

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Tuesday, 20th August, 1901. Bicyclists in Parliament Grounds - Presbyterian Church of New Zealand Bill-Land for Settlements Act-Shops and Offices Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m. PRAYERS. BICYCLISTS IN PARLIAMENT GROUNDS. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND wished to ask the Hon. the Speaker, If it was possible to take any steps to prevent cyclists passing through Parliament Ground at a fast pace. When he was entering the ground that afternoon by the Museum Street entrance, a cyclist ran into him and knocked him down, with the result that his leg cyclist went head-over-heels on to the road. He thought some steps should be taken to prevent such a nuisance existing on the premises. Some by-law should be passed or some order should be given that cyclists were not to go through the premises at a fast pace. The cyclist of whom he complained was going at a fast rate and knocked him down, and went himself right into the middle of the road. The Hon. the SPEAKER said he would inquire into the matter, and see what steps could be taken.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND BILL. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- Sir, this is a Bill that is necessary on account of the union of the Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand. It is their unanimous wish that the Presbyterian Church of Otago should retain the management of the property they now hold. I would like to tell members that this property has been administered in the past without any reproach to any one, it has been well conducted, and part of the property maintains three chairs in the Otago University. It would be impossible for them to put that property into the Union, and it has therefore been unanimously agreed that they shall administer the property in the future as they have done in the past. There is no opposition to the Bill-it is a private measure-and I shall be very glad to give to members any other explanation that it may be in my power to give. I move the second reading of the Bill. Bill read the second time. LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS ACT. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND moved, That there be laid on the table of the Council a return showing,-(1.) All land purchased under authority of " The Land for Settlements Act, 1894," and handed over to the Lands Department, giving the acreage of each block, and

the cost, including all expenses in acquiring the same. (2.) How such lands have been disposed of, giving a separate return for each block, such return to show how the lands have been classified—that is to say, if a block has been divided into several classes the return shall give the acreage classed as agricultural land, second-class land, third-class land ; also, the acreage devoted to providing homes for workmen in the vicinity of cities or towns ; the acreage disposed of as small grazing-runs, the number of sections into which each block has been divided, the acreage of the sections, and the rentals ; also, a return of advances made to settlers in each block under the authority of the Land for Settlements Act. The return to show the cost to the colony of each block, including surveys, roading, and all expenses to date of disposal, and the gross rental at which such blocks have been disposed of. When he gave notice of this motion some weeks ago the Land for Settlements Amendment Bill was in another place, and he had hoped the information he wanted before the Bill reached

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members to consider it before the Bill came on. The adjournment of the Council interfered with his motion coming on, and in the meantime the Bill passed the other branch of the Legislature, and had since also passed the Council. He thought it was matter for regret that Parliament did not have full information as to the working of this very important Act before the measure was disposed of. He did not say there was anything in the return that would affect the measure very much ; but, at any rate, it would have enabled members to study the subject and see how the Land for Settlements Act was being administered and how it was working in the colony, and to bring to the consideration of the matter information which at present was not in the hands of either members or the people of the colony. He thought that, although the Act was passed, it was necessary that the colony should have very full information as to the way in which this important Act was being administered. He might say, in passing, that Parliament ought to have had laid before it, within fourteen days of opening, a full return as required by Act of the working of the Land for Settlements Act during the past year. Another return showing how the Crown lands had been disposed of should also have been presented, but as yet neither of these returns was available for honourable members, although Parliament had been fifty days in session, and those returns were required fifteen days and twenty days respectively from the beginning of each session. Parliament was at present without any information as to the working of these very important Acts during the past year ; and if in what he was about to say he was incorrect in any of his premises, it was only because he had not had an opportunity of availing himself of the information which those returns would have given as to what had been done during the past year. It was a matter for regret that these returns had not been laid on the table as required by law. It was a default that ought not to occur again. It was impossible to do justice to an important subject like this, unless they had full and complete information as to its working when Parliament was dealing with it. The cost of the return, he thought, would not be great. The motion spoke for itself. He desired to have a return of all land purchased under authority of the

Land for Settlements Act of 1894, and that such a return should show clearly the different classes of land acquired. He had followed the classification named in the Act, so as not to have a conflict in this respect in any return that might be furnished. That Act defined lands as: (1) Agricultural, (2) second-class, (3) third-class, grazing-lands, and so on ; and in a return it was desirable that that classification should be followed under which the lands had been acquired. When the Act of 1894 was passed many honourable members who were now in the Chamber were here, and others were in the other branch of the Legislature ; and he ventured to think that all would agree with him Hon. Mr. Ormond the debates when it was adopted, they would find that Parliament originally determined that the Act was necessary for the purpose of providing land for close settlement. That was the great justification for asking for an appropriation of large sums yearly under the Act, and, as he said, the principal object Parliament had was close settlement of the land. He was entirely in favour of the Land for Settlements Act when it was passed, and with others in the Council had taken part in amending it from being, as it was when brought down, & crude, imperfect, and unworkable measure, and making it useful. His honourable friend who sat behind him, the Hon. Mr. McLean, was one of those who also took a very active part in that direction. The object of Parliament was, as he had said, to secure close settlement, and in 1896 Parliament went further. It had then become apparent that sufficient provision had not been made in the original Act for close settlement of another kind-namely, workmen's homes-and that was provided for in the Act of 1896. He asked the Council to follow him in agreeing that the objects of passing the Land for Settlements Act were close settlement : under the first Act, general settlement, which was intended to be largely agricultural ; and in the second place, the very important provision for workmen's homes in the neighbourhood of cities and towns. No one could deny these objects were such as did credit to the colony. And we knew now that in older countries, even in England, homes for workmen were being largely promoted, with benefit to a class of workmen-mechanics and artisans who were living in the neighbourhood of the towns. He had endeavoured, so far as he was able, to get from the returns which were at the service of honourable members how this Act had been working in New Zealand, and he was obliged to say that he was very much disappointed. The Act was not being worked as it ought to be, he thought, for the benefit of the persons for whom it was passed. It was very difficult for any one without studying these returns to get at what proportion of the lands, which had been purchased for settlement, were agricultural land to be used for agricultural purposes or for close settlement ; and the returns, so far as they had been given, of what had hitherto been done in respect to workmen's homes were exceedingly disappointing. Very little had been done in that very important direction-that direction in which he thought there was very large scope in the colony, and to which Parliament, he thought, intended a considerable proportion of the moneys which had been duly appropriated for that purpose should be devoted, and that must be disappointing to those who wished to see this Act carried out for the benefit of the people of the colony. The result of his inquiry therefore was that, on the whole, quite a minor proportion of the settlement which had taken place under the Land for Settlements Act had been on that class of land which Parliament meant should be the chief object on which the money should be

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agricultural land. He knew that there were some very successful settlements in the South. He did not know the name of one property-he thought it was bought from Mr. Allan McLean -and that property, he believed, had proved everything that was desired, and that was the close settlement he thought Parliament meant should be largely instituted under the grants which were made. But his study of the question, so far as he had been able to follow the information given in the returns, was that a very large proportion of the money which had been spent on acquiring land for settlements had been devoted to the acquisition of sheep-farms; and he was one who thought that Parliament never meant, when it appropriated these moneys for the purposes of close settlement, that settlement of a kind which could not

be called close was to occupy the chief place, and that the moneys which were being yearly spent on land for settlements were not intended to be devoted to providing sheep-runs for a very limited number of people in the colony. That was his opinion, and why he said this subject deserved the consideration of the Legislature, and why it would have been well had the Parliament had before it, before the Bill was passed, such information as would have enabled it to deal with this very important subject, and why he suggested that they should insist upon such amended administration of the Act as would fulfil the objects for which he claimed the Bill was originally contemplated .. He had just stated that he was one of those who were strongly in favour of the Land for Settlements Act when it was first brought in, and so he was ; but he had always disapproved of what were known as the compulsory clauses. He held that they would work, as they had worked, with great injury to the colony, and he knew that they were even now working with still greater injury to the colony than when they were first started. He held that the compulsory clause was altogether unnecessary ; that there were heaps of land then ready to be sold as there was now, and that the effect of this clause would be to unsettle the people, to stop improvements, and in various ways be prejudicial to the best interests of the colony. His contention that the compulsory power was unnecessary was proved, inasmuch as between 1894 and the year before last, when the estate well known as Hatuma was taken, not a property was acquired under the compulsory clause. The Hon. Mr. JONES .- Yes ; the Ardgowan Estate, at Oamaru, which was taken with the concurrence of the company. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said he was obliged for the illustration, which he had overlooked. There were only two in the whole of that time taken compulsorily, and Hatuma was by far the largest. Well, his opinion was still that the mischief done by the bad influence of this compulsory clause, which was unnecessary, had been infinitely greater than any good that could be derived from it ; and how much worse it was working now than it was at the beginning first taken-Hatuma-which he knew very well, and as well probably as anybody in the colony. He said that was a property which, in the interests of the colony ought not to have been taken, and that the colony would sustain a serious loss by the acquisition of that property. That was his opinion ; and he felt satisfied that in the course of a very short time we would see that the price paid for the Hatuma Estate, and the terms on which the Government had been able to dispose of it, were such that the settlers would not be able to pay the rentals they were called upon to pay for that property ; and that, therefore, it would be as undesirable a purchase for them as it was for the Government who bought it. In no sense could Hatuma be spoken of as agricultural land. It was purely pastoral country, badly watered, but a good sheep-run. Now, he had taken out from this little book, describing Hatuma, a few figures to show how in this particular case his representation that the Land for Settlements Act was being worked in the direction of making sheep runs for a few people was being given effect to. He found in this book that the Hatuma Estate contained altogether 25,737 acres. He might say he had no feeling at all in this matter, or in regard to what had taken place. The estate belonged to an absentee, who was not an improving settler. He was only taking this case to show that in his opinion the colony had made a bad bargain, and that it was an undesirable thing to have exercised the power. Now, he found, on going through the list of lots put up at the Hatuma sale, that there were fifteen lots that could be properly described as small sheep-runs, the largest of which was 1,509 acres, and the smallest was 584 acres, the next being 612 and 651 acres, so that of these fifteen lots every one except two was more than a square mile in extent. He wanted to quote that area, because it would convey more clearly to those outside the fact that this could not be regarded as an instance of close settlement of the land. These were estates. He knew from his knowledge of the country that these bigger lots were really the best of the property ; and the smaller sections, although more level land, were inferior to these larger blocks, and that the only people who would get any good out of Hatuma (if anybody did) were those who had these larger sections. And it would be seen at once, when he gave the figures, as follows : 1,509, 1,158, 1,134, 1,217, 716, 774, 878, 701, 584, 782, 676, 612, 651, 704, 926 acres. So that each one of them was a

considerable property. An Hon. MEMBER .- How many sections are there altogether ? The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said he had taken out fifteen of the larger sections. Of course there He was only giving were smaller sections. members an instance how far the money which Hatuma cost went towards the purchase of what he said were a class of property which was never intended, from his point of view, by the Land for Settlements Act. These fifteen properties averaged 868 acres apiece.

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the land carry to the acre ? The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said, About one sheep and a half to the acre, he should think. But Hatuma was a place which he had seen many times under varying conditions. It was a badly- watered property, and how the small settlers would get on in dry seasons, any one who knew Hawke's Bay might guess. The price of Ha- tuma, as near as he could get at it, was about £5 4s. an acre. That was without any roading, surveying, or other incidental expenses, which he would not estimate, simply because he did not want to say anything which could not be thoroughly substantiated. But this little book said that roads were to be provided and access given to each section. The whole cost, at \$5 per acre-much less than it cost-would be £65,110 for these fifteen sections, and it could easily be seen that providing properties of this kind for very few people was something which was never contemplated by the Land for Settlements Act. That was what he was try- ing to make apparent, not only to the Council but to people of New Zealand outside the Council who would consider this subject, because, in his opinion, what he had stated was never intended by the Land for Settlements Act. As to the rental of Hatuma, he might state that various rentals were given-7s., 6s. an acre, and so on. He estimated that the very lowest rental would be this-that by the time any one of these settlers, small or large, had fenced in his block and stocked it and put the smallest of whares on it, his rental, including rental to the Government and interest on his money, would be 10s. an acre a year at the very least, and probably it would be more. With wool at present prices it did not need him to demonstrate that any such rental would be absolutely impossible; and he did not think the colony ought to be in the position of creating a class of tenants on terms which, in the end, it would be impossible for them to comply with, and which would oblige the Government before they had done with them to largely reduce their rentals. He had instanced the case of Hatuma because it showed how the Land for Settlements Act was working in respect to that particular class of property. Since the Hatuma case was settled, action under the compulsory clauses had been largely pressed upon the consideration of the Government, and one property, Forest Gate, had been taken. He would have something to say about that directly. Notices had been given in the case of three others, but no notice had yet appeared in the Gazette with regard to them. None of them were suitable for close settlement. At the present values which the Valuation Department had managed to have placed upon the land in the Hawke's Bay District, he did not believe any of those pro- perties would, if acquired, pay the Govern- ment. In his opinion they would not be safe investments, nor at those values would settlers be able to occupy them profitably. Believing that, he thought it was his duty to place those facts before the public and before future in the settlement of land of the class of Hatuma, it might not be said that the whole position was not clearly put before the land was acquired. As he had already stated, the second block in Hawke's Bay that the Government had taken was a property called Forest Gate, which consisted of about eight thousand acres, and which had belonged to an old settler, Colonel Herrick, who died some time ago. He was an officer of the Colonial Forces, and was actively employed during the Native wars. He was in command of the expedition at Waikare- moana against Te Kooti, and had performed good services for the colony. The estate was not a big one, nor was it of high quality. He left a widow and five children. Three of them were grown up men, whose ages range from twenty-five to thirty years, and there were two daughters. The estate contained a little over eight thousand acres of land, which, in his opinion, was not suitable for close settle- ment. He should say, in fairness, in refer- ence to the Forest Gate property, that when the proprietor, Colonel Herrick, died, he left an executor, who, knowing that the place was not a

very good provision for the family, saw his way some two years ago to acquire, as he thought, a better place where those young people could have a better chance of settling. That was, provided he could sell Forest Gate. It was therefore offered to the Government, which declined it, for the reason that the price asked was considered to be too high. The family was very much pleased at that. The widow desired to end her days there. In the meantime the chance of getting the property which it was thought could be acquired out of the money to be got from the Government for Forest Gate was lost. Then, after that, they were served with a notice that the Government had taken the place. In his opinion that was a very harsh proceeding. The family consisted of, as he had said, five young people and a widow. The property was extremely moderate in size, and it would not provide for more than double the number if it were cut up into pieces which it would be profitable to occupy. Why the Board thought it necessary to be so harsh and arbitrary as to take a small property of this kind from a family who had been born and brought up on it, it was very difficult to say. There was a very strong feeling in Hawke's Bay that this was a cruel and wanton act, and it was generally thought to be one which ought not to proceed further. However, there it was. Notice had been given that the land was taken, and the young people had no other place to go to. This was the return an old settler who had done good service to the colony met with, under the compulsory clauses of the Act. The case, however, was not yet settled, as it had to go to the Court to decide as to what the Government had to pay, and if it had to pay in the same proportion as it had done in the case of Hatuma, he ventured to say this place would be an equally bad bargain. In regard to the other two properties, there had been no notification of their having been taken, except a statement

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that they were to be taken. One was a property belonging to an absentee, and the other the case of a very old settler in Hawke's Bay named Rathbone, whose property was not more than five or six thousand acres. Neither of the properties contained much agricultural land, but were pastoral country; and he held that it was never intended that this Act should be worked in such a way that the Government could give risky prices for properties of that sort. He might tell the Council that, since the Hatuma Estate had been taken over, there had been very strong feeling throughout Hawke's Bay in every little settlement and township, that they would like, as the people near Hatuma had liked, to have places subdivided; and in many little towns meetings had been held at which the storekeepers and residents passed resolutions declaring that they desired that such-and-such a place should be taken. This sort of thing was promoted by the compulsory clauses of the Act. He would like to tell a little story, which was perfectly true, about something which took place at one of those meetings not very long ago. At this meeting it was resolved that property "A" should be taken. This was rather a good place near the township, owned by two old gentlemen who had been there a large part of their lives, and who would soon, in the ordinary course of events, be departing this life, and, when they did, no doubt the land would be cut up in the ordinary course; but that was not soon enough, so the land had to be taken. Then, some persons who resided in another part of the same little township said, "That is all very well, but there is another property near here we would like taken," and a resolution was proposed to move the Government to take that also forthwith. But a man present got up and said, "Stop; this is a very unwise proceeding. These settlers who own this property are spending large sums of money, and are improving their property. They have been very useful to the township for the last few years. This pear is not ripe. Let them go on and spend more money on improvements, and when the property is ready then it will be ripe to take." There was a nice sentiment! And that was the sort of sentiment that was being promoted by the compulsory clauses of the Land for Settlements Act. "Naboth's vineyard" was a very poor story compared to that. They had all heard about "Naboth's vineyard," but, in his opinion, this beat it a long way. He had said, perhaps, all he desired to say in endeavouring to show-so far as the information at the disposal of Parliament enabled him-that the Act was not being worked to the best advantage of the colony. A study of the various properties that had

been acquired would show that a very large proportion consisted of pastoral land pure and simple. This was never intended by the Act ; there was plenty of good agricultural land to be got on which the class of settlement desired could be carried out. He also urged that the provisions of the Act which were provided to enable homes to be procured for workmen were not being taken proper advantage of. Very little was being done in this direction. If he erred in his facts it was not his fault ; it was the fault of the Government not providing proper information to enable him to collect statistics. Had it not been for that he would have placed statistics before the Council to bear out what he was saying ; and if he got the return he was asking for he would make it his business to see that the figures should be made public, so that the people might see how the administration of the Act was going on. As a supporter of, and as one who believed in the usefulness of the land-for-settlement policy, if properly worked, he very much regretted to think it had not been used to the advantage of the colony. The information he had given would enable the Council, and others outside the Council, to judge how far his contentions were correct. But there was one thing in connection with the Land for Settlements Act he ought to mention, because he believed in the freehold tenure. His firm conviction was that, as the operation of the Land for Settlements Act extended-as it would doubtless extend-it would largely increase the number of persons holding lands under the Crown under leasehold ; and the day was not far distant when they would say, " We will have the freehold." That day was fast coming on, and the proper administration of the Act would create a large class of people in the country settled on the land as leaseholders, who only wanted to be numerous to put down this wretched system of leasehold, and insist on having a freehold. That would be the outcome of the Land for Settlements Act. He hoped the Council would agree to give the return he asked for. The information he asked for was information the Council and the colony was entitled to. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said they had just listened to a very extraordinary speech, because he did not believe such a speech had ever been delivered by an honourable gentleman coming from any other part of the colony. The strange thing was that he came from the part of the colony where the Act was required, absolutely, to assist the district through its troubles - that was a district where the population had been stagnant for years, where the capital town was being strangled by outside towns, and where the trade and commerce and population were at a standstill because of the large amount of land held in a few hands. The great difficulty the Government felt was to get into this district, and open it up, because they had received no assistance from the people who owned the lands, or from the public spirit of the district. The honourable gentleman had made an indictment against certain villages and towns that were bold enough to hold public meetings, with a view of asking the Government that certain properties be purchased for close settlement. Well, was there anything wrong in that? He (Mr. Walker) would have thought from the necessities of the district, and certainly from the exceedingly well expressed sentiments of the honourable gentleman himself as regarded the propriety of close settlement, that

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he would have been very glad indeed that occasion should be taken at these meetings to bring these properties before the notice of the Land Purchase Board. The fact was that, in this district, it had been exceedingly difficult to get hold of properties that were available for purchase ; and there had also been a certain amount of difficulty because the country was broken and rolling in its nature, and if the Government took a large property it was necessary there should be a certain amount of pastoral country in it. However, taking the honourable gentleman's statement about Hatuma, let them suppose it was cut up into thirty holdings. Was it not better that it should be cut up than that it should remain in its old state ? When the honourable gentleman talked in a grandiloquent way about the enormous estates the Act is creating on the Hatuma Estate-900 acres, 1,200 acres, and 1,500 acres of land that would only carry a sheep and a half to the acre-did honourable members not wonder at the honourable gentleman's own moderation in what he had done himself in that direction ? If the honourable gentleman could only

bring himself to the state of mind of-he thought-Warren Hastings, or Lord Clive, when he was brought before a great tribunal, and was charged with certain things -of course they charged the honourable gentle- man in a Pickwickian sense with being a large landowner-he would likely be able to say he was astonished at his own moderation. All these properties were a monument to the acquirer's personal moderation. Nobody blamed the honourable gentleman or anybody else in Hawke's Bay for having acquired these estates. All that was said was, that the time had come when they must try to break them up for the purpose of assisting that district to progress. Let them compare that district with any other district in the North Island during the last ten years. Let them compare it with Taranaki, and where did they find in any one district a more miraculous illustration, not only of settle- ment but also of good trade, than they would find in Taranaki ? And where would they find the opposite of this steady progress more than in Hawke's Bay? There was the difference of pole from pole between the two places, and the reason was that Hawke's Bay was a district of large estates and Taranaki was a district of small estates. As far as the natural advantages went, it was true Taranaki had the natural ad- vantage of having a marvellous growth of grass, and the consequent production of dairy pro- duce. Hawke's Bay, on the other hand, was a dry climate ; but still it was a climate that had many possibilities, a climate that, in his opinion, lent itself very reasonably and favour- ably to a great number of small cultures. He was certain that in Hawke's Bay they could have a larger variety of small cultures than in Taranaki, because the wet climate naturally limited the range of production. He did not understand, taking a general view of the subject, that the honourable gentleman was at all justified in making the charges he had made against the policy of the Land for Settle- Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker ments Act or its administration. Of course, if the honourable gentleman had taken a wider view of the subject, and had been able to show that in other parts of the colony the same objection could be taken to the administration of the Act as he contended existed in Hawke's Bay, they might have been able to listen to him with more conviction. For instance, he evidently imagined that the administration of the Act in Hawke's Bay was not only typical, but was the solitary instance of the land- for-settlements administration, because he was not aware of any other estate except Hatuma that had been taken over for settlement. He could assure the honourable gentleman that the difficulties in the way of helping Hawke's Bay had been enormous, and not the least assistance towards helping Hawke's Bay would come through the Land for Settlements Act. The honourable gentleman complained that, because of the high range of the land- values in Hawke's Bay, it would be im- possible for the Government to acquire land there under these values at anything like a reasonable price. Well, the strange thing was that for years valuers had been absolutely under-estimating the value of property in that district, and if conscience-money was pro- curable from the landowners of Hawke's Bay. he believed they would pay a very handsome sum indeed to the Treasury at once. It was impossible that these values could be so extreme ; because they had been low for so long it had been impossible to bring them up to their true value. One of the greatest difficulties the Government had been labouring under, as regarded land-taxation, was that in certain districts, owing to the imperfect machinery, the valuers had not brought the land-values there up to anything like their proper level ; because the essence of true valuation was that there should be one standard of value- an even standard of value-all over the colony. It was very wrong for a Wellington settler who held land to have to pay at a high rate ; while if you went across the border and got- into Hawke's Bay the man who owned similar land was only valued at one-half or two-thirds the value. But those were the sort of anoma- lies which seemed to grow with a certain amount of indigenous vigour in the soil of Hawke's Bay, where the values had been most untrustworthy ; and if the honourable gentle- man now complained that the values were being raised too high, he (Mr. Walker) was only too glad to hear it, because he believed it showed that the values now were being put at something like what they ought to be. He knew they had not been so in the past. Values now in Hawke's Bay were reaching the level of what other parts of the colony had reached long ago, and therefore the

landowners in Hawke's Bay were just beginning to pay the same taxes on land that other landowners were paying five years ago. Of course, it was very easy to talk about Naboth's vineyard, and to complain of the compulsory clauses having brought this modern sentiment into certain localities, but the Act had served the policy

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the land was wanted for general purposes the Act said that the owners must retire on compensation. Where was the hardship ? Where was the iniquity of teaching this doctrine of Naboth's vineyard ? As far as he remembered the story of Naboth's vineyard, it was the big man who wanted to eat out the little man. Now, apparently, the story was reversed, and the honourable gentleman tried to apply the parable to the little man trying to eat out the big man, which was quite different. The big man could not complain, especially as modern sentiment went beyond Biblical doctrine in some respects, and had absolutely affirmed the principle that, for the good of the State and for the good of the community, there was no sacredness in the private tenure of land if the land were wanted for public purposes. The tenure of land was the purest fiction that the ingenuity of man had ever invented, and, of course, it was being made sacred by means of statutes of Parliament. But still all that was necessary was to train up a population to prefer one tenure over another, and the whole thing remains exactly the same. No man could take that land away with him to his grave. He did not require any more when he was dead than his 6 ft. of earth. He could not take away anything more. The land remained, and the land must remain for the good of the country, and all the tenant and all the occupier had to consider was, "Can I occupy a piece of land on a sound good tenure ?" and if honourable gentlemen read up the history of land tenure they would find that the freehold was by no means such an antiquated and venerable kind of tenure as some of them seemed to think. He was quite certain that in England thirty years ago the freehold was hardly recognised as a legal term as to the title of land. It was more a title which had grown up since the colonies had sprung into existence, and after they had had proper Land Transfer Acts passed, and where it had been conveyed direct to the individual from the Crown in the individual's lifetime. But as far as the individual occupier was concerned, he contended that he was just as much able to enjoy the profits and the compensation from his piece of land under a perpetual lease as he was under a freehold tenure, and there was no reason on earth why a population should not grow up with sentiments quite contrary to the honourable gentleman's expectation and prophecy. There was no reason why the next generation of people in New Zealand should not grow up absolutely contented with the leasehold tenure, and who would refuse if they were asked to go back to the servitude of the freehold tenure. Because, what was the freehold tenure ? It simply gave the opportunity to this man or the other man, or to their sons, to squander and mortgage the property, and to allow it to go away from the family. The old Jews in their Mosaic laws dealt very jealously with all these problems, and specially with regard to this matter of alienating the family lands. They did not allow them to go away from the family for ever; a man could mortgage them the family at a certain date periodically. So that it was only in this colony, he believed, where there was a certain amount of sentiment tried to be invoked in favour of what was called freehold tenure. He was not at all afraid on the one hand that the change would take place which the honourable gentleman contemplated in regard to public opinion as regards this leasehold tenure. In fact, he believed that the longer the agricultural population in this colony lived, and the longer they experienced the benefit of the leasehold tenure, they would be all the more satisfied with it, and would refuse to go back to what was called the independence of the freehold. The Hon. Mr. Ormond wanted certain returns. Well, he had a complaint in reference to the non-production of those returns, and he admitted that what was a valid complaint was that the returns on this question had not yet been placed on the table. He might assure the honourable gentleman that he was informed by the department that, through the printing-office having been so much overburdened this session with the printing of returns and papers, although these returns

had been prepared for a couple of months, they had been unable so far to get them done, but they hoped to do so soon. If the honourable gentleman would look at the returns of last session he would find that, as regards these lands, they were very full and ample, and he was informed that in this year's returns every particular that he wanted would be found, and therefore he trusted that the Council would, at all events, not ask for further returns until it found that those already supplied were not sufficient. They did not want to ask for unnecessary returns which would also be very costly, and he would repeat that, as far as he could see, the returns as given last year and those to be supplied this year would give the honourable gentleman pretty well all the information he wanted. Then, the honourable gentleman referred to workmen's homes. Of course, the honourable gentleman must know that this legislation had been progressive. We had been going on from year to year; we hoped, like the honourable gentleman, that this policy was going to be a sound one, but we were cautious, like the honourable gentleman, too. We therefore did not step too far in advance until we felt our way, and while we have had workmen's homes in our minds for some years, we found year by year, even though Parliament gave us fresh powers, still these fresh powers were not sufficient. If the honourable gentleman would look at last year's Act he would see we were obliged to take fresh powers in order to enable the Government to compulsorily take land for workmen's homes. It was a matter of very great moment that we should have workmen's homes in the neighbourhood of our cities, of the best kind of land, and connected by such means of conveyance as would enable workmen to get back night and morning to and from their work. But that there had not been anything done in that direction, as the honourable gentleman stated, was an exaggeration, because

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were being initiated as was found desirable; but his contention could only point to the fact of the great difficulties that occurred in putting the Act into force in regard to that particular class of settlement. He did not, for one minute, think that any one, except the honourable gentleman, thought the Act was mainly intended for that class of settlement, and that class of settlement alone. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND. - Mainly. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said the honourable gentleman stuck to his guns; he said mainly for that class of settlement. Now, he maintained, as he said before, that it was not only to break up agricultural properties, or to acquire properties near the towns for the purpose of putting workmen on them, that the Act was contemplated. It was to bring a larger number of families into a district, even though it was pastoral country and magnificent estates of nine hundred acres. That was better for the country than that the land should remain locked up in the large estates which had hitherto existed. He did not see any reason why any one should object to this Act, because it had had a wider range than apparently existed in the mind of the honourable gentleman as regarded its possible operation. After all, anybody who had been accustomed to sheep, and who brought it out in figures and talked about a place of nine hundred acres, carrying a sheep and a half to the acre, as a "magnificent estate," almost staggered one. We knew very well that it was just about that number of sheep where expenses began to run up; and the same man would probably be able to run three times as many sheep for the same expense. But fifteen hundred was not a very big flock - certainly not in the North Island, where the sheep were more neglected and a little more run down than they were in the South Island. But he knew that in the South Island fifteen hundred was not a very big flock, and it was an abuse of language to charge Government with creating large estates in cutting these compulsorily purchased properties into such blocks. He thought the honourable gentleman, in spite of his philosophic manner and treatment, still had got a certain amount of "bee in his bonnet." He felt quite certain that if the honourable gentleman would only look at Hawke's Bay as it had been, and as it was, and as it might be, he would recognise in this Act, probably, the salvation of Hawke's Bay. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said he had got from the honourable gentleman the book from which the honourable gentleman had quoted, and he found that this Hatuma

Estate was now cut up into fifty-eight holdings, ranging from three hundred acres. Now that was a big thing. The average number of people on each was said to be about five for each family, so that if fifty-eight was multiplied by five there would be very near three hundred persons settled on the estate of this very ancient Scotchman, who was an absentee up to a few years ago. Now, in regard to the question of freehold, when they were discussing the Land for Settlements Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker Cheviot settler. He knew him first as a freeholder, but he took a mortgagee in as a partner, and it was a case of the lady of Riga- There was a young lady of Riga Who went for a ride on a tiger; They came back from that ride with the lady inside, And a smile on the face of the tiger. There was a smile on the face of the mortgagee, and the freeholder left, and when he went to Cheviot he had to borrow the deposit-money, and now he was a man worth thousands. If you talked to that man about the freehold, he would laugh at you. He knew all about it. There was no use in discussing the subject any further. He would like to speak on the freehold business, but he did not think the time was opportune just now, and he did not feel up to speaking-pitch. He only wanted to state these two facts. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said the honourable member representing the Government referred to the Hon. Mr. Ormond's speech as an extraordinary speech. He thought they might term some portions of the Minister's speech as still more extraordinary. He thought the Hon. Mr. Ormond was endeavouring to show that if the Act was worked in the manner in which it had been worked in Hawke's Bay, then the land-for-settlements policy would come to an end. He took it that it was not for the purpose of providing the people of this country with sheep-runs that that Act was passed, and that was the whole argument of his honourable friend, Mr. Ormond. The honourable gentleman's argument was that only land should be taken in Hawke's Bay that was fit for close settlement, and fit for agriculture. He would like to ask what member of the Council would gain-say that argument. Then, to say that there was no better land in Hawke's Bay than they had heard the honourable gentleman describe was, to him, ridiculous. He knew that there were grand plains of fertile land there. Many people had the idea that instead of taking unsuitable lands and borrowing money to pay for them, it would be better to run through the North Island Main Trunk Railway, and settle the lands there that the colony had paid for years ago. That was what many advocated, and not to take large estates that were unsuitable for close settlement. Every one knew that they could not go on for ever borrowing and borrowing. Many people were of opinion that the freehold must be given in time. Everybody, and every Councillor, knew that it was only a matter of time when they would have to give the freehold again. Freehold was a sentiment that the people wished for, and why should it not be gratified; and a needy Treasurer coming into power in a fix for money would soon find a way of giving it. He held that they could make laws that people should not have more than a certain amount of land, and if they had any more than the specified amount it would be forfeited to the Crown. Surely that would prevent the aggregation of big estates. Every one knew that when these people wanted the freehold they

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reduced they would have their demand acceded to. Every one in politics knew that there was a certain time when the Government got weak in the House, and when members went to them and said they were pledged to get certain reductions in rent for their constituents, and that they could not go back to them with any hope of getting returned without getting those reductions, and that if they did not get them they would have to vote with the Opposition. Every one knew that then the rents would be reduced, otherwise out would go the Government. He was not one of those who believed in big estates, and he had never contrived to get them. He had always held that there was no need to take land compulsorily for land-settlement. The people who got their estates taken were the lucky people, in his opinion. An Hon. MEMBER. - What do they growl about? The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he did not know any one growling about having had their estates taken from them, except one in Hawke's Bay, and he did not believe he was in earnest. If he had land he would be very glad indeed to have it taken, and he would rejoice with

others similarly situated at having got rid of it. If the Tax Department were raising the value of land in Hawke's Bay before Government took it, surely that was the worse for the colony ; and for his honourable friend to say it was to equalize values all over the colony, was simply ridiculous. Land was valuable according to the position it was in, and according to its access to the railways or water carriage, and although people might give \$50 an acre in the neighbourhood of Christchurch for land, it did not follow that land in the neighbourhood of Napier would fetch half as much. It would be absurd to compare Taranaki with Hawke's Bay. A great portion of Taranaki had been reclaimed from the bush. Other parts were Native land that had been cut up and sold. He would ask: What about the plains out of Hawera? That was Native land which had been confiscated, he thought, and afterwards cut up into sections, and beautiful land it was for the purpose. They could not successfully grow crops, nor breed sheep there, but it was excellent dairying country, and was of considerable benefit to the colony. He did not think any one would hold that the land in Hawke's Bay was suitable for dairying, as the land in Taranaki was. It was, however, suitable for other classes of cultivation. In his opinion, it was very suitable for fruit-growing, and that industry could be worked up there. They could grow crops without any inconvenience there. The difficulty of doing that in Taranaki was that, after even they got them into stock, they started sprouting again, on account of the dampness of the atmosphere. As a consequence dairying was found to be much more profitable there than cropping. To make the excuse for not supplying the return, that the printing-office was not able to print returns required by statute to be placed before Parliament within a Plenty of matter was being printed in that office that could very well be kept. He thought the resolution should be carried, and if the return was laid on the table and conveyed the information required in the return, he thought his honourable friend would not put them to the inconvenience of compiling or printing it. He thought the return should be ordered. There was one thing regarding land for settlements which he would say he had always upheld himself to a certain extent, and that was that it had prevented other people from cutting up properties and selling them. It was only the Government that could sell or let them, and everybody rushed to the Government, in the hope that some day they would get freehold when wanted, or their rents reduced. If laws were made preventing settlers from increasing the size of their properties, then he did not see why they should not have the freehold. He was quite satisfied that some of those estates mentioned should have remained untaken until the railways were sufficiently advanced into their Native lands. on which a large population could be settled. Traffic for the railways could thus have been made, while a large tract of country would have been settled. That would have prevented running up the debt of the colony at a pace which every one must know could not continue. They required something like two millions a year for public works at present, and he did not think it would be long before they saw an end of that boom. He would support the motion for the return. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY saw no objection to the return asked for by the honourable gentleman. In his opinion the Act had been very beneficial to the colony, and would continue to be so if properly administered. When the Government purchased land from a private individual where it was well situated and suited for the purpose of cultivation, they must, in the terms of the Act, give a good price for it- that was, at least, the market price-and unless the land was of good quality and was easily accessible, the tenant would not be able to pay 5 per cent. on the cost to the Government, besides fencing and building, in order to profitably occupy it. Comparison had been made between the land in Hawke's Bay and Taranaki. There could be really no comparison between the two. On the East Coast the climate was a dry one, while on the West Coast in Taranaki there was continual rain and sunshine; and in dealing with lands subject to these different descriptions of climate the class of purpose to which the land was most profitably applied were entirely distinct. In Taranaki, round the base of Mount Egmont, owing to the reliable rainfall, which on an average was 6 in. or 7 in. every month in the year, the most profitable pursuit was dairy - farming. The climatic conditions dominated the class of farming that was most beneficial to the occupier. It meant that

they could not hope to grow grain there ; but dairying, on the other hand, could be carried on more cheaply and successfully than in any other part of the world. Hawke's

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be profitably raised there, because the climate and soil suited them ; whereas they could not be so successfully kept in Taranaki. In regard to the statements made by his honourable friend, Mr. Ormond, in regard to small sheep-runs in which a portion of run referred to by him was cut, it appeared to him that, at the present price of wool, land carrying only one sheep and a half to the acre, and with a rent of from 6s. to 8s. per acre, it would be impossible for the tenant to make a living on sheep-farming. But if dairy- ing was possible on such land it was possible to succeed. The hour of four o'clock having arrived, the Council proceeded to the Orders of the day. SHOPS AND OFFICES BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 3 .- " Hours of employment." The Hon. Mr. BOLT moved to insert, after " may," in subsection (2) the following words, "on the written application of the occupier, and." The Council divided. AYES, 11. Smith, A. L. Arkwright Kelly, T. Barnicoat Kelly, W. Swanson Walker, W. C. Bolt Reeves Harris Rigg NOES, 16. Feldwick Shrimski McLean Taiaroa Gourley Montgomery Tomoana Jenkinson Ormond Jennings Pinkerton Twomey Scotland Williams. Jones Louisson #cc-zero Majority against, 5. Amendment negatived. The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK moved to add the following new subsection :- " It shall be a valid defence in any proceedings under this section that any work undertaken without leave of an Inspector was a work of emergency." The Council divided on the question, "That the subsection be added to the clause." AYES, 12. Shrimski Barnicoat McLean Feldwick Ormond Taiaroa Gourley Twomey Pinkerton Kelly, W. Reeves Williams. NOES, 14. Smith, A. L. Jones Arkwright Bolt Kelly, T. Swanson Harris Tomoana Louisson Jenkinson Rigg Walker, W. C. Scotland Jennings Majority against, 2. Amendment negatived. Progress reported. The Council adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock p.m. Hon. Mr. T. Kelly Tuesday, 20th August, 1901. First Reading-Charles Kerse and Others-Merri- vale Estate - Fiji-Military Pensions Board - M. D. Dineen-Masterton Cadet Corps and Kiffe Club-Rifle Team for Bisley Meeting-Encourag- ing Population - Returned Troopers -Govern- ment Works in Hawke's Bay - Ammunition for .303 Rifles - Woodville Refreshment-rooms Scandal-Auckland Drillshed-Mr. Cross's Pro- perty - Rifles for Volunteer Officers - Am- munition for Volunteers-"Sweating "-Waitaki Mounted Rifles - Flour-millers' Association - Conciliation Boards-Military Pensions Exten- sion Act-Dunedin Public Art-gallery-Austral- asian Squadron-Imperial or Colonial Naval Reserve - Rifle - ranges - Defence - Returned Troopers-Stoke Orphanage>Returns re Large Estates-Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Women and Children-" Municipal Corpora- tions Act, 1900 "-Returned Troopers' Pay-Go- vernment Life Insurance-Criminal Assaults Women and Children - Colonial - made on Saddlery for New Zealand Troops-State Gold- mining and Issue of Sovereigns-Ralph Porter- Invercargill Railway-station-Hospital Nurses Registration Bill-Land for Settlements Bill- Government Advances to Settlers Extension Bill. The DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half- past ten o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Rotorua Town Council Validation and Exten- sion Bill. CHARLES KERSE AND OTHERS. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) brought up the report of the Waste Lands Committee on the above petition, asking that the Moa Flat Estate should be acquired by the Government for the purposes of close settlement. They re- ported that the land was not suitable for the purpose, and recommended that the estate be not acquired. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) said that unfortunately he was not present at the Waste Lands Committee when the evidence of Mr. McKerrow was taken on this petition : he had not then returned from the South when the report was submitted. The report was probably quite correct to a point, when it stated that all the estate was not fit for close settlement ; but that the estate was fit for settlement he asserted was beyond a doubt. There was a portion of it unfit for close settlement, and he was quite sure, from what he knew in connection with numbers of farmers in the surrounding districts who had grown-up families, that they wished the estate would be taken up and divided into small grazing-runs and small farms. He was cer- tain if that were done

they would be taken up. In connection with this estate, he felt certain that in its present condition it was a bar to progress in that important district. The Government had the power to acquire it, and they could acquire it at a price he was quite certain that would enable them to settle it under proper conditions. If one saw, as numbers had seen, the class of country that was opened up for small grazing-runs in the

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the people who had taken up that country, he was quite sure that the Government could do well with the estate, if acquired at a reasonable price, to secure successful settlement in that particular district. Personally, he was exceedingly anxious to see all the country acquired that was fit for occupation by the sons of settlers ; and there were a great number of settlers in that neighbourhood who, he was persuaded, would take up that country and become successful farmers. Of course, as he said at the beginning of his remarks, he agreed with the Committee that it was not all fit for close settlement ; but, taken at a price such as the Government would acquire it at under the Land for Settlements Act, he was quite satisfied it would be taken up. Motion agreed to. MERRIVALE ESTATE. Mr. GIEFEDDER (Wallace) asked the Government, If they will favourably consider the advisability of acquiring the remaining portion of the Merrivale Estate for closer settlement ? Part of this estate was purchased some years ago by the Government under the Land for Settlements Act, and settlement in that locality had been fairly successful. Seeing that there was a demand for land in the neighbourhood, and the property was for the most part of fair quality for closer settlement, it was desirable that in the near future the Government would see their way clear to purchase the remainder of that estate. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said that 11.0. there were two blocks on the original Merrivale Estate which might still be obtained : the homestead, of 6,290 acres, of which about 2,000 acres was birch forest, on poor land ; the remaining area of about 4,290 acres was considerably broken, and was generally poor fern land. About 1,500 acres had been cultivated ; the rest was in the natural state. This block was offered to the Government a few months ago, but the Land Purchase Board did not see its way to recommend the acquisition. There was another block of about 9,000 acres which contained some good river-flat land. It was all open grass country, some of it hilly, but fair soil, and would subdivide well into moderate-sized farms. It was adjacent to the block of 10,000 acres purchased from the same estate about six years ago, and which had since been gradually taken up, and was now a successful settlement. It would be worth while ascertaining if the 9,000 acres could be obtained at a reasonable price. The opening of the Ringway Estate of 2,300 acres shortly in the Otautau district, about twelve miles from the 9,000 acres, would be a criterion as to what demand there was in the district for land. FIJI. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) asked the Premier, Whether he will lay on the table of the House a copy of the letter addressed by the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain to Sir George O'Brien, Governor of Fiji, dated Downing # VOL. OXVII .- 81. print a copy of the letter, and he thought it only right that it should be laid on the table of the House with the other correspondence that had already been placed on the table. The letter had an important bearing on the question which, he understood, was to be brought under the consideration of Parliament. He understood the right honourable gentleman to say a few days ago that a copy of the letter had been laid on the table of the House, but he had made inquiries from the Clerk, who told him that the letter had not been laid on the table. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, If the letter was not confidential it would be laid on the table. If it was the one from the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain to His Excellency Sir George O'Brien, Governor of Fiji, in which he inferred that there must be some mistake, misapprehension, or misrepresentation, then there would be no objection, and if the honourable gentleman could show him a copy of it he would let him know at once. [The honourable gentleman having done this, the Premier replied that the letter would be laid on the table of the House.] Captain RUSSELL .- What correspondence will be laid on the table ? Mr. SEDDON .- All letters from the Secretary of State except those that are confidential. Captain RUSSELL .- I am glad to hear that. Mr. FISHER said he had the letter. In it the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain said,- "

Unfortunately, however, the language used by you on this occasion was open to misconstruction, and has been garbled and distorted by Press summaries so as to give umbrage to the Government of New Zealand." Mr. SEDDON said he had already informed the House that all letters from the Secretary of State to the Government in respect to that matter, excepting those that were confidential, would be laid on the table of the House. MILITARY PENSIONS BOARD. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) asked the Minister of Defence, If any appointments have been made to the Pensions Board under the Military Pensions Act ; if so, will he state the duties to be performed, and give the names of appointees ? Since he had put the question on the Order Paper the Gazette had appeared, and the names asked for had been gazetted. He would like, however, to have the additional information. He noticed that the Boards were made up of medical men, some of whom did not belong to the Volunteer Force. Medical officers had been passed over by the appointment of civilians to the Military Pensions Board. The result had been intense dissatisfaction amongst the medical officers, who had served in the various districts for over twenty years. They felt that a slight had been cast upon them, and serious harm would be done to the medical staff if those who had given their services for so long in the past were thus passed over. These

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officers had been doing the work in connection with the Volunteers without pay. They had inspected the men of the contingents when they went away; they had inspected the men on their return; and now they were passed over, and so they naturally felt very much slighted. He noticed a case in Canterbury, for instance, where the senior officer of the district had been passed over and a junior officer had been made chief officer of the Pensions Board, and another who was not a Volunteer officer at all had been appointed to the Board. Similarly in Otago two medical men had been appointed to the Board who were not connected with the Volunteer Force. Medical men, one of whom had served twenty years and another ten years, had given invaluable services to the Volunteers, but they had been slighted and put on one side. In Auckland a similar thing had taken place. There the chief Volunteer officer had been passed over, and a civilian, who was a medical man, had been appointed to the Board. He feared this was an action that would do serious harm, as it showed the way men were liable to be treated who had given their time and services to the Volunteer work. He hoped a satisfactory answer could be given. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said there certainly had been no intention on the part of the Government to slight medical men, whether they were Volunteer officers or otherwise. He believed it was necessary to have a mixture, and he had very good reasons for it too. Volunteers and military people did not seem to know everything : Mr. J. ALLEN .- Why not as much as civilian doctors ? Mr. SEDDON said he had his reasons, and the responsibility was his; but no slight whatever had been intended to the officers. If it could be said that the medical men who had been put upon the Board were not competent to examine into and to report upon the cases, then he would consider the matter of making a change. A doctor might be an excellent surgeon for Volunteers, but when they desired to have this particular business performed there might be reasons for making a different selection. At all events, he had made as good selections as he could, and it had not been altogether There plain sailing in respect to this matter. was one district in which the medical man had refused- Mr. J. ALLEN .- Because of the insult to a brother officer. Mr. SEDDON said, No; the honourable member was like the little boy-he did not know anything about it. The honourable member knew absolutely nothing about what he was alluding to. Did he know that the medical men in Wellington had all refused to accept the position at a guinea a case ; and did he know that three medical men were required to give a man a certificate for a month's leave, and that it cost three guineas, whilst the trooper's pay would only come to £6? The honourable member was referring to another matter altogether. The honourable member did not know the difficulties that had had to be met ; and he might Mr. J. Allen say that if he could not get surgeon-captains he would get others where he could. At all events, in this matter there had been no discourtesy intended, and the probability was that

the men selected would join the Volunteer corps. # M. D. DINEEN. Mr. LANG (Waikato) asked the Government, If they will place a sum on the estimates for the purpose of giving effect to the recommendation of the Public Petitions A to L Committee of last year on the petition of M. D. Dineen (Petition No. 389), namely : "That the Committee recommend that the petitioner be paid the amount claimed (namely, £18 18s. 4d.) " ? This petition came before the Public Petitions A to L Committee last year. The Committee went very fully and carefully into the case, and heard evidence on both sides. The head of the department was also present. The Committee reported, " That the Committee recommend that the petitioner be paid the amount claimed- namely, \$18 18s. 4d." He therefore asked if the Government would give effect to the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said there was no fund out of which compensation could be paid. The debit balance of this particular transaction was 3s. 6d. There was a general balance of £4,686 6s. 2d. at credit on account of all lands dealt with by the office under the Act to date. This had to be kept for twenty years before it became Crown property. If Dineen was to be compensated a sum must be placed on the estimates for that purpose. He would again point out that when he first asked for compensation it was for a sum of ES only. In the face of that, the Government did not see their way to go beyond the advice of the Public Trustee. Mr. LANG might be allowed to point out to the Premier that the Public Trustee was present before the Committee, and that the Committee took his evidence, and after hearing what he had to say they recommended the payment of the £18 18s. 4d. The case was too long to go into in the time allowed by the House in asking a question ; but if the Premier looked into the matter he would see that it was a just claim, and he could meet it by putting a sum for the purpose on the supplementary estimates if he wished to do so. Mr. SEDDON said the case had been up before, and his colleague the Colonial Secretary had on that occasion said,- " This matter was in the same position as other recommendations from the different Committees. It would be considered with other recommendations, and whatever decision was arrived at would be shown on the supplementary estimates. If the amount was not provided for on the supplementary estimates, it would mean the Government did not think that provision should be made for it." The Government had given it full consideration. In cases of this kind they must be guided by the Public Trustee. Any members who saw what was placed before the Petitions Com-

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mittee from the Public Trustee, together with the correspondence, with which he did not want to weary the House, would recognise there was strong reason in support of the course that was being taken. He said if they were to admit claims of this kind, and asked the Government to put votes of public money on the estimates for them, they would be taking up a wrong position. Mr. LANG .- Then, you ignore the report of the Committee. # MASTERTON CADET CORPS AND RIFLE CLUB. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) asked the Minister of Defence, When the applications of the Masterton Cadet Corps and the Masterton Rifle Club to be accepted under the Volunteer He regulations are likely to be dealt with ? would like the Minister of Defence to inform him in what position the applications from the young men who had asked for enrolment under the Volunteer and military regulations were at the present time. From time to time he had been appealed to on the subject by members of the corps in course of formation. They represented that they had written to the Defence Department and were unable to get a reply. This department, he was told, had the services of six staff officers and thirteen clerks, but apparently their work was of such magnitude that they were unable to acknowledge the communications that were sent to them. This was his reason for putting the question on the Order Paper. He had written himself to the Minister of Defence, and addressed his letters to the Hon. the Premier, thinking they would receive attention, but he found very great difficulty in getting any information. With reference to the Masterton Rifle Club, he found he had made a mistake. The name should have been the Opaki Rifle Club ; but he had made the Defence Department aware of the blunder he had inadvertently committed. The club had been in existence for

ten years under the name of the North Wairarapa Club, but as some other Wairarapa corps had been formed they considered it advisable to change the name. Mr. SEDDON .- Where are its headquarters ? Mr. HOGG said its headquarters were some seven or eight miles away from Masterton, and the members had no opportunity of joining any Volunteer Corps. They were mostly sons of farmers living out in country districts, and they were exceedingly eligible young men, a number of them being looked upon as our best shots, so that they deserved every possible encourage- ment. On Saturday night twenty-six of them handed in their names, and other names were to be sent in shortly. Though they had made an application prior to the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of York, up to the present time they did not know what had been done with their application. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said the answer he would give the honourable member would apply to all other rifle clubs in the colony. He had refused none, nor did he intend to refuse any so long as they complied with the regulations. When they made application a copy of the regulations was sent to them asking them to reply whether they came within those regulations ; that was to say : (1) Whether they were three miles from the headquarters of a Volunteer corps ; (2) whether their mem- bership was of the number required ; (3) whether they were prepared to comply with the conditions. Now, it would surprise honour- able members when he told them that not 20 per cent. had had the courtesy or had taken the trouble to reply to those questions. That had caused delay. On Saturday last he signed for about twenty rifle clubs ; he did not know whether this was one of them or not. He could only assure the honourable member that if this rifle club replied to the questions put and complied with the regulations he would accept them with pleasure. Then there was another question. Some of these clubs were cadet corps, and those cadet corps attached to the high schools and some of the other schools were under the Defence Department. Well, in his opinion, there should not be divided authority. All these school cadet corps should either be under the Boards of Education or under the Defence Department ; and he was inclined to think, as the Boards had something to do with them, and the school-teachers had a good deal more to do with them, that it would be better if those cadet corps were taken over by the Education Department. However, he had hesitated to do that until he saw that the Education Department was fully prepared to do for those corps what the Defence Department would have to do for them. They would have to see that they were instructed, and that there were regulations and inspection, otherwise the thing would not be a success. At the present time the matter was between the two depart- ments until a decision had been come to as to which should have control. He had given the Committee and members his views on the matter, and he would like to say now that he believed the cadet corps of the colony were of vital im- portance, and it was the intention of the Go- vernment to accept them, and to see that they were properly trained and fairly well encou- raged.

RIFLE TEAM FOR BISLEY MEETING. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) asked the Govern- ment, If it is proposed to send a rifle team from New Zealand to compete at the next Bisley meeting in England ? This was a question of a good deal of interest to both rifle clubs and Volunteer corps in New Zealand. On the last occasion when a team from New Zealand com- peted at a similar meeting he believed they gave a very good account of themselves, and one of them was very nearly carrying off one of the principal honours. The rifle-men in his district were anxious to know whether a similar opportunity would be given again. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he was pre- pared to give this matter the very fullest con- sideration. No application had yet been made by the Rifle Association, but probably, if it was

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place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates, and the House could decide whether a team should go. He believed in encouraging rifle associations, and that the colony should be represented, but he must leave it for the House to determine. He might say to the honourable member that he had rung up the department about the Opaki Rifle Club, and could now say that that was one of the clubs that had sent in no return.

ENCOURAGING POPULATION. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) asked the Pre- mier, If he

will introduce a measure granting relief, either by a monetary or a land grant, to parents who have six children or more, and so encourage the increase of population in our colony ? He hoped the Government would recognise the necessity of doing something in this matter. If honourable members would refer to the Budget, at page 10 they would find a paragraph stating that the population of the colony from 1891 to 1896 had actually decreased by 7,366 persons, which affected the prosperity of the colony. In his own district there were many struggling settlers who had large families, and the men were desirous of getting on to the land, but who, owing to the peculiarity of the present ballot system, were unable to do so. He thought if the Government would introduce a measure giving those who had six children and over an opportunity of settling on the land, they would be doing a good work for the colony. If honourable members would refer to the cost of immigration, they would find that from the inception of the immigration scheme it had cost this colony £2,147,718 16s. 4d. Now, if the Government would give a grant of land of a hundred or two hundred acres to those men who have families of six and over the cost would be infinitesimal compared with the cost of immigration. If it was impossible to do what he urged in the way of a land grant, he would suggest that the Government should propose a monetary grant to be paid every year to parents of such families as he had described. He thought that some consideration should be given to these people, and, as the matter was important, he hoped the Government would give it attention. The legislation proposed by the Premier would not have the desired effect, and a private member could not introduce a measure interfering with the revenue of the Crown without the permission of the Government. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the honourable member had failed in the main essential. It was for him to have proved that the giving of monetary aid or land would have the effect of causing an increase in the population. If a monetary grant or a piece of land would change the position, he thought they should have more families. He did not know why the honourable member had fixed the arbitrary number at six. He had no doubt that the honourable member was fully conversant with the game of under and over seven, and he did not understand why he had fixed the number at six. Personally, he had always believed that there was luck in odd. Mr. Seddon did not think they should cast a slight on the colony. A family of six was nothing. If the honourable member had said a dozen he could have understood him, because it was a struggle for the head of the family to maintain such a large number. But he certainly would not offer a premium in the case of a family of six. An Hon. MEMBER .- Six is above the average. Mr. SEDDON said that, of course, showed that the people who had only six children did not appreciate the joy of a large family. There was nothing created so much happiness as having a large family around one. He believed there were cases where they might render some assistance. When he wanted to give preference to married men under the Land for Settlements Bill objection was taken to that by some members. Those members were inconsistent, because one day they refused to give preference to married men taking up land, and the next day they asked that a premium should be given in the case of a family of six children. He could not accede to the request. Mr. O'MEARA said he made no objection to preference being given to married men, and he could not understand the Premier making such a statement. Mr. SEDDON said, When the Land for Settlements Bill was brought in it contained a provision that preference should be given to married men to go on the land. He understood the honourable member was one of those who objected to that. If he had done the honourable member an injustice he regretted it. If members had changed their minds he might probably reintroduce the provision. Mr. O'MEARA said the Premier had made an inaccurate statement with respect to him (Mr. O'Meara), and he expected the honourable gentleman to withdraw it. Mr. SEDDON said he would be most happy. He was very glad to find that the honourable member was converted. RETURNED TROOPERS. Mr. A. L. D. FRASER (Napier) asked the Minister of Defence, What is the cause of the delay in payment to returned troopers of money due to them for services in South Africa ? Since placing this question on the Order Paper the matter had been dealt with in the Budget. It was, however, a subject of considerable im-

portance. He had received a number of communications from young men who had returned from South Africa some six weeks ago, and they had not yet received what money was due to them. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) could only repeat that the Government had done all that was possible in this matter. As soon as certificates were issued the money was paid. The Government had advanced and were advancing money to the men pending their accounts being made up. The departmental reply was as follows :- "The Fourth and Fifth Contingents, which are under Imperial pay, are having their ac-

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present moment, and as soon as money is received from the War Office, as promised by them, the men will be paid as soon as possible ; but they all receive advances when asked for if so entitled. The complete settlement of accounts of the first three contingents is being made as rapidly as it is possible to do so." He could not do any more. He believed the accounts were about finished now. The Government were not either refusing advances or delaying matters; but the accounts must be made up in order to ascertain what was due to the men. Complication had arisen owing to the state of things when the men left South Africa. It was not the fault of the Government. # GOVERNMENT WORKS IN HAWKE'S BAY. Mr. A. L. D. FRASER (Napier) asked the Minister of Labour, If he will explain why men have been brought from the South Island for employment on Government works in Hawke's Bay when local men are idle, and overlooked ? No doubt it might be said that the obvious answer to this question was that where there was labour for the men it was immaterial where the men were brought from. As a fundamental principle, no doubt that was correct ; but he did say it was wrong for the Government to bring men from the South Island and place them on the Hatuma Estate when there were men idle in Hawke's Bay. Only three or four days ago the Mayor of Napier had to call a meeting of the unemployed, and their chief grievance was this : that, although there was work at their doors, some one with influence or power had brought seven men up from Oamaru and had them placed on the Hatuma Estate roads. That was manifestly unjust, and no doubt the Premier would agree with him that it was wrong. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Labour) said half a dozen men were taken from Oamaru and sent to the Government works in Hawke's Bay. The men referred to by the honourable gentleman were out of work in May last, and, as there was no Government work available in the vicinity from which they came, it was the duty of the Government to endeavour to give them work in other parts of the colony if it was available, and as there was work to be done in the Hawke's Bay District, and no complaint had been received that men were idle there, they were placed on road-works in the Hatuma Estate. The bulk of this work was, however, only suitable for plough and scoop, and, as it was understood that the local men referred to by the honourable member were principally small farmers with teams, they would have an opportunity of participating in the work when the proper time arrived. As to the meeting of the unemployed at Napier, he thought the honourable member should be the last to give prominence to the fact that Napier was in a worse position than other parts of the colony. What had been reported to him (Mr. Seddon) by the Chief Clerk in the Labour Department on the matter was this :- " About thirty assembled in answer to advertisement, some mere youths, many elderly men, and not up to labourers' requirements. Few of them would be employed by any contractor. Not more than ten could be regarded as able-bodied. Some were the usual derelicts. Have shown this to the Mayor, who concurs." That was shown to the Mayor, who concurred in it ; and if that was the state of Napier, then all he (Mr. Seddon) had to say was that Napier was well off. He would indeed be sorry to know that things were otherwise. If the " unemployed " difficulty was felt in an acute form it would not require an advertisement to call the men together, so that it was rather satisfactory to know that things were as they were. No doubt there were some people out of work in the district, and he would not be surprised to know that the trouble was caused by the existence of large landed estates in the district. Mr. A. L. D. FRASER said that what the Premier had stated with regard to the personnel of the meeting was practically correct, because he had received a telegram from the Mayor to the same effect. The meeting

was called in his (Mr. Fraser's) absence, but he had no doubt from the information he had received that there were at the meeting several young able-bodied men who were out of work at the time, and who were, of course, anxious to get something to do. It came back, however, to what he considered was a wrong principle-namely, that where men had their names on the books of one district, others should not be brought to that district from somewhere else to fill the vacancies. Mr. SEDDON said he would do the same thing again. If there were only five or six able-bodied men out of work in Napier, for a few days, and other men had been out of work since May last, he did not care where they came from, the longest out of work should have the preference of any work. AMMUNITION FOR .303 RIFLES. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) asked the Premier, What steps the Government have taken with regard to supplying ammunition for the new .303 rifle with which the Volunteers have been furnished ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said this rifle took the same ammunition as the Martini-Enfield, and was being supplied under contract with the Colonial Ammunition Company. Mr. COLLINS said his object in asking the question was this : He had anticipated a reply in the nature of that given by the right honourable gentleman, and he wanted to draw attention to the fact that the source of the supply of ammunition in New Zealand-he did not find a single fault with the source of supply-was a manufactory situated in the City of Auckland, and he (Mr. Collins) said it seemed to him that the supply of arms and ammunition should come from some point less open to attack than a coastal town. The lessons learned in South Africa should teach us the advantage of having supplies of ammunition from some point little

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open to attack and easily get-at-able in case of necessity. Mr. SEDDON said, Mount Cook was invulnerable, but he did not think it was possible to put an ammunition factory on the top of it. # WOODVILLE REFRESHMENT-ROOMS SCANDAL. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) asked the Minister of Defence, If he will extend the scope of inquiry of the Military Commission now sitting to the railway refreshment-room scandal at Woodville ? The allegations that had been made in respect to this matter had been absolutely denied in the House, and he thought it would be only fair to those who made them that justice should be done and an inquiry held. He felt perfectly confident that the charges made at the time by the ex-Mayor of Woodville and himself were practically correct in every detail. When he had asked a question on the subject previously the Premier promised that he would lay the papers on the table. Why had this not been done ? It would be not only fair to himself, but to the young ladies who made the allegations, and whose evidence was taken at Woodville, that the papers should be laid on the table so that they might be cleared from the charge of making false representations. He thought the officer in charge, Lieut. - Colonel Watt, should be asked for an explanation of his conduct. In his opinion, that gentleman had never moved from his place at all during the whole of the disgraceful scene. He hoped the Premier would enlarge the scope of the present Commission so that further inquiries could be made into the charges, so that the Government might be cleared from the suspicion of having no desire to make a full and satisfactory inquiry. He hoped the Minister would agree to this proposal for his own sake. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said he had stated before that, in his opinion, there were good reasons why the papers should not be laid on the table. He had no objection to the honourable gentleman seeing the papers, but nothing should be done which was calculated to bring discredit on Volunteers or the Volunteer movement, more particularly when they did not know who were the delinquents. It would be casting a slur on every Volunteer corps and every Volunteer who had come from the West Coast on that occasion. He believed the girls, and he believed there had been an insult, and also that- whether in joke or otherwise-some things had been taken away. But honourable members knew as well as he did that, whether for business or other reasons, the restaurant-keeper was satisfied, and did not wish the matter reopened. He did not himself wish to publish through the Press anything that would bring discredit on the Volunteers. Mr. O'MEARA thought that, if it could be shown that the colonel had neglected his duty, he

should be dismissed. Mr. SEDDON said that was another phase of the question ; but the Commission had concluded its labours, and he could not refer the matter to them. Mr. Collins # AUCKLAND DRILLSHED. Mr. FOWLDS (Auckland City) asked the Minister of Defence. When he hopes to have a new drills shed erected at Auckland ? Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said the plans had not yet been completed, but would be shortly submitted. He thought the cost would be about \$3,000, at which the Government would erect the drills shed on the old site. It showed the necessity for the State to insure its properties. # MR. CROSS'S PROPERTY. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) asked the Premier, On whose recommendation five gentlemen were appointed to visit Mr. Cross's property and make a valuation for the Government, and whether their suitability was inquired into by the Government previous to making the appointments ? He had a list of the gentlemen appointed on this Commission, and he would like very much to know whether their suitability and character were inquired into prior to making the appointment. They should be exceedingly careful in making appointments as valuers, and those appointments should be above suspicion and cavil. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the valuation of Mr. Cross's property was made by Mr. David Gill for the Land Purchase Board, and on that valuation the recommendation of the Board was based. Accompanying Mr. Gill was Mr. Thomas Hyde, a member of the Land Purchase Board, and Mr. McKerrow, the Inspector-General. He thought the honourable gentleman would have nothing to say against the character of those three members of the Board, because if anything could be said against the character of the gentlemen on whose valuation the matter was done he (Mr. Seddon) should be very much surprised, and should regret it very much. He did not know of five gentlemen having been appointed to visit Mr. Cross's property, but in the near future there would be a probability of a number of witnesses visiting and inspecting the property in order to enable them to give evidence in the Compensation Court, to be held on or about the 23rd September, and, as there was great difficulty in getting suitable witnesses, it was not desirable that they should be referred to in a public manner. As regarded the question of who might have visited the farm for the purpose of obtaining information to enable them to give evidence before the Compensation Court, he did not know who they were. Mr. O'MEARA said he could give the Premier a little information about this estate, as he had gathered all the information himself on his last visit to Woodville. He could give the honourable gentleman the names of the gentlemen appointed to visit the estate. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) rose to a point of order. Some members had had questions on the Order Paper for many weeks, and he desired to ask whether it was in accordance with the Standing Orders for members to make 1 two speeches in asking questions, and for there to be two replies from the Ministerial benches.

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that only one speech should be made in asking a question, and one in reply; but it was in accordance with parliamentary practice that when a question had been answered by a Minister and the member asking it considered that he had not been understood by the Minister for him to give further information to explain his question. Mr. O'MEARA said the honourable gentleman (Mr. Fisher) was the greatest transgressor himself. He would like to point out to the Premier that the following gentlemen were appointed to go over this particular district, and he would give their names : Hon. G. F. Richardson, F. Knight, Joseph H. Harris, W. P. Hartstone, and H. Monteith, for the Government. Well, if it was necessary to subpoena witnesses to say what was the value of land in this particular district, he thought it was the duty of the Government, or the head of that department who made the appointments, to inquire very carefully into the character of these witnesses. It was absurd - Mr. SEDDON rose to a point of order. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was now introducing debatable matter, and was out of order. Mr. SEDDON could only say that neither Mr. Richardson, Mr. Monteith, nor the other gentlemen named were sent by the Government to make a valuation. He had given the honourable gentleman the three names of the men who were sent by the Government to make a valuation. RIFLES FOR

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS. Mr. RHODES (Ellesmere) asked the Minister of Defence, If he cannot see his way to provide officers of Volunteer corps with rifles ? If not, will he grant them the same privileges as members of defence rifle clubs, and allow them to purchase their rifles on the same terms? He did not think it would be a very costly matter to supply all Volunteer officers with rifles ; but, as he realised that only a certain number of officers went in for shooting, he would be satisfied if the Premier could see his way to supply those who put in an application. At the present time an officer was in this position : he had either to purchase a rifle from a private firm or borrow one from a member of his corps, and, as all rifles varied more or less in matters of shooting, an officer had to become acquainted with the peculiar eccentricities of each rifle borrowed before he could make fair shooting. Therefore he did not think he was asking too much when he asked the Premier in this way to supply officers with rifles. If the Premier did not agree to that, he would like him to give a favourable answer to the second part of his question. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said he had no objection to officers purchasing rifles, but he could not set up a precedent that the Government should supply officers with rifles. He would allow officers to purchase rifles at cost price. clubs ? Mr. SEDDON .- No ; at cost price. AMMUNITION FOR VOLUNTEERS. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) asked the Minister of Defence, If he will reduce the price of ammunition to Volunteer companies so as to further encourage Volunteering and the shooting ability of our young men ? It was generally admitted that one of the greatest encouragements young men had to join Volunteer corps was the possibility of shooting-practice. Not only did it encourage them to join a corps, but after they had joined they recognised that it was necessary they should become expert shots. Now, with regard to a supply of ammunition, they recognised that a great majority of the Volunteer corps were composed of working-men, and the price that was charged to the various corps, and through the corps to the members, was so heavy that it was impossible for them to receive the amount of ammunition to practise with that they should have. He trusted the Government would see their way clear to reduce the prime cost of ammunition to the various corps for the purpose mentioned in his question. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said they were now charging 11s. per hundred rounds, which was 9d. less than was paid to the Colonial Ammunition Company, so that they lost 9d. on every hundred rounds supplied. He could only say that they must not ride a willing horse to death, nor go too far. "SWEATING." Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) asked the Minister of Labour, If he will, for the purpose of further diminishing "sweating," make such provision as will compel all tradesmen taking orders for tailoring, and employing tailors or tailoresses, to have such work done in workshops belonging to the firms taking such orders ? Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Labour) said the question implied greater limitation to be enforced, either than that existing at present or that embodied in the amending Bill now before the House. The existing law put three disabilities on "home-work," namely : (1) If not made in a factory, any garment or other textile article must, until sold, have a label fixed thereto stating that it had not been made in a factory ; (2) the person to whom work had been given out from a factory was forbidden to sublet ; and (3) if any person employed in a factory took work away to do at home an offence was committed. These provisions had been found sufficient to stop "sweating" of any pronounced character. There had been some grumbling among tailors about work being given out. Of course, if the honourable gentleman's question was favourably entertained, "home-work" in the tailoring trade would cease altogether. It was really a question as to whether any work should be taken home at all. From a sanitary point of view it would be better if all the work could be done in the workshops. He

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Department that they were giving careful attention to the matter, and that if the law was properly carried out-that is, if there was more effective administration - there would be no necessity for further legislation. WAITAKI MOUNTED RIFLES. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the offer of the services of the Waitaki Mounted Rifles, with headquarters at Kurow, has been or will be

accepted ? As the company desired to go on with their organization, he hoped the honour- able gentleman would inform them as soon as possible that their services would be accepted. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said that the company's services would be accepted. FLOUR-MILLERS' ASSOCIATION. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Go- vernment, If they are aware that a trust has been formed in the South Island for the purpose of controlling the flour output of New Zealand ; and will they introduce a Bill this session to render illegal this and other trusts whose objects are to destroy competition and exact an artifi- cial price from the people for the necessities of life ? He would point out that very recently an organization had been formed for the pur- pose of creating a monopoly in the flour trade, and it now controlled all the mills in the colony except two in Timaru and three in Auckland. Thirty-six mills were controlled by the syndi- cate, and one of the immediate results of its formation was the raising of the price of flour by \$1 a ton. He had received communications both from the United Flour-millers' Employés' Society and the Auckland Trades and Labour Council on the subject, in which strong protests were made against the attempted monopoly, and an appeal was made to him to urge the Government to introduce immediate legislation to deal with it. The Trades and Labour Coun- cil said,- " We think that if this trust is successful it will be able to fix prices of wheat and flour to suit itself-that is to say, that, there being little or no competition in the wheat-market, low prices will rule, while flour will be raised up out of all proportion to the price of wheat ; so that the trust will be bleeding the farmer equally with the consumer." There was also a very strongly worded article in the Napier Telegraph, in which an earnest appeal was made to Parliament to introduce legislation on the subject. He would like to mention that the evil results of powerful trusts in Europe and America were very fully shown in a book that had just arrived in the library. It showed that a large proportion of the earnings of the people were taken by means of artificial prices, in consequence of the enormous power which the accretion of capital gave to those trusts. He hoped the Premier would see his way to give a favourable reply to the question. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, In the Speech from the Throne the Government announced that legislation would be introduced this session Mr. Seddon Since that announcement had been made, facts had come under his notice which made it almost necessary that they should do something in the matter. He had seen correspondence that had passed between the secretary of the association in the South and a flour-miller who had refused to come in. The pressure that had been used and the threats held out confirmed his opinion that it was about time something was done by the Legislature. He believed that the Auckland millers had refused to join the association. An opportunity would be given Parliament to deal with the matter this session. # CONCILIATION BOARDS. Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked the Minis- ter of Labour, If in his remarks "that the Conciliation Boards sat too much, and were doing the thing to death," he included the Otago and Southland Board in such remarks. His reason for putting the question was that some very sweeping remarks had been made by the Right Hon. the Premier in connection with the Conciliation Boards of the colony. Now, the Board referred to in the question had been admitted by the Arbitration Court, and by the employers and employés and the Press, to be a Board which had done its work in a most satisfactory manner, and in no sense could the remarks of the Hon. the Premier apply to them. Instead of driving the thing to death, these men had sat till ten and eleven o'clock at night so as to get through. If the honourable member liked to have a return prepared, he thought it would be shown that in no one year had the members of this Board been paid for thirty days. Therefore he thought it was clear that the statement that they were driving the thing to death clearly could not apply to them, neither could the interjection that had been made-that the guinea a day had some- thing to do with it. He was not speaking for other Boards, but he was sure the remark did not apply to this one, and therefore he put the question. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Labour) said he was in this position : that if each member who was interested in a Conciliation Board asked the same question he should then have to fix the remark upon some Board, and he was not going to be drawn into that position. His friend could easily see that by this

means he would soon get into what the honourable member for Ashley would call a cul de sac. He would, however, say this: that the Dunedin Board had done really excellent work. He might also say that he had no reason whatever for withdrawing a single word he had said, and that he believed his remarks had done good, and were required at the time. **MILITARY PENSIONS EXTENSION ACT.** Major STEWARD (Waimate) asked the Minister of Defence, - (1) Whether it is not necessary to amend " The Military Pensions Extension to Contingents Act, 1900," by adding schedules containing the names of the members of the Sixth and Seventh Contingents, in order to in-

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to the members of the previous contingents by the Acts cited ; (2) if so, will an amending Bill be introduced this session ? Last session they had passed an Act entitled the Military Pensions Extension to Contingents Act, the provisions of which extended the benefits of the Military Pensions Act to the members of the South African contingents. The Act provided that the principal Act should extend and apply to the forces enrolled by the New Zealand Government for service in South Africa. Then, section 3 said, "The following persons, and those only, shall be deemed to be members of the forces enrolled," namely : Those referred to in Schedule I .; those in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Contingents ; and, next, those who, though not enrolled in New Zealand, were sent to South Africa by the Government and were enrolled there ; and, next, those who, though not sent out to South Africa for the purpose, vet, being New-Zealanders, joined the contingents there ; so it would be seen that the Act absolutely excluded the members of the Sixth and Seventh Contingents now serving in South Africa, who were certainly equally entitled with the members of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Contingents to be included under the Act. He therefore begged to submit the question standing in his name. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said a Bill would be introduced this session. It was necessary this should be done. There were some cases that had come under his notice that really demanded an alteration of the law, otherwise grave injustice would be done. As to placing these names in the Schedule of the Bill, most decidedly they would be so placed, and given the same position as those in Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Contingents. Just to show members a case in point, if a soldier's mother was a widow and anything happened to the son, then the mother was entitled to a pension ; but there was a case where the father was bedridden and the son was maintaining father, mother, and family, and, being wounded and incapacitated, nothing could be done for them at all. There was another case of a similar character where the son had been killed. In cases of this kind the law ought to be amended so as to give power to consider all such cases. Major STEWARD asked if there would be a nominal schedule containing the names of the Sixth and Seventh. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes. **DUNEDIN PUBLIC ART-GALLERY.** Mr. MILLAR (Dunedin City) asked 12.0. the Premier, If he will grant a subsidy of \$1 for £1 on any subscriptions raised for the purpose of building a public art-gallery in Dunedin ? He would like to point out to the right honourable gentleman that there was an art-gallery in Dunedin at the present time, but, unfortunately, no proper buildings to put the pictures in. There were some very valuable pictures in the collection, and they had to be put in a temporary galvanised-iron building. Christchurch, he believed, had got a site some through the munificence of some private citizens, was provided with very handsome buildings for the purposes of an art-gallery, and on any day you liked to go to these art-galleries you would find students there engaged in copying the pictures. The people of Dunedin were similarly desirous of putting up an art-gallery, and, as it would cost a considerable amount. and seeing that the Government had subsidised public institutions of various kinds, he asked now if they would grant a pound-for-pound subsidy towards the erection of an art-gallery in Dunedin. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the matter would be referred to Cabinet for consideration. # **AUSTRALASIAN SQUADRON.** Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Government, If any practical steps have been taken towards securing the strengthening of the Australasian squadron, as recommended in paragraph 20) of the report of the Secret Defence Committee

? In asking this question he would like to point out that section 20 of the report of the Secret Defence Committee of 1900 was as follows :- "Your Committee, having regard to the altered international political conditions, especially in China and the Pacific, recommend that representations should be made by the Government of this colony to the Commonwealth of Australia and to the Imperial Government as to the necessity of strengthening the Australasian squadron by raising the class and increasing the number of the cruisers composing that squadron ; the increased cost to be paid by the Commonwealth of Australia and by New Zealand on the basis of the present agreement." That step seemed to the Committee to be one of urgent necessity, and from recent events and the disclosures made both in the House of Commons and by the Chairman of the Navy League it was apparent that the necessity had become still greater at the present time, owing to the disparity between the ships of France and Russia and those of Britain in the China Seas. He hoped to hear that the Government had taken some steps in the matter, as recommended by the Defence Committee. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said it would be in the recollection of honourable members that he had stated the necessity of this in 1897. He had repeated the statement since then, and, as time went on, the necessity for strengthening our naval forces in the colonies and in Australasian waters became more imperative. The honourable member would note that during the last few days a report from the admiral in charge of the station, Admiral Beaumont, had been given to the Federal Government, and, now that the Australasian Governments were definitely informed what was the position, it would be for them to make representations to the Imperial authorities to have the Australasian squadron strengthened, and on the basis of our present contribution. It was futile to

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mation that had been asked for by the Federal Government had been obtained. As honourable members were aware, we must take joint action in the matter, and, as far as New Zealand was concerned, that joint action would be taken to make the necessary representations to the Imperial Government. Mr. NAPIER understood the Premier to say, "On the basis of the present contribution " the Imperial Government were going to be asked to strengthen the Australasian squadron. Now, he believed there was a unanimous feeling throughout the country that our contribution should be increased, if a demand was made for the increase of the squadron. Mr. SEDDON said it followed as a natural sequence that if we got more ships we would have more to pay. # IMPERIAL OR COLONIAL NAVAL RESERVE. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Minister of Defence, If he has communicated with the Imperial Government and the Commonwealth of Australia with regard to the formation of an Imperial or Colonial Naval Reserve, as directed in paragraph 18 of the report of the Secret Defence Committee of the 21st December, 1900? Paragraph 18 of that report was as follows :- " With regard to the subject of the establishment in this colony of a branch of an Imperial or Colonial Naval Reserve, your Committee consider the matter to be one of such importance that they recommend negotiations being entered into by the Government of New Zealand with the Commonwealth of Australia and the Imperial Government with a view of ascertaining whether some satisfactory arrangements can be made upon the subject." The report which : he right honourable gentleman referred to in his answer to the last question only emphasized what the admiral on the station had said in New Zealand-namely, that it was useless to have a Naval Reserve which was such only in name. We had a Naval Volunteer Force here which knew nothing about naval warfare. They were really Garrison Artillery Volunteers, and what the admiral wanted was that if there was to be a Naval Reserve it should be a Naval Reserve capable of going on board ships and understanding the working of ships' guns. Now, the Defence Committee thought some steps ought to be taken with a view of forming the nucleus of a local Naval Reserve in fact, one which would be thoroughly efficient, and which might be prepared to supply men for manning Her Majesty's ships in time of war. It was borne in upon the minds of all those who took an interest in defence questions that if the war-vessels out here had to go fifteen thousand miles to recruit in time of war there would be very little chance of having the ships

in an efficient condition. All the principal authorities, he thought he might say, agreed that not only men but stores should be in reserve in various parts of the Empire for the purpose of refitting and remanning; and that Mr. Seddon and which resulted in the recommendation that negotiations should be entered into with the Imperial Government and the Commonwealth to see if some practical scheme could not be devised for the purpose mentioned. He trusted that no time would be lost in carrying out the Defence Committee's recommendation. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said the Government had received a communication from the Secretary of State on this subject, and on the receipt of that communication action was deferred. # RIFLE-RANGES. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Government, If it is intended to introduce a Bill during the present session of Parliament to legalise the recommendation of the Secret Defence Committee, in the report of the 21st September, 1900, paragraph 10, (), regarding the compulsory acquisition of land for rifle- ranges ? It was generally agreed that if our young men could not shoot they would be almost valueless for the purpose of defence ; and in order to shoot well they must have rifle-ranges for practice. Now, a difficulty had arisen in regard to the acquisition of rifle- ranges under the present law. The officers of the Defence Department were blocked in the vicinity of Auckland a little while ago, when they wished to acquire a rifle-range, owing to the owners asking an exorbitant price for the land required. There was no power under the Public Works Act, nor was there power under the Defence Act Amendment Act of 1900, to compulsorily take land for rifle - ranges upon payment of compensation at a fair valuation. Singularly enough, the Government had power to take land for defence purposes generally, yet it was not thought that rifle-ranges came under that heading. At all events, there was a doubt about it, and, under the circumstances, the Government had made no effort to acquire land for rifle-ranges. He thought legislation should be introduced at once to deal with this diffi- culty. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the Government were of opinion that, before it was too late, pro- vision should be made to provide rifle-ranges close to every centre of population. He himself looked upon shooting and rifle practice as being of much more importance than the drilling of our Volunteers, and it was quite clear that something would have to be done in this respect. Neither in Auckland nor in Welling- ton was there a suitable range. As regarded Wellington, Trentham was too far away, and the working-men could not possibly spare the time nor incur the expense to go out there. There ought to be some place near Wellington so that the men could get up early in the morning and have their practice, or in the summer they could practice in the evenings. He had in his eye a site for a rifle-range near Wellington, and he proposed to ask the officers to make a report upon the site, and if they con- sidered it suitable he intended to take the land for the purpose. Of course, they could take it

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for defence purposes, although it might not be for a rifle-range. If there was any defect in the law he would see to it. # DEFENCE. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) asked the Minister of Defence, Whether he has com- municated with the Imperial Government in terms of paragraph 16 of the report of the Secret Defence Committee of the 21st Septem- ber, 1900? Paragraph 16 of the Secret Defence Committee's report was as follows : - "That the Imperial authorities be applied to by the Government of the colony to advance the capital necessary to enable the colony to carry out such of the above recommendations as may be adopted by Parliament, and upon the terms set forth in the statement made in the House of Representatives on the 20th July, 1900, by the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Premier and Minister of Defence, referred to in the early portion of this report." The recommendations of the Defence Com- mittee, adopted by Parliament last session, involved an expenditure of #373,428, which required an annual cost of \$59,303, in order to place the defences of the colony on a satisfactory footing, and it was apparent, of course, to the Committee that the colony could not stand an immediate expenditure to that extent ; therefore the Committee recommended that application should be made to the Imperial authorities to see whether that Government would contribute, and, if so, in what form. This was an

important matter, and should not be allowed to drift. Twelve months had passed now since the Defence Committee reported, and, although a good deal had been done considering the amount of money at the disposal of the Defence Department - they had now an abundant supply of the most modern rifles and ammunition. still all the items of Schedule A in the report of the Defence Committee had not received attention. There was not one single item in the report that the Committee thought could be deleted with safety to the colony. Therefore it was very necessary that immediate negotiations should be commenced with the Imperial Government. He knew that the Minister had had a great deal to do lately in connection with the Royal visit ; but still this was of vital importance to the Empire and to the colony, and it would be false economy to delay assuming obligations which the conditions of our existence as an insular colony demanded. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said he was Colonial Treasurer, and, with the very heavy claims now made upon the Imperial Treasury and the increased taxation necessary, it would be futile at the present juncture to press this matter. They must wait until the Imperial difficulties were over and a normal condition was established. They could then ask for this and go into it thoroughly. He thought to press for it now would mean a negative reply. Mr. NAPIER would point out that this was a most suitable time. The Imperial Government were now spending on outlying stations millions of money. They were going to spend large sums straight away at Hongkong, at Thursday Island, and also at other strategic points in the Empire. The Imperial Government recognised that it was necessary to make this expenditure on these outlying stations, and there could be no more opportune time to push this colony's claims than when so much money was being spent on Imperial naval bases, especially as Auckland was now an Imperial naval station. Mr. SEDDON said the places to which the honourable member had referred were points at which, for strategical reasons, it was absolutely necessary that the Imperial Government should spend money. It was quite different with New Zealand. To press the claims recommended by the Committee now would, he repeated, bring forth a negative reply. If they waited till a more favourable opportunity the probabilities were that something would be done. He was speaking now with authority. RETURNED TROOPERS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government will establish some systematic method of dealing with applications for employment by returned troopers from South Africa ? He understood that the Government had already very properly stated that they would, if possible, find employment for returned troopers. He did not think it should be necessary for these men to have to go to members of Parliament and ask them to use their influence to get them employment under the Government. There should be some bureau established or some other system by means of which the Defence Department should deal with this matter. He had no doubt the Government were paying some attention to this subject, but he trusted the Premier would be able to say that the Government would make a strenuous and systematic attempt to find employment for returned troopers, and in particular those who were incapacitated from doing hard manual work. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) might say that there was a systematic method now in operation. And not only that, but he knew that the Christchurch Press was voluntarily and freely helping by inserting advertisements gratis on behalf of those who are out of employment. In reply to an interjection, he might say that it did not matter whether the paper was Liberal or Tory, if any paper was helping a patriotic and proper object it should be commended for doing so, and he would like to see all other papers throughout the colony doing the same thing. However, the Government were finding places for these men as fast as they could. It was only natural, however, that when a large number of men came back to the colony some of them should be out of employment for a time. He might say that some of them were a little fastidious, and wanted better positions than those they held when they went away. Of course, he did not blame them, but the Government were doing all they could.

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Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) asked the Premier, Whether the Government will recoup the Brothers the

cost of the several trials in connection with the Stoke Orphanage-which were in the nature of State trials-the juries having returned a verdict of "Not guilty " in every case? It would be remembered that, consequent upon certain alarming reports in regard to the management of the Stoke Industrial School, the City of Nelson was thrown into a state of ferment, and an investigation was made by a Royal Commission, which resulted in extraordinary and sensational statements being made throughout the colony and in the House in regard to the acts of cruelty which had been perpetrated within the walls of the institution. These sensational statements resulted in the use of inflammatory language in the House, and ultimately steps were taken which led to the prosecution of the Brothers who were teachers in the school. These trials extended over twenty one days -from the 21st November to the 12th December. There were twelve charges in all : six were tried and six were abandoned. Of the six cases tried, verdicts of acquittal were recorded in every case. He would epitomize the cases and their results. On the 21st November, 1900, at the Supreme Court, Wellington, before his Honour Mr. Justice Edwards, James Solan (Brother Kilian) was charged with committing a common assault, which Mr. Bell, the Crown Prosecutor, described as consisting of " unkind treatment." The case lasted the whole of that day, and was unfinished. On the 22nd November, after a second day's hearing, the jury retired at twenty-five minutes to six o'clock, and after a quarter of an hour's absence returned into Court with a verdict of "Not guilty." The case occupied two days, and the jury settled the matter in a quarter of an hour. On the 23rd November, before Mr. Justice Edwards, James Solan (Brother Kilian) was charged with common assault. The jury retired at half-past five o'clock, and in less than ten minutes returned into Court with a verdict of "Not guilty." On the 29th November, before Mr. Justice Edwards, the Crown Prosecutor entered a nolle prosequi in all the other charges against James Solan (Brother Kilian). On the same day - 29th November- before Mr. Justice Edwards, Edward Forrier (Brother Wybertus) was charged with having committed an indecent assault on William Hardwick. The Judge said, " Personally, he would not punish a cat on the boy's evidence," whereupon the Crown Prosecutor, Mr. Bell, consented to accept a verdict of " Not guilty." On the 30th November, before Mr. Justice Edwards, Edward Forrier (Brother Wybertus) was charged with having committed an indecent assault on Thomas Francis Owens. The jury, after twenty minutes' retirement, returned a verdict of " Not guilty." On the 1st December, before Mr. Justice Edwards, Edward Forrier (Brother Wybertus) was charged with having committed a common assault on William Ross. Mr. Justice Edwards said, " It is quite impossible these things could have taken place retiring from the box, returned a verdict of " Not guilty." Then the Judge was changed. On the 3rd December, before the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Stout, Edward Forrier (Brother Wybertus) was charged with having committed an indecent assault on William Joseph Guckert. Mr. Skerrett, who appeared in all the cases for the accused, mentioned that "these cases were looked at by many persons from a sectarian point of view. During the empanelling of the jury counsel for the Crown, as well as counsel for the defence, had, in making challenges, proceeded on the assumption that the cases were being viewed in that way. The jury probably did not include any one who agreed with the religion of the accused, and probably included some men who were opposed to it." The jury disagreed, after being locked up for one hour and five minutes. On the 10th December, at the second trial, the presiding Judge, Sir Robert Stout, in summing up, made the following extraordinary statement : "If in cases of this kind the evidence of the accused was to be believed, then the crime in question might as well be taken out of the statute-book." The jury returned at half-past eight p.m., after nearly a three-hours retirement, with a verdict of "Not guilty." The New Zealand Times' report of the case states that "the verdict was received with a round of applause." That was the end of the trials. On the 11th December Mr. Bell announced, as appeared from a report in the New Zealand Times of the 12th December, that "the Crown had decided not to proceed with the remaining charges against Edward Forrier (Brother Wybertus), which comprised three for common and two for indecent assaults alleged to have been committed on boys at the Stoke Industrial School. This

decision brings the Stoke cases to an end. In all the cases tried the juries brought in verdicts of . Not guilty.' Two of the cases against Brother Wybertus which came to a hearing broke down. Both Brother Wybertus and James Solan (Brother Kilian) are now, therefore, acquitted of the indictments found by the grand jury, the charges against the latter having been disposed of in his favour the other week." Thus it would be seen the trials covered a period of twenty-one days. It was known also that the Crown had adopted the extraordinary course of excluding from the juries, by way of challenge, every person thought to be a Roman Catholic, and so, as it afterwards appeared, there was no Roman Catholic on any of the juries. Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable gentleman was trespassing on debatable matter, and accusing the Government of doing that which they did not do or authorise. Mr. FISHER said he was only remarking on what the Crown Prosecutor actually did in Court. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said he understood the honourable gentleman was only stating facts. Mr. FISHER said he was only stating facts.

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Mr. FISHER said there could be no possible doubt about what actually took place in Court -namely, that the challenges were made by the Crown Prosecutor. Mr. SEDDON .- They were not challenged by the Crown because they belonged to a certain section of the community. Mr. FISHER said he was surely entitled to believe what he had seen with his own eyes. The right to challenge was very freely exercised by the Crown Prosecutor, and the jury as em-pannelled might be truly said to be absolutely free from bias or prejudice of every description. These trials were instituted in deference to a strong public demand, and, having regard to the severe ordeal through which the Brothers passed and the extreme importance of the trials themselves, the State being as much interested as the accused, the costs of the several trials ought to be returned to the persons who had been charged. He need hardly say that in regard to the matter a strong feeling existed in the minds of a large number of people in all parts of the colony-not only of those of the religion of the persons charged; it would be a great mistake to think that-but of New Zealand colonists of all shades of opinion. The verdicts in all the cases bore one interpretation -namely, that there was no ground whatever for any of the charges. That was the result of the trials, extending over twenty-one days, before two Judges-the Chief Justice and Judge Edwards - and six separate juries. Having regard to the importance of the trials, and the importance to this colony of the interests involved, and the accused having been proved clearly not guilty of the charges made against them, it would be only an act of becoming generosity on the part of the Government to repay to them the actual expenses to which they were put. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, In his opinion, the Stoke Orphanage matter was one of those unpleasant episodes in our Parliament and history about which the least said the better for all concerned. It was an unfortunate incident, and the sooner it was forgotten the better. No application had been made to the department for the repayment of these costs, and, presuming such an application had been made, it was unusual for the Government in such a case to refund them.

RETURN RE LARGE ESTATES. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) asked the Premier, Whether he is correctly reported in the New Zealand Times of the 1st August as having stated, in answer to a deputation on rating on unimproved values, that "a return just laid on the table of the House showed that large estates were increasing, despite the number which had been acquired for settlement" ; and, if so, whether he was aware that the return alluded to was ordered in August, 1899, and was returned as at 31st March, 1899, and is therefore two years old and out of date? The question had been so long on the Order Paper that the return alluded to by the Premier was the return laid on the table to the order of Mr. Millar : "That there be laid before this House a return showing-(1) The value of all freehold lands in the colony at the 31st March, 1899; (2) the total amount of mortgages on freehold registered at that date." This return had been ordered in August, 1899, and was only laid on the table of the House this session. He was aware that the returns had been made, contrary to the order, up to the 31st March, 1900, but even then they were not up to date. These returns were always compiled a year late. The land valuations were sent out in May or June, and

therefore a return bearing date the 31st March, 1900, would be compiled on information which would be obtained in May or 12.30. June, 1899, and therefore the return which the Premier alluded to would be certainly two years old, and was not a correct statement of the affairs of the colony at the present moment. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, When the honourable gentleman put his question on the Order Paper he was evidently under the impression that the return only brought the valuation up to 1899, whereas the return itself was up to date. It showed the classification according to the capital value of the land on the 31st March, 1900, and, so far as the value of the land was concerned, they could not ask for more—they already had what was wanted. When he stated that the number of estates had increased he gave the particulars where the particular increases had occurred. For instance, in estates of £1,000 and under \$2,000 there was an increase from 6,755 in 1889 to 10,496 in 1900. In estates of \$2,000 and under £3,000 there was an increase of over a thousand—from 2,299 to 3,680. From £3,000 and under \$4,000 there was an increase of over six hundred. From £4,000 and under \$5,000 there was an increase of 888. From £5,000 and under \$10,000 there was an increase of from 1,237 to 1,900. From \$10,000 and under \$20,000 they had gone up from 623 to 841. Then, in regard to estates of \$20,000 and under \$50,000 the total number of owners in 1889 was 338, and in 1900 it was 394. From \$50,000 and under £100,000 there was a decrease, from 107 in 1889 to 92 in 1900; in \$100,000 and under \$200,000 there was an increase of two estates—from 37 in 1889 to 39 in 1900; in \$200,000 and over they stood in 1889 at 11 owners, and in 1900 there were only 11, so that there had been no change in that item. As far as the number of the estates was concerned there was an increase in the number of these large estates. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) asked if that had not been brought about by the revaluations. Mr. SEDDON said it mattered not to him how it had been brought about, the fact was that there was the increased numbers. He thought it might have the effect after a certain time of taking them from one scale to another, but still there was the increase of prices all round.

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Mr. W. FRASER said the areas had not increased. Mr. SEDDON said he was not saying any thing about the areas; but he would like to call members' attention to this fact : that this was the case in regard to these estates of \$50,000 and over, notwithstanding that the Government had bought so large a number of estates. At all events, there was the fact as given by this return. It would not make any alteration if we got the area, because if a man had bought a piece of ground he would keep it as a separate estate; unless we had them jointly as landowners we would not be able to trace them by the area. However, taking it any way we like, there had been an increase in these estates during the last ten years. SOCIETIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN. Mr. TANNER (Avon) asked the Premier, If the Government will consider the propriety of subsidising the revenues of the New Zealand societies for the prevention of cruelty to women and children ? He asked the question in consequence of the statement in Mr. Commissioner Tunbridge's report, that there had been a marked increase in the number of criminal assaults on young children. Owing to the helplessness of this section of the community, and the fact that the police were overburdened with work, and the difficulty of moving the police to take action in many cases of this kind, the prosecution had to be left largely to the initiative of these societies, and they had done well so far as they were able. There were many cases of which we heard little because of the utter lack of method or means to bring them before the Court. He would be glad to hear what the Premier said as to the advisability of giving assistance to these societies. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said his colleague answered a similar question the other day. Mr. TANNER said. That was about bullocks and dogs ; this is about women and children. Mr. SEDDON said it was well known that the legislation and administration of the Government had had in view the improving of the condition of the women and children of the colony. No one regretted more than the Government the increase of the trouble that the honourable gentleman referred to. But, in his opinion, we would have to look to another source entirely,

and one which the public, either wilfully or blindly, refused to recognise. He said this Legislature was a good deal responsible for what was going on in that respect. Mr. TANNER .- What are the Crown Prosecutors doing ? Mr. SEDDON said the Crown Prosecutors would not stop it ; the Legislature had a good deal to do with it. An Hon. MEMBER .- How? Mr. SEDDON said he would not say how now, but there was no doubt about it ; and to stop it, in his opinion, we would have to go back. But so far as the punishment of the wrongdoers was concerned, in the face of the advice given by those intrusted with the responsibility he thought he should have to do something. It was a question, of course, whether the law at the present time gave us sufficient power. He was inclined to think himself that it did. However, if it did not, it would be the duty of the Government, unless there was an alteration, to do something in respect to it. We must have our children and women protected from the gross outrages that were occurring.

"MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT. 1900." Mr. HALL (Waipawa) asked the Premier, If the Government will introduce an amendment to section 91 of " The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900," so as to permit special rates to be banked to the District Fund Account of boroughs? He had been induced to ask this question in consequence of a communication he had from a Borough Council in his district. The Borough Council in question complained that, notwithstanding they had a very considerable amount of revenue on hand, they were not allowed to place that money to the credit of the general fund. Consequently, they were paying interest on an overdraft, and at the same time they had a large amount of money in the shape of separate rates in the bank, which for the time being would wipe the overdraft out. He wanted to see if the Minister would amend the Act so that a Municipal Corporation would not have to pay interest on an amount of money on overdraft when they had funds lying in the bank. The honourable gentleman would know the section he referred to. It was section 91, which read as follows :- "(1.) All moneys belonging to the Corporation shall be paid into such bank as the Council from time to time appoints and publicly notifies (hereinafter called 'the bank'). (2.) Moneys in connection with the general account hereinafter mentioned, and all such fines and penalties and amounts of fines and penalties as mentioned in section ninety hereof, shall be paid into an account at the bank to be called the ' District Fund Account.' " He wanted to say that, notwithstanding the fact that a Council might have a large amount of money at credit, it might at the same time have a large overdraft. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) scarcely thought there was sufficient to warrant an alteration of the Municipal Corporations Act. They only passed the general Act last session, and he thought something more should be required than was now asked before an amendment was made. He believed that a great deal depended upon the Borough Councils themselves. There was a danger of getting accounts mixed up, and of moneys being used for purposes other than those for which they were intended. A good deal could be said on both sides. In any case, he did not think an amendment was required for the purpose mentioned. Other alterations might be necessary, and, if so, the whole question could then be dealt with.

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RETURNED TROOPERS' PAY. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government will give a definite assurance to the returned troopers from South Africa of the date when their lawful claims for arrears of pay may be expected ? He had received two letters on the subject from returned troopers. One of them was dated the 5th instant, and in it the writer stated :- "I relied on my arrears of pay as a member of the Third Contingent to meet the half-yearly rent of my own and my brother's section. I wrote to the Defence Department, Christchurch, asking that the money should be forwarded as soon as possible. The money has not arrived yet, consequently we lose the 10-per-cent. rebate allowed on rents paid before the 31st July last. In our case it amounts to \$6. It appears to me to be very unjust that one Government department withholds money due for so long, while another department imposes a penalty for non-prompt payment of rent." That young man belonged to the Third Contingent, and returned to the colony about three months ago. He and his brother were tenants on the Cheviot

Estate. He had another communication, dated 12th August, from a trooper who returned to the colony about ten months ago. It was as follows : "I may say that the Defence Office has not paid us our back money yet ; also, we were told the Imperial Government voted a bonus of £5 a man to all colonials who served in South Africa. I have not yet heard regarding it. I am not hard up for money, but I think it is time the Government paid up our lawful claims. Also, troopers having their own horses : the Premier recently said that the Government would pay for the horses of all deserving cases. Will you ask him what he means by that? I had my own horse, and would like to know about it." Although the writer of the second letter he had just read returned to the colony about ten months ago, the arrears of his pay had not yet been settled. Those two cases would show the Premier that there was something decidedly wrong in the management of the Defence Department. That one man should be kept out of arrears of pay for ten months and another for three months was a grave reflection on the Government. In consequence of not receiving the £60 that was due to him, one of the troopers had lost a rebate in his rent of £6. owing by him and his brother as Crown tenants. If the Premier desired it, he would place the letters at his disposal for departmental inquiry, and hoped the matter would be attended to at once, and the men paid their just and well-earned claims. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) asked the honourable gentleman if he would include in his question the case of Sergeant Mitchell, whose pay was in arrear. He had not long returned from South Africa, and the Government had asked him to go back ; but why should he do that while there was pay due to him here that he could not get ? Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said, If the honourable member for Ashley had given him particulars of the cases referred to before putting the question he would then have been able to give the departmental reply. There must be something deficient. There was no man so much as ten months in arrear. Either the man was not entitled to the payment demanded or there was some dispute between him and the department, and he ought to have told the honourable gentleman the facts respecting it. He (the Premier) undertook to say there was something wrong. Possibly he was claiming more than his certificates entitled him to be paid. There were any amount of those cases. In some cases the men had got the money, and when the pay-sheets came back from Africa it was found that they had been paid twice over. Well, he was not going to throw away public money. If the case was not shown to be one right for payment the Government would not pay. As to the cases the honourable member referred to by name, he would make inquiries and let him know the result of the inquiry. The department told him that, with very few exceptions of disputed cases, all the returned troopers of the First, Second, and Third Contingents had been paid. Regarding the other case, where £6 was alleged to be due, the probability was that the £6 was lying in the office of the officer commanding the district. Mr. MEREDITH said the young trooper he referred to was at Cheviot, and in consequence of the Defence Department not paying him he had lost the 10 per cent. of the Government rebate, which amounted to £6. Mr. SEDDON said, Not knowing the particulars of the case, he could not give the honourable member a definite reply : but he could say that if he was one of those who came back with the Fourth or Fifth Contingents, their accounts had only just been finished by the Officer Commanding. If he belonged to the First, Second, or Third Contingents, the officers had finished their work weeks and weeks ago, and their certificates and money had been sent to the officers commanding the districts, and the young man had not made application. It was one of two things : either there was a dispute as to the amount owing, and there was no certificate for it, or the money had not been applied for at the proper quarter -to the Paymaster General : it was not kept back by the Government. Then, with respect to Sergeant Mitchell : He might say that he had treated him with consideration and generosity. The honourable gentleman could see the papers, and he would find that such was the case. No one regretted what had occurred more than he did himself; but he did not see that there was anything more that he could do. The trooper's wife died in Wellington, and he (the Premier) had given instructions for the fact to be cabled, and the trooper had obtained leave to return to Wellington. The man was an Imperial

soldier and had been granted six months' leave, and had been in Wellington six weeks. Of course, the
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question was, What were they going to do ? The man had asked that the Government should give him employment. Well, they had no employment for him, and said that he must go back to his duty in South Africa. The man said he preferred to stay here rather than to leave for South Africa ; but the arrangement had been that he should go back. He was an Imperial soldier, and the Government could not do anything in his case. Nothing more than had been done could be done. GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) asked the Government, Whether the Government Life Insurance Department can see their way to charge interest on the lowest scale where a borrower has borrowed £100 or over, though on separate policies? He desired to ask the question in view of these facts : When a person borrowed £100 or over £100 from the Government Life Insurance Department on his policy he was charged 5 per cent. interest ; but if a borrower had two policies and borrowed say £60 on one policy and \$50 on another, making a total of £110, he was charged 6 per cent. Well, it seemed to him that it would be only right to charge the smaller rate of 5 per cent., whether the amount was in one policy or spread over two policies, so long as it was over the £100. It seemed unfair that the rate should be 6 per cent. instead of 5 per cent., simply because the amount was in two policies. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said it had always been the practice of the department to treat loans on separate policies belonging to one policyholder in exactly the same way as if they were held by different individuals, for the following reason : Each policy, being a distinct contract, must have a definite and proper (that is, within the surrender value) portion of the loan allocated to it. The position was not the same as, for instance, where the loan was granted on mortgage of land where several securities were involved. In the latter case only one account would be kept, but in the case of the policies a separate account had to be kept for each policy. The necessity for this arose mainly from the fact that the premiums on one policy might be allowed to fall into arrear and the arrears eventually exhaust the surrender value, and the policy lapsed, while the other remained in force. They had to debit the charges of any policy against the surrender value of that policy alone. Any other practice would lead to confusion and misunderstanding. They were in a different position from an outsider taking a mortgage over several policies. They were under a legal obligation to keep the policy in force so long as the surrender value of the policy-less the loan and interest thereon and the arrears of premium-was sufficient to pay a quarter's premium. Therefore, although on the first blush it would appear to be quite reasonable to put the policies together for the payment of interest, as the honourable member had suggested, yet it would be seen by what the department said that it was otherwise, and that it might bring about confusion. Mr. Seddon Mr. BARCLAY confessed that he did not see it. CRIMINAL ASSAULTS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) asked the Government, Whether they will, in view of the deplorable increase of criminal assaults on women and children, as reported by Commissioner Tunbridge and Lieut. - Colonel Hume, amend the Criminal Code Act in the direction of increasing the severity of punishment ? The protection of women and girls from criminal assaults was a most serious matter, and of the utmost importance, and he ventured to think that, as the Premier had as much at heart as any other member of the House the prevention of these infamous crimes, he would agree with him (Mr. Mackenzie) that they ought to apply the lash more severely to this class of criminal than was the case at the present time. The fact was that every now and again the public were shocked by some dreadful crime being perpetrated on defenceless children or women, and if, as a people, we were going to enjoy the reputation of a very high civilisation, it was incumbent upon us to stop these outrages, and it could be done, and thus protect our children, girls, and women in such a manner as to show the world we knew what to do with the brutes and scoundrels who committed these assaults. He would like to see these fellows lashed within an inch of their life, and if that were done more frequently than the Judges now did, these crimes would be seldom attempted. He had noticed with intense

indignation that some of the Judges did not apply the lash at all, and some very sparingly. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) deplored the fact that our criminal records should show that there was an increase in the direction indicated by the honourable member, and to that extent our fair fame was sullied. These crimes needed to be stamped out, and that punishment should be accorded which would prevent them went without saying. But he believed our present law gave sufficient power to deal with them. It was a question for those who administer the law. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- You should not give them the option. Mr. SEDDON thought they must leave it to those intrusted with the carrying-out of the law and imposing the penalties. He hoped the fact that the matter had been drawn attention to by these officers, and by the honourable member, and also by the Press of the colony, would have its effect. He did not think further legislation on the subject was required, as there was sufficient power at the present time.

COLONIAL-MADE SADDLERY FOR NEW ZEALAND TROOPS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki), for Mr. Witheford (Auckland City), asked the Government, If they will issue instructions that in future only colonial-made saddlery shall be supplied to the New Zealand troops ?

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Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said there was no necessity for any instructions being given. As he had told the House, he intended to intro- duce a Bill repealing the provision in the Defence Act which gave the Minister of De- fence power to admit free uniforms and mili- tary equipments. ## STATE GOLD-MINING AND ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNS. Mr. FIELD (Otaki), for Mr. Witheford (Auckland City), asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether the Government will consider the ad- visability and practicability of the State mining its own gold, and issuing its own sovereigns ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said this was going in quite the opposite direction from what the late worthy Mr. Macandrew advocated. He ad- vocated a bale of paper and the printing press. If he were to answer this in the affirmative it would be said he was giving way to his own weakness. But he did think something might be done in the way of paper, and keeping gold against it ; and if they adopted that view they would have to buy the gold, and he thought they could buy gold much cheaper than they could mine it. # RALPH PORTER. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) asked the Minister for Railways, Whether his attention has been called to the very severe penalty and unnecessary costs imposed in a case of cattle- trespass on a railway reserve at Glenavy, brought against one Ralph Porter, on the 1st August, in the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court, Waimate, the defendant having been fined £2-namely, £1 per head-and saddled with £2 17s. costs, including fee of counsel (£2 2s.), said counsel having been brought from Timaru to prosecute, although the de- fendant had previously notified his intention to plead guilty ; and, if so, will he take steps to secure that such counsel's fee shall be re- funded to Mr. Porter? He asked this ques- tion in consequence of a communication he had received from one Ralph Porter, under date 1st August, to the following effect :- "I beg to bring under your notice a gross in- justice that has been done to me to-day. The facts are that two cows, my property, strayed across the railway-line on the 8th June last, and grazed for twenty minutes on the reserve be- yond the line, for which I was summoned to appear at Waimate to-day before Major Keddell, charged with allowing cattle to trespass, and fined, including costs, \$4 17s. Now, here is where the injustice of the case comes in. After receiving the summons, I saw the railway ganger, Mr. Seaman, and explained to him as he had seen the cows trespass, that I would plead guilty of the offence to save any friction and expense. But, to-day, Mr. White appeared for the department and pressed for a heavy penalty, although I explained to His Worship on the bench that this being my first offence, and the railway being unfenced, a small fine ought to meet my case. But, no; I was to be treated VOL. CXVII .- 32. as one that had committed the offence twenty times, and fined £1 for each head and saddled with #2 17s. of expenses. Now, I consider that I ought not to have been called upon to pay Mr. White, as the police could have prosecuted as well, if not better. The railway is left un- fenced, no security whatever ; even if you were in attendance on any stock it would be impos- sible to keep them from getting on the line. I would deem it a great favour if you will kindly look at

my complaint as a public one, and lay the matter before the Hon. the Minister for Railways. I do not think I am wrong in saying that he will at once see that I have been severely dealt with, and order the £2 2s. to be refunded." This man considered he had been very severely dealt with, and so did he (Major Steward); and, although the grievance might appear a somewhat small one, it seemed to him very hard that any settler should be put to the unnecessary expense referred to. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) was advised that the Railway Department had previously warned Mr. Porter against permitting his cattle to trespass on the railway, and he was written to in May last in respect to the trespass on the line at Glenavy of five cows belonging to him, and was then informed that he would be prosecuted if a repetition of the offence occurred. Two of his cattle trespassed on the line again on the 8th June last, and proceedings were accordingly instituted against Mr. Porter. The department had no definite knowledge of his intention to plead guilty. Mr. Porter, it now appeared, had informed the ganger at Glenavy a few days before the case was heard that "he supposed he would plead guilty"; but, as the department had no positive knowledge of his intention to so plead, it was compelled to take steps to secure a conviction. Cattle trespass on railways was a source of great danger to the travelling public, and in the interests of public safety prosecutions were undertaken in all cases where convictions could be secured. Major STEWARD said, That was quite true, and for years past the department had been urged to fence that particular place, which was very dangerous, and he had twice brought the matter up in the House, both last session and this session. INVERCARGILL RAILWAY-STATION. Mr. HANAN (Invercargill) asked the Minister for Railways, If he will favourably consider the proposal to provide access to the Invercargill Railway - station from Spey Street, so as to enable residents in the north part of the town, Avenal, and North Invercargill to more readily obtain entrance to the railway-station. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said the report he had was this : "It is considered that the residents of the northern part of Invercargill have already a very convenient approach to the railway-station along Leven and Dee Streets, and the department is strongly opposed to the granting of any additional access."

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HOSPITAL NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 5 .- "A certificate given after the passing of this Act by the medical officer of any hospital shall not entitle the holder thereof to registration unless a course of at least twenty-five lectures has been delivered in that hospital in each of the three years' residence therein of the holder of the certificate, and unless the matron of the hospital is herself a registered nurse." Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) moved to strike out the words " twenty-five, and to insert in lieu thereof the word " twelve." Word struck out and "twelve " inserted. Mr. HALL-JONES moved to strike out the words " and unless the matron of the hospital is herself a registered nurse." Amendment agreed to, and clause as amended agreed to. Clause 8 .- " Any registered nurse who is convicted of any indictable offence, or is proved to be guilty of misconduct, is liable to have her name erased from the register by order of the Governor in Council." Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister for Public Works) moved to strike out all words after "offence," and to insert, in lieu thereof, " shall have her name erased from the register by order of the Governor in Council ; and any registered nurse who is proved to the satisfaction of the Registrar and any Stipendiary Magistrate to have been guilty of grave misconduct shall be liable to have her name erased from the register by order of the Governor in Council." Amendment agreed to, and clause as amended agreed to. Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister for Public Works) moved the addition of the following new clause : - " For the purpose of enabling nurses who, previous to the coming into operation of this Act, hold certificates issued by any hospital authority, or who may have had not less than four years' experience as nurses, and who do not come within the foregoing provisions, to be registered under this Act, the Minister may make regulations prescribing the qualifications or form of examination required and the fee to be paid for the issue of a certificate which shall entitle the holder to registration under this . Act : "Provided that no such certificate shall be issued after the thirty-first day of

December, , one thousand nine hundred and two. New clause agreed to. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) moved to add the following new clause :- " In all appointments of nurses in hospitals under the control of Boards constituted under 'The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885,' preference of employment in regard to future vacancies shall be given to registered nurses : Provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to interfere with the employment of probationer nurses in such institutions." New clause agreed to. Mr. HALL-JONES (Minister for Public Works) moved to add the following new clause :- "This Act shall come into operation on the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and two." New clause added. Bill reported. LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said that subsection (3) of section 6 had been amended to read as follows :- " (3.) If the Governor determines not to proceed with the purchase he shall forthwith give notice thereof to the claimant, and thereupon the restriction on the disposition of the land under subsection one hereof shall cease to have effect." His opinion was that that meant that there was no restriction as to time. An Hon. MEMBER .- I do not think that is right. Mr. SEDDON said he was going to move to disagree with that. The House fixed it at twelve months, and he thought that was the right thing to do. He moved that the amendments made in subclause (1) of clause 8 be agreed to. He had promised the House in Committee that he would see that the machinery was properly adjusted, and after consulting with Mr. Marchant, the Commissioner of Lands here. these were the suggestions he had made so as to make it workable. He said that, although there might be no classification under the head of "ordinary farms" or "run," you would have to group them, because there would be some large and some small tenants, and if a tenant took up a small section he could not possibly take up a large one. At any rate, these suggestions had been made, and he moved that they be agreed to. New subclause (3) was entirely at variance with what had been done in the House, and he moved that it be not agreed to. Clause 9 was now read to form part of subsection (4) of clause 8. He moved that that be agreed to. In subclause (5) there required to be inserted before the word " Board " the word "Land," so as to make it " Land Board." Members would notice that throughout the piece " Board," " Board," " Board " occurred, but it should be " Land Board "; so far as the section dealing with applications was concerned. Then, new subclause (7), he moved, should be agreed to. Clause 13 he moved should be agreed to. and the new clause 14 take the place of the wording struck out of clause 13. He was advised that it would be better to strike out those words in clause 13, and simply to put in a new clause. The summing-up as to the amendments was this : Subclause (1) of section 6 to be agreed to. The amendments in subclause (3) of section 6 to be not agreed to. Subclause (3) of section 8 to be not agreed to. The amendments in subclause (1) of section 8 to be agreed to. The amendments in the 3rd subsection of

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in clause 9 to be so amended as to form part of clause 8, and also the amendments made in such section to be approved. New subclause (7) to be approved. The amendments made in clauses 12 and 13 agreed to, and the insertion of a new clause 14 to be agreed to. On the question, That the amendments made in subsection (3) of clause 6 be agreed to, Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) said that it appeared to him that the time in subsection (3) of clause 6 was too indefinite. He did not think they would do right unless they insisted upon a speedy determination as to purchasing or not. Under the Bill there was a date fixed for the commencement of official negotiations, and surely three months after that the Government ought to know whether they were going to proceed with the purchase or not. It was not right to keep this sword of Damocles over the heads of the owners of land indefinitely. Mr. SEDDON said they had six months' notice. Captain RUSSELL said it seemed a very hard case. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said it seemed to him the alteration was necessary, because as it was the matter might be hung up for several years. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) agreed with the last speaker. When the Bill was before Committee he expressed the opinion that the period of twelve months was too long, but this was worse, because it provided for an

indefinite period, or, at all events, until the Governor determined not to proceed with the purchase of the land, and that might be years after the negotiations commenced. The clauses were put seriatim, and all the amendments made agreed to, except those made in subclause (3) of clause 6, and the addition of a new subsection (3) to clause 8, which were disagreed to. Mr. SEDDON moved, That a message be sent to the Legislative Council setting out the clauses disagreed to. Motion agreed to. THE GOVERNMENT ADVANCES TO SETTLERS EXTENSION BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 2 .- " In addition to the loans authorised to be raised under Part II. of the principal Act, it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to raise under and for the purposes of that Act any sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate the sum of two million pounds : "Provided that not more than one million pounds (inclusive of any portion of the loan authorised to be raised by the principal Act and which has not yet been raised) shall be raised in any financial year." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved, That "two million " be struck out, with the view of inserting " one million " in lieu thereof. Motion to strike out words "two million" agreed to. " one million." Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) moved to insert " five hundred thousand." The Committee divided on the question, "That ' five hundred thousand ' be inserted." AYES, 14. Allen, J. Russell, W. R. Lang Thomson, J. W. Lethbridge Atkinson Bollard Monk Tellers. Herries Rhodes Hardy Russell, G. W. Massey. Haselden NOES, 43. Allen, E. G. Gilfedder Palmer Graham Arnold Parata Hall Barclay Seddon Hall-Jones Bennet Stevens Buddo Steward Heke Hornsby Symes Carncross Houston Carroll Tanner Collins Kaihau Thompson, R. Colvin Ward Laurenson Duncan Wilford Lawry Ell Willis. McGowan Field Mckenzie, R. Meredith Fisher Tellers. Fowlds Flatman Mills Fraser, A. L. D. O'Meara Hogg. PAIRS. Against. For. Hutcheson Smith, J. G. McGuire Smith, E. M. Mackenzie, T. McLachlan Pirani. Napier. Majority against, 29. Amendment negatived, and words " one million " inserted. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved to strike out the proviso. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) moved to strike out "one million " from the proviso, with the view of inserting "five hundred thousand." The Committee divided on the question, "That the words down to 'one million' be retained." AYES, 14. Russell, W. R. Allen, J. Lang Lethbridge Thomson, J. W. Atkinson Bollard Tellers. Massey Hardy Herries Monk Haselden Russell, G. W. Rhodes NOES, 42. Field Allen, E. G. Houston Arnold Fisher Kaihau Barclay Flatman Laurenson Bennet Lawry Fowlds Buddo Gilfedder McGowan Mckenzie, R. Carncross Graham Carroll Mills Hall Collins Hall-Jones O'Meara Heke Colvin Parata Duncan Seddon Hogg Ell Stevens Hornsby

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Fraser, A. L. D. Wilford Symes Palmer. Willis. Tanner Thompson, R. Majority against, 28. Amendment negatived, and proviso negatived. Bill reported. The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to eleven o'clock p.m. #