districts on the West Coast. When the survey was first started he was told that a better route could not be got, but one had been found, and clearly the line ought to have been made by this route in the first place. With respect to the vote for the Midland Railway, the question had been asked what they proposed to do with the money. They had no work in hand on the West Coast line, which had been completed to the Otira Gorge, and they had to face the question of carrying the line on a heavy grade by some system similar to the Rimutaka, or of tunnelling. He believed the tunnel would be best, and, from a commercial point of view, the most economical, because they could carry heavy goods through a tunnel on a good grade which could not be done by an incline. They did not, however, propose to start the tunnel at present. They had received reports from their own engineers, and arrangements had been made for an expert—a man of very high standing, recommended by the best authorities in America—to report as to the best way of dealing with this section, whether by tunnelling or similar to the method adopted in the Rocky Mountains. The country had been well explored, and he did not believe they could find in the world any man better able to report upon the subject than the gentleman who was coming from America, and was expected to leave for New Zealand in the course of a week. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why not get him to report on the Rimutaka ? Mr. HALL-JONES said that idea struck him as a very good one. He would be glad to give effect to it. When they had a gentleman of standing and ability they ought to make the best possible use of his services. On the eastern end of the Midland Railway they had work from Springfield towards Staircase Gully, and, when that was completed, instead of it taking two days to get from the east to the west coast, people would be able to go through in a day. They must consider this question, for it was one of much importance. There had been no extravagance, and the proposals made were based upon common-sense, and would result in benefit to all concerned. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) would rather base the claim for the Rimutaka line to consideration on the saving which could be effected than upon a contrast with any other line in the colony. A return that had been laid upon the

<page:900>

if the deviation were constructed, would be £13,508 per year; so that, on a very moderate computation, there would be sufficient money saved by the deviation to pay for the whole cost of the work and provide a sinking fund of 1 per cent. It would also save one hour in the time consumed in the journey. Then, there was the additional saving between Featherston and Cross's Creek. He felt sure the construction of the

deviation would be a good business investment for the colony! Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) had no desire to say anything against the allocations of public money for roads and railways in the Auckland District, but would point out, in reply to the references that had been made to the construction of public works in Canterbury, that Canterbury had provided funds for public works by selling land for not less than £3 per acre, and, subsequently, when the best land had been disposed of, at £2 per acre, some of which had been resold last year at 16s. per acre. It was with the proceeds from the land-sales that the people of Canterbury had made their roads and bridges. They put their hands into their own pockets and provided money for roads and bridges, while Auckland and Hawke's Bay sold their land for as low as 5s. per acre. He asked the Minister when the first section of 12.0. the Waipara-Cheviot line to Skargill, about fourteen miles, would be opened for traffic. During the next six months not less than sixty thousand fat sheep and fat lambs would be ready to come by that line from Skargill to Christchurch. He would also like to know if a tender had been accepted for the railway-bridge over the Hurunui. This line should be constructed with all celerity, as it would be one of the best-paying lines in the colony. Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) asked what was the intention of the Government with regard to the large combined road-and-railway bridge over the Motueka River at Tadmor. It was reported in the Statement that tenders had been invited and declined, and the plans were under reconsideration with a view to modification. Had they reconsidered the plans, and did they intend to reinvoke tenders forthwith? Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) said the Minister was pursuing the same policy of "shunt" with regard to the Rimutaka deviation that he had pursued with regard to the straightening of the Hutt Railway. The manner the Government had of dealing with the votes was only hoodwinking members of the House. As for the Manawatu Railway, he was satisfied the Government had no more intention of pursuing it than he had. Mr. GUINNESS (Grey) asked what was proposed to be done in regard to the vote of \$2,000 which was passed last year for the Ngahere-Blackball line and bridge. In the Public Works Statement last year the Minister told them this line had been asked for for several years, and the time had arrived for providing a better means of crossing the Grey River and giving access to the railway system. To meet this requirement it was proposed to Mr. Hornsby Grey River, and the vote of £2,000 was to make a start with the work. It was a branch line to the Town of Blackball, and a very considerable traffic in connection with gold-mining and coal-mining would pass over it. At present that traffic had to be taken from the Ngahere Railway-station across the river in punts and drays at very considerable cost. Last year, although the vote was passed, the Minister did not include it in the Railways Authorisation Act, and none of the money had been spent. This year the same £2,000 appeared on the estimates again. When the residents of the district heard there was no increase in the vote, they held an indignation meeting last Saturday night; and he now asked were the Government prepared to carry out the original intention upon which the vote was passed last session? He would urge the Minister to show some expedition in the construction of the bridge over the Grey River, as it would take a couple of years to build. It was a most urgent and necessary work. He would also urge the Minister this session to bring down the Railways Authorisation Bill that he promised last session, and give an assurance to the House that he would proceed with the work, and that it would be completed within a reasonable time. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) pointed out the necessity there was for a deviation of the line from Marton to Wanganui. The deviation had been surveyed, and the cost would only be £80,000, and it would shorten the distance by ten to fifteen miles. Mr. HALL-JONES said, With regard to the Rimutaka deviation, they must look to the needs of those settlers who had no railway or road communication rather than to those in places where there was communication. With regard to the Waipara-Skargill Section of the Cheviot Railway, that would not be ready for opening before January. With regard to the Hurunui Bridge, the tenders were considerably above the estimate, and the Cabinet would decide what course to take. The plans of the Motueka Bridge were being revised, with a view to economy in construction. They would probably be completed in time to allow the work to go on this

summer. Mr. GRAHAM wished the honourable gentleman to give him an assurance that tenders would be invited early, so that they might take advantage of the present summer. Would that be so ? Mr. SEDDON .- Yes, certainly. Mr. HALL-JONES .- With regard to the question raised by the honourable member for the Grey, if they had a Railways Authorisation Bill this session Ministers would have no objection to that work being included. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) moved, That the vote, "Marton-Te Awamutu, £160,000," be reduced by the sum of £10,000. He did so as a protest against the action of the member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) speaking of the Grahamstown-Whangarei extension as a swindle. He favoured the reduction of the vote by £10,000 because he believed the work could be

<page:901>

be quite sufficient for it, and what more was required might be voted next session. Amendment negatived. Vote, \$560,999, agreed to. Additions to open lines, £675,968. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said a vote of \$50,000 which had been put on the estimates last year for duplicating the line, Dunedin to Mosgiel, had now disappeared from the estimates. He would like some explanation of this. The work was absolutely necessary, and had been recommended by the Railway Department for many years back. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) called attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the railway-stations in North Canterbury. The Kaiapoi and Rangiora Stations were very old, and did not afford sufficient accommodation. Would the Minister inform him when the Kaiapoi Railway-station would be rebuilt ? Mr. CARNCROSS (Taieri) hoped the Minister would be able to give a satisfactory reply regarding the disappearance of the vote for duplicating the line, Dunedin-Mosgiel. £50,000 had been voted last year and £1,200 expended, and now the vote disappeared from the estimates. This was a highly important and necessary work. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said it certainly was not intended to abandon the proposal to duplicate the Dunedin-Mosgiel line. By utilising large locomotives and putting in crossings at the southern side of the tunnel the department had been able to get over many of the difficulties that formerly existed to a considerable extent. While they were committed to the work, and intended to carry it out, it was unnecessary to load the estimates with the amount, as the work could not be carried out this year. The heaviest railway traffic in the colony was on this portion of the line. Traffic on it was being conducted night and day ; but the exigencies of traffic had been met to a certain extent. While the vote was dropped for the present, there was no idea of abandoning it altogether. The line would be duplicated, that was certain, and the work would be carried out within the next two years. In reply to the honourable member for Kaiapoi with regard to railway-stations: the Government was anxious to attend to all these things, but the difficulty was, they had to be done gradually. He could assure the honourable member that they would carry out these alterations as soon as they could. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) asked if it would be done during the coming year. Sir J. G. WARD said they might not be able to commence it during the financial year, but would do so afterwards. Necessary works would be attended to as soon as possible. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) asked how long Petone was to be left without a railway-station. Sir J. G. WARD said this was in the same position as the matters referred to by the honourable member for Kaiapoi. It was absolutely essential in the Railway Department to carry out the most pressing works first. His district had been neglected ; but he could not say when the work would be commenced. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) drew attention to the want of proper railway accommodation at Te Aroha. Mr. E. G. ALLEN (Waikouaiti) was very pleased to hear the reply that the question of duplicating the Dunedin-Mosgiel line had not been dropped, although the £50,000 vote for that purpose was not renewed. He was disappointed to find, however, that no provision had been made on the estimates for duplicating the line between Sawyers' Bay and Dunedin. The Minister would recognise that this work would be required to be done. It was one of the works that had been scheduled amongst the works under the head of " Additions to Open Lines," for which two millions of money was to be borrowed, and expended at the rate of £400,000 1.0. a year. He hoped the Minister would not lose sight of it. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) urged the

necessity of straightening and duplicating the railway-line between Wellington and the Hutt. He was informed by competent engineers that if proper machinery, costing about £2,000, was obtained, the work of cutting down the hillside and putting it into the sea would be comparatively small, and that the value of the land reclaimed would repay the whole outlay. He could not too urgently impress this important matter on the notice of the Minister. The road to the Hutt was a disgrace, and a source of cruelty to man and beast during the winter; and it was impossible to do anything with the road until the railway-line was straightened. Sir J. G. WARD would say, in reply to the member for the Bay of Plenty, that the last time he was at Te Aroha he thought the railway-station was a lovely one; but he would make inquiries to see whether it met the public requirements. He quite agreed with the member for Waikouaiti about the duplication of the line from Sawyers' Bay to Dunedin, but there were other works which must take precedence of it in point of urgency. They could carry the ordinary traffic over the line now without inconvenience. With regard to the duplication and straightening of the Hutt Railway, it stood much in the same position. They had not the money to undertake the work at present; and, moreover, there were more urgent works demanding attention all over the colony. He would be glad to make inquiries with regard to the machinery mentioned by the member for Otaki, with the view of seeing whether the economical removal of hills could be undertaken as stated. Vote, £675,968, agreed to. CLASS XXII .- PUBLIC BUILDINGS. General, £17,000. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) asked in what part of the estimates the expenses incurred in the furnishing, et cetera, of Ministerial residences were shown. He had looked vainly through the estimates trying to find out where this expenditure was buried.

<page:902>

to know on what principle the department proceeded in its chargings against revenue and capital account. Looking through the estimates, there seemed to be the most extraordinary charges. The ordinary person insured his house against fire, and if an accident occurred and any expenditure on renewals was required it was done by the insurance company, and the person might be said to have done the renewal out of revenue by paying insurance fund out of the annual revenue, and not out of capital. But in these estimates the restorations were done out of capital account. For instance, the renewal of the old furniture in the Parliamentary Buildings was charged to capital account; in other words, they were borrowing money for that purpose. He felt sad in thinking, while he was sitting on his comfortable settee, that he was sitting on borrowed money the whole time. Such small items as refencing the grounds, Parliamentary Buildings, the repairs and painting at Papakura, Taupo, and Napier, and the renovating and re-painting of the new post-office in the town he lived near, were all charged in the same way to capital account, and not to revenue, as all wear-and-tear should be. Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister for Public Works) said, With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Riccarton, as to the maintenance of Ministers' residences, there was a purchase of some land adjoining one of the residences, and that was charged to capital account. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) wanted to know, in regard to Ministerial residences, why the cost of the alterations should not appear in the estimates, as shown in the annual report by the Engineer-in-Chief. Mr. HALL-JONES said they did not issue a report with the Consolidated Fund estimates. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) said he had looked vainly through the expenditure on these estimates for information regarding the Ministerial residences, and the only place where he could see any reference to it was the item, "Buildings not specified." Last year they spent £3,371. Mr. HALL-JONES said that was for all the buildings throughout the colony not specified in the estimates. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said the amount authorised last year was £2,000, and he might therefore conclude that the \$1,371 spent in addition constituted the cost of the additions to Ministerial residences. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) would like the Minister to tell them as to the sum of £1,371, spent in regard to the ground around the Molesworth Street residence. Mr. HALL-JONES said he thought that cost about \$1,000. Mr. HERRIES asked if it was true that some more land was to be bought. Mr.

HALL-JONES said that was not correct. Vote, £17,000, agreed to. Vote, Judicial, £43,000, agreed to. Postal and telegraph, \$55,000. as regards the new post-office site at Levin. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) said the Post-office site was offered by a resident at a certain price. After examination by an officer of the department the price was jumped up very considerably, and he was not prepared to pay the increased price, and he declined the offer ; and, as the Government did not believe in being " had," the site was abandoned. Vote, £55,000, agreed to. Vote, Customs, \$5,000, agreed to. Lunatic asylums, £18,000. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) wished to know whether the Government intended to take land in Horo- whenua No. 6 Block for a large asylum. Mr. HALL-JONES said, Not that he was aware of. Mr. FIELD wished to know whether the Government had considered the establishment of the half-way house system in connection with asylums, which, he understood, had proved of great benefit in other countries, to which persons in an incipient stage of insanity could be committed, and so be given an opportunity of being cured, instead of being left until they reached a stage when cure became impossible, as was too often the case under our present system. He believed if that system was introduced the number of lunatics in the country would be reduced instead of increased. He also considered it most urgent that a better system of classification of patients should be introduced. He was aware that to do this meant an increase of asylum space, and therefore increased expenditure. It was also a question whether it would not be advisable to substitute a system of small asylums for the present system of building huge ones. The danger of large disasters by fire would thus be much lessened, there would be better control, and for other reasons the system would be a very beneficial one. Mr. HALL-JONES said, The matters referred to would receive the consideration of the Government. Vote, £18,000, agreed to. Vote, Quarantine Stations, £1,250, agreed to. School-buildings, £30,000. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked, In connection with the items of £2,200 and £2,000 in connection with the Levin Industrial School, whether the school at Levin had been started. Mr. HALL-JONES said the land had been acquired, and was being cleared, and the buildings would in due course be started. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked if it was the intention of the Government to go on with the proposal to separate boys and girls of the same family. Mr. HALL-JONES said the object had been to separate the boys and girls, but this was the first time this phase of the question had been brought under his notice. He would bring the matter under the notice of his colleagues. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) wished to point out, in connection with the item " New buildings," school for deaf-mutes, that last year £1,500 had been voted and nothing spent.

<page:903>

down at £15,000. £2,000 was asked for this year, and he wished to know what was to be done with the £2,000. He wished to mention that the institution was splendidly conducted, and the children were happy, healthy, and well trained ; but it was positively immoral of the Government to continue to house them in a wooden building. He had on several occasions brought the matter before the department and before the House, and the anxiety to which the present conditions gave rise must be his excuse, if excuse were needed, for again referring to the matter. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Information had been obtained as to the most modern building for this class of school. The plan was almost completed, and before they met again the building would be under way. Mr. WILFORD (Wellington Suburbs) alluded to the urgent need for a home for epileptics. It was a disgrace to the State that there was no such accommodation. Mr. HALL-JONES said, As soon as a site was selected, the necessary buildings would be started. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) drew attention to the state of the buildings at Caversham Industrial School, the old wooden buildings being nothing short of a death-trap. Mr. HALL-JONES was understood to say that if these were not required they would be removed. Vote, £30,000 agreed to. School-buildings, Special, £30,000. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) said, in connection with the Technical School at Christchurch, through some feeling on the part of a School Committee the sale of the school site had been put a stop to, and he wished to know whether any provision would be made by the Government whereby the Board would be

enabled to purchase a site. Mr. HALL-JONES said he was not aware of any special provision being made for the purchase of a site at Christchurch, or whether a decision had been come to regarding the site proposed to be dealt with by the Canterbury Board. The question of the disposal of a site would be decided very shortly, and that, he thought, would also settle the matter of obtaining a new site. Mr. BUDDO said he understood it would be provided for. Mr. HALL-JONES did not say that, but believed that an arrangement would be come to by which the Christchurch Board would be able to build the school. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) would like to know on what principle the £10,000 for technical schools would be allocated. Mr. HALL-JONES said the money would be distributed according to the Act, and under regulations. He was advised that the site on the Town Belt at Christchurch was not required for public-school purposes; and, if that was so, he did not see why it should not be used by the Canterbury Board. Vote, £30,000, agreed to. Vote, Hospitals and other Charitable Institutions, £5,000, agreed to. CLASS XXIII. Vote, Lighthouses, £5,500, agreed to. Vote, Harbour-works, £7,527, agreed to. Harbour defences, £25,000. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) moved to reduce the vote by £15,000. No less a sum than £420,000 was asked this year for defence purposes. Was it possible for the colony to maintain this expenditure? It meant a charge of 11s. per head on the population for defence. This item was but a small one, and, as the liabilities were under £10,000, it was not handicapping the Government to reduce the vote by £15,000. That would give sufficient to meet liabilities, and would be an indication that the Defence vote was to be reduced. Mr. HALL-JONES said the fact that the expenditure on this item was low was an indication that a greater expenditure would be required this year. At the present time works were going on in various places which must be provided for. If the money was not required it would not be spent. It would only be expended in carrying on work that was necessary. Every possible precaution should be taken, in his opinion, to make the defences of the colony as modern and efficient as the finances of the colony would permit. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said it was absolutely monstrous that the Government should propose an expenditure of close on £450,000 upon the defence of the colony. The colony could not stand the strain; the money ought to be spent on roads and bridges. The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £15,000." AYES, 16. O'Meara Arnold Herries Russell, G. W. Barclay Hogg Bennet Hornsby Tellers. Collins Lang Meredith Lethbridge Graham Millar. Hall Massey NOES, 28. Allen, E. G. Kaihau Smith, G. J. Buddo Lawry Stevens Carroll McGowan Thompson, R. Colvin McGuire Ward Duncan McKenzie, R. Wilford Field McNab Witheford. Fraser, A. L. D. Mills Hall-Jones Parata Tellers. Heke Rhodes Carncross Houston Seddon Palmer. Majority against, 12. Amendment negatived. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked 2.0. what liabilities had been incurred that the Minister said this vote was required for. Mr. HALL JONES said they came up to very nearly the amount asked for. They were works that were being carried on at Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin, and when these works were completed the vote would cease.

<page:904>

works at Otago Heads were concerned, it was done by prison labour. Mr. HALL-JONES said there was the cost of material. Mr. MILLAR asked what material was going to run into £20,000. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) wished to know if this money was for works in the colony, or was it for material ordered from Home. Mr. HALL-JONES said it was for masonry, concrete-work, and water-supply. Mr. HERRIES considered the vote should have been divided into its separate headings. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said this vote for harbour defences was for the emplacement of the guns, and liabilities had already been incurred to the amount of £8,398. The foundations and fixings for the guns were now in progress. They were partly completed, and this vote was taken for the work now in hand. Most of the work was being done at Auckland, where a new fort was being constructed. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked if the Minister had reports from competent authorities as to the positions of the forts. They were often told by high naval authorities they were in the wrong positions. Mr. SEDDON said the highest naval authorities

we had were the Imperial Defence Com. mittee, and they had reported on the forts. Everything relating to defences from one end of the Empire to the other was submitted to them for their decision. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) said it was a fact that at Otago Heads the guns could not be depressed sufficiently to touch any hostile vessel that might be coming in. The money that had been frittered away might just as well have been thrown from the end of the wharf. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) did not attach much importance to the decisions of these high military authorities. They were liable to make mistakes, and we could best settle our defences for ourselves. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) said all the money that had been spent on the fortifications might just as well have been pitched into the sea. All the talk about an invading army was mere moonshine and nonsense. Mr. SEDDON said the forts at Otago Heads had been erected so long ago that alterations now had to be made. Vote, £38,027, agreed to. CLASS XXIV .- TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS. Vote, Tourist and Health Resorts, £9,350, agreed to. CLASS XXV .- IMMIGRATION. Immigration, £300. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) would like to know what form it was necessary to go through before any one could get this assistance from the Government in bringing out men from Home. Mr. HALL-JONES said the application had to be made to the Minister for Immigration, applicants were able to give. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked why it was, then, that he noticed in the Yorkshire Post, a statement by the Agent General, saying that people could apply to him for assistance. Mr. SEDDON said, In those cases we paid nothing at all. There was an arrangement with the shipping companies by which any one who had proved that he had a sufficient amount of capital and was an agricultural farmer would be brought out at reduced rates. Of course, the Government pay the difference. This vote on the estimates was to bring families together who were separated. Vote, £300, agreed to. CLASS XXVI .- CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND SUPERVISION OF ROADS, BRIDGES, AND OTHER PUBLIC WORKS. Roads, Departmental, £24,178. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) wished to refer to the item, "Road Surveyor, Auckland, £325." He presumed that that officer was Mr. Wright, who had been in the service to his knowledge for the last twenty years, and he believed at the present time there was not a better officer in the service of the Government. He had lately been promoted, and was now practically head of the Roads and Bridges Department at Auckland ; but his promotion did not appear to have carried with it any increase of salary, as he (Mr. Massey) thought it should have done. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked what steps were being taken to inquire into the very serious charges that had been made against the officers of this department in Auckland. The Minister had very serious charges in his possession, and if one-half of them were proved to be true there must be radical alteration in the department in Auckland. He did not wish to specify these charges, but, as honourable members insisted, he would say they amounted to little short of downright robbery, holding-back of money, et cetera. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) said he had never heard anything about the charges mentioned by the honourable member. What he rose for was to support the honourable member for Franklin in his reference to Mr. Wright. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said that Mr. Wright was just doing the same work as he was before, and had not altered in any way. He did not do all the work in the Auckland District by any means. With regard to the charges referred to by Mr. Millar, a report had been asked for, and as soon as that was received the whole thing would be considered by Cabinet ; and, if it was necessary there should be an inquiry, there would be an inquiry. Vote, £24,178, agreed to. Roads, &c., £384,000. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) wished to point out how the lands of this colony were, or, rather, were not, a source of revenue to the people of New Zealand. Under the consolidated estimates they had voted £127,000 to the Lands Department, and the total vote now for

<page:905>

expenditure on Public Works Account for Lands Department and roads at \$300,000, they would have £427,000 that the Lands Department cost the colony. The total land revenue was only £270,000, including £78,000 for cash sales. We lived in a country that had been settled some fifty or sixty years, and

we had the delusion some years ago that the lands were going to be a source of revenue, and would relieve the country of taxation. It was doing nothing of the kind. The land revenue went into the Consolidated Fund, but far more was taken out of loan-moneys each year. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) wished for information regarding the item, "Advances to co-operative workmen's dwellinghouses, £235." Was that amount placed on the estimates to provide dwellings for those sent to the country districts from the larger centres of population? In his own district, notwithstanding the fact that the local man was seeking employment, eleven men were sent from Oamaru to work on the roads. That was manifestly unfair to the settlers in that district, who were promised work as an inducement to take up land. He wished also to protest against notices being sent out to the effect that men would not be engaged on the roads whilst men were required for harvesting in the South Island.

CLASS XXVII .- DEVELOPMENT OF GOLD-FIELDS. Vote, Development of goldfields, £50,000, agreed to. CLASS XXVIII .- PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS. Vote, Purchase of Native lands, £30,000, agreed to. CLASS XXIX .- TELEGRAPH EXTENSION. Vote, Telegraph extension, £40,489, agreed to. CLASS XXX .- RATES ON NATIVE LANDS. Vote, Rates on Native lands, £650, agreed to. CLASS XXXI .- CONTINGENT DEFENCE. Contingent defence, £180,000 .. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) thought the amounts spent on each item ought to be given, and he moved to reduce the amount of the vote by £10,000. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) wished to know if it was the intention of the Government to send drill instructors to the rifle clubs in the back country. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) .- No. Mr. LETHBRIDGE (Rangitikei) said he had received a letter from a member of the Fifth Contingent stating that he had been back three months and had not been able to get any money. Mr. SEDDON said that was all nonsense. The men had all been paid. He himself had received three similar letters from men, two of whom had overdrawn £6. There were a number of these men who had left no addresses. Mr. O'MEARA thought it was unfair for the Customs Department to levy a duty on uniforms. how they proposed to distribute the overcoats represented by the item in the estimates. The sum of \$2,000 would go a very small way towards distributing overcoats amongst eighteen thousand Volunteers. He would also like to know in what way the item for saddlery was to be expended. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty), regarding the submarine-mining vessels, desired information as to why they had been ordered, and when. The House had given no authority for this expenditure of £22,000, and the vessels, from a defence point of view, would be utterly worthless to the country. Mr. SEDDON said they had been recommended two years ago. One was for Auckland, the other for Wellington, and they were necessary to make the defence complete. They had been authorised last year, and provided for in the lump sum for harbour defences. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) asked if the Defence Minister had heard of the fact that, when a shilling in postage stamps had been sent to the Defence Office for a service ribbon, the department had replied, returning the stamps, saying that the amount was correct, but must be forwarded by postal note. Mr. SEDDON had not heard of this before, and said that such a thing was not likely to occur again. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) asked whether 3.0. the Minister considered £5,000 & sufficient sum to provide rifle-ranges for the other parts of the colony, when it took £2,550 for Wellington and Dunedin alone. The vote for water-bottles ought to be struck out, as they were, in his opinion, in this country unnecessary and useless, and only calculated to induce young fellows to simply fill their water-bottles with other beverages than cold tea. He hoped the Minister would see that shooting was encouraged, and, in order to do this, would see that rifle-ranges were provided wherever there was a Volunteer corps. Mr. SEDDON, in reply to the member for Ellesmere, said the vote taken for overcoats this year would take them over the 31st March. Tenders were now in, and he preferred, himself, to keep the money in the colony. With respect to the member for Pahiatua's question, he remitted the duty on the caps if the Volunteers themselves imported them. As regarded the question of rifle-ranges, mentioned by the member for Egmont, the amount he was asking for would meet all his requirements. The £2,000 that had been expended in Dunedin was owing to the purchase of land at



Pelichet Bay. With respect to the water-bottles, the Defence Committee recommended they should be procured. We must have them in case of necessity, even though we kept them in stock. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) asked what the item, " Saddlery, £2,000," meant. Mr. SEDDON said it was for material to be kept in stock. The Committee divided on the question, " That the vote be reduced by £10,000."

<page:906>

Parata Lang Arnold Russell, G. W. Lethbridge Barclay Tellers. Massey Collins Herries Meredith Hall Millar. O'Meara Hornsby Kaihau NOES, 26. Fraser, A. L. D. Palmer Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Seddon Bennet Smith, G. J. Heke Buddo Stevens Houston Carncross Ward Lawry Carroll Witheford. McGowan Colvin Tellers. McKenzie, R. Duncan Rhodes Field McNab Symes. Mills Flatman Majority against, 11. Motion negatived. Vote, £180,000, agreed to. CLASS XXXII .- LANDS IMPROVEMENT. Vote, Improved - farm settlements, £3,800, agreed to. Lands, Miscellaneous, £3,250. Mr. COLLINS called attention to the item, "Waimakariri - Ashley Water-supply Board, further contribution, £1,000." He would like to know what that was for, and what previous contributions had been made. This was a time when that vote might very well be withdrawn, and unless a satisfactory answer were given he would be forced to consider the advisability of moving that the item be struck out. It was well known that this Board was opposing the electric-power scheme of the Christchurch City Council, and, if this vote was given it, it would further strengthen their hands in opposing the interests of Christchurch in connection with the scheme referred to. He had no desire personally to oppose the vote, but he was anxious that nothing should be done which would prejudice a scheme in which the social and industrial interests of the people of a large city were involved. Mr. DUNCAN (Minister of Lands) said, Already the Government had given about £2,000 to the work this Board had in hand, and this amount was to complete it. He understood there was a large area of the very poorest land in Canterbury there, and this money was voted for the purpose of bringing in water for the stock and other purposes. Mr. G. J. SMITH (Christchurch City) said the position was that, if the Government continued to subsidise this Board, it was being put in a stronger position to oppose the Bill promoted by the Christchurch Council. Would the honourable gentleman leave this matter over until the question in dispute between the two bodies had been settled? He would like the Minister to say whether he would give him that assurance. Mr. DUNCAN said he would not give any assurance. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) said, If the Board had the right to the water, the question was the rights to the water one way or the other. Vote, £3,250, agreed to. Vote, Government Loans to Local Bodies Account, £46,577, agreed to. Resolutions reported. The House adjourned at four o'clock a.m. (Wednesday). #