

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Tuesday, 23rd July, 1901. Third Reading - Bible-reading in Schools - Young

Person> Protection Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS.

THIRD READING. Chinese Immigrants Bill. BIBLE-READING IN SCHOOLS. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY

presented a petition from the Rev. Robert McCully and 101 others in and around Riverton, praying that a

plebis- cite be taken for the purpose of ascertaining the mind of the electors on the question of

Bible-reading in the public schools. This was the petition to which he referred the other day. He referred to

it then with the view to getting it inserted in Hansard, so that it would be seen he had not ignored it. He

understood, how- ever. that Hansard did not take any notice of petitions, and consequently it did not

appear. That being so, he had obtained the fragments of the petition and pasted them together, and,

although it was not complete, he thought it was sufficient for the purpose. The petition was ordered to lie

on the table. YOUNG PERSONS PROTECTION BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 11 .- " Any member of

the Police Force may at any time, under warrant signed by a Magistrate, enter and search any house,

shop, building, or other premises occupied or fre- quented by prostitutes or gamblers, or which he has

cause to suspect to be frequented for

<page>552</page>

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gambling or other illegal or improper purposes by boys apparently under the age of seventeen years ; and every such boy there found shall be forthwith taken to the nearest police-station, and there detained in custody until he can be brought before the Magistrate by the police on the charge of being not under proper control, whereupon the provisions of sections seven and eight hereof shall, mutatis mutandis, apply." The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK moved to insert, after the word "custody, " the words " if not admitted to

bail." The Committee divided. AYES, 20. Feldwick Smith, W. C. McLean Gourley Montgomery Stevens Harris Ormond Taiaroa Jennings Pinkerton Tomoana Johnston Rigg Twomey Kerr Scotland Williams.

Louisson Smith, A. L. NOES, 7. Barnicoat Jones Swanson Bolt Kelly, W. Walker, W. C. Jenkinson Majority for, 13. Words inserted, and clause as amended agreed to. Bill reported. The Council adjourned at five minutes past four o'clock p.m. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Tuesday, 23rd July, 1901. First

Reading-New Member -- Sir G. O'Brien and New Zealand-Land for Settlements Bill. Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READING. Shipping and Seamen's Bill. NEW

MEMBER. Mr. G. J. SMITH took the oath and his seat for Christchurch City. SIR G. O'BRIEN AND NEW ZEALAND. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay). - I desire to ask the Premier if he will supply the House

with a full copy of the speech of His Excellency the Governor of Fiji at the opening of the Wai- nibokasi Hospital, so that we may have the whole of the circumstances before us. Mr. SEDDON (Premier). - I have

given orders for the full report of the speech to be printed and circulated amongst members. LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi). - Sir, with other honourable members, I desire to make a few remarks on the Bill now before the House. Notwithstanding that it is a measure of an amending or technical nature, I believe that no harm will come to the administration of the Government Land for Settlements Department from a free discussion of a measure of this importance. There is, Sir, not the slightest doubt but that the land-for-settlements policy of the Government has caused a considerable amount of prosperity not only to those who may have had the privilege of acquiring sections, but also to those who are living in towns, and to those engaged in trade and manufacture. But the principal object in view is to extend to the colony the benefit of small settlement. and in that respect I maintain that small settlement has always been more to the interest of the colony as a whole than the wider system of free selection of large areas. The first matter I see in this Bill is one of great importance ; it is the right of the owner to dispose of an estate, or part of the estate, attempted to be acquired. Under that section it is declared that an estate shall not be lessened during the time of the notice and of the actual offer by the Government. Well, so long as members of the family of the owner receive the benefit of these particular blocks of land I see no reason why this should be brought into force; but if it is to allow the owner to sell the property to any one not connected with his family, then there may be a great deal of necessity for a clause such as this. Then, the next section provides that the Minister, or any person appointed by him on his behalf, may purchase land at auction : and I see no reason why the Government should not, under any system of purchase, acquire land for settlement. so long as the price is fair market value. Then, with regard to the clause dealing with the general administration -that is, the clause giving married men preference in acquiring land for settlement-I am somewhat doubtful what effect this is going to have on the young men applicants. For instance, if it is understood elsewhere as well as in this colony that married men have special preference over the selected blocks of land. what is to hinder married people from Australia and other places from putting in their applications and receiving the benefit of this amendment of the law ? I contend that if we are to keep the hands of our Land Boards tied in this direction very gross injustice will be done to the sons of settlers in this colony who may have the advantage of some little capital of their own or of their parents with which to settle and stock a farm. That is my reason for opposing this clause, and unless it is amended in that respect, allowing the Land Boards some considerable amount of latitude, I shall certainly oppose it. The intention is no doubt excellent, but there is not the slightest doubt that very great injustice may occur if the section is carried through exactly on the lines now proposed. Now, there is another matter I desire to speak of, as this is the only opportunity members have of discussing the general administration of the Act. I have always contended that poor land means poor settlers, and I trust the Government, in the acquisition of

<page>553</page>

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lands for settlement for the purpose of settling wish to speak to, and that is the question of men of limited means, will acquire good land. allowing the applicant the full amount he can Poor land means an extended area, and that apply for-namely, 640 acres of first-class land. means increased cost of fencing and other Now, Sir, I submit justice would be more improvements, and which must act detrimentally on the settler of limited means. In this section. It is true some of the sections of the respect the Government is to be commended for purchasing only those lands that are near to railways and lands of good quality. Then, with regard to the rental. there is a feeling on the part of the public that as far as possible the Government should give special privileges to those who settle on the land. I am not in sympathy with that proposal. I see no reason why settlers settled on bush lands, that take a considerable time to improve and a great deal of labour, should have a special privilege, even to the extent of remitting

one or two years' rent altogether. A better proposal would be to charge no rent for these first two years while the settler was preparing the land, and then to increase the rent to make up the deficiency. But to say that lands which have been acquired with moneys for which the colony has pledged itself should be given away without any charge for rent for the first year or two is undesirable, and I do not think is warranted by the experience of settlers who have been placed on our lands for settlement. They are mostly successful, and do not expect special privileges. There is another matter I wish to refer to, and that is the question of gambling in lands for settlement, for I can call it by no other name. It is very obvious there is a certain section of the community who consistently follow round these land-for-settlements ballots and try to make something out of them. Their intention is, under any circumstances, to get sections, and afterwards sell their interest or good-will. The wealthy man, of course, has an advantage in being able to get his brothers, cousins, and aunts, and all the rest of his relations, to put in a deposit for him and take a number, and in some way he benefits, either by the question of transfer, or in many cases by putting some one to represent him on the property as a settler under the Act. And this is done by people who have the means of purchasing the freehold of land, and by this means they take advantage of the facilities which are specially designed by the colony for those who are not able to purchase land for themselves. If we are to have this land-transfer system carried out, it simply means that this form of gambling will continue. At any rate, there is a remedy. A very easy means of stopping this, by determining that all transfers shall be stopped with regard to our land for settlements, and then when any one desires to get out of his property he will have to surrender it to the Land Board, who will weight it with the improvements and let it be balloted for again. This, Sir, I repeat, would stop all gambling in our land-for-settlements land. The question of the applicant having the right to sell his interest and appeal to the Land Board to agree to the transfer, gives him a privilege which, I think, the colony never desired he should have. There is another question that I partial if an applicant could only apply for one settlement might not be applied for, but the good land would be more than sufficiently applied for. The loss would be infinitesimal. It would prevent the duplication of applications, and prevent an unfair advantage being granted to the applicants who had the fortune of possessing more friends to apply and more money to pay the deposits with. I now wish to refer to the cost of our land for settlements, 11.0. and I would point out that the cost is very materially added to by this small-grazing-run system adopted with regard to the poorer portions of estates purchased. The system has grown up owing to the fact that the Government wishes to conserve blocks of land in large areas so as to make the investment profitable, and in some cases prevent small settlers taking grazing land which they are unable to stock. There is another side to the question which throws the colony into a considerable amount more debt in connection with the scheme. I remember the policy of the man who initiated the scheme- the Hon. Sir John McKenzie when he settled the first estate under the Land for Settlements Act, the Cheviot Estate. An Hon. MEMBER .- No, no; not under the Land for Settlements Act. Mr. BUDDO .- Well, it was practically the same -- the Cheviot Disposition Act. In that case the homestead and five thousand acres was sold for cash, and a considerable area of other land was offered on the same terms, thus relieving the colony from the responsibility of finding money to settle small runholders. Settlers of small means took up the other sections, and the estate was settled at less cost than otherwise would have been the case -- if, for instance, it had been settled under the system adopted at Hatuma. This system is too costly to the State, and if continued must land the State in an increased debt without any adequate benefit, and settle wealthy people on the land. I hold that if a man has got the means to take up sections worth from £3,000 to \$6,000 he can purchase a freehold and leave the land-for-settlements to landless people. I now wish to make a few remarks with regard to those members who cast reflections on the Government for acquiring land too slowly. I am aware that they do it with the best of intentions, more especially the Canterbury members, for in that province land for settlement is urgently required. At the present time the

money-market is tight, to use a financial phrase, and the price of British Consols is low, which implies that money is tight on the London market, and the supply of money in the colony is limited. Now, Sir, I object to the Government raising money in the colony. There is, it is true, an amount of uninvested money in the colony, but it must not be supposed that that amount is of any great extent, and if half a million is frequently borrowed in the colony it will reflect

<page>554</page>

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on the money-market here, and farmers and others requiring money will have to pay an increased rate of interest. I say that with a knowledge of what recently happened, and I say that immediately a large sum is raised by the Government in the colony a hardship is done to the small settlers. There is another question to be considered also in this direction by those who blame the Government for acquiring land slowly. I am as anxious to see settlement as any other member; but I do not wish the colony to take on responsibilities which it will have to pay for dearly, in the experience of those who have had anything to do with pastoral lands in the colony. The market value of land of that description has during the last eighteen months or two years advanced as much as 15 per cent., and in many cases a great deal more. In that case if there is any fall in the price of our produce in English and European markets it is very evident that small settlers taking up land purchased under such conditions will be loaded with considerably more rent than they can pay. Under these circumstances, I think that no great injustice has been done to the colony or to land-settlement by the care the Government has exercised during the past year, and the somewhat slow method of acquiring land for settlement. It is true the previous year shows a considerable amount purchased for land for settlement, but last year shows a much more restricted area acquired. Now, Sir, before I sit down I wish shortly to refer to those lands which are held by the Assets Board, and I think that on a question of land-settlement they may be referred to in this House. I am informed, I do not know whether rightly or wrongly, that there is, at least, almost a quarter of a million of acres of this Assets Board's lands in the North Island. I am also informed that a considerable area would do for dairy-farming purposes. I consider that the Assets Board are not at all to be commended on their management of these lands. At the present time, considering the high value of pastoral lands, it would be better to sell the land. The demand for pastoral land is good, but I see no effort on the part of the Board to do that. I see no advertisement that the lands are open for sale. I believe that some offers have been made, and excuses have been given that these particular estates are returning good interest on the money invested in them, and that the Board had not yet decided to put them on the market. If that is so, I feel that the policy adopted by the Board is not only not in the interest of the settlement of the land in the colony, but will reflect on the financial position of the Bank of New Zealand, as well as the responsibility of the colony to the bank. In the future we cannot expect that the prices of produce in the London market will continue at the present high rate. It is true that the Argentine, which has always been a competitor with the Australasian Colonies, has been prevented from putting dead meat on the London market by reason of disease to the extent that it did previously; but every member who knows anything about the subject knows that in the near future the South American States must cultivate their land and put more produce on the London market, and we must look for a much larger supply from South America, which will cause a decrease in the price of frozen meat on the London market. I cannot see that the outlook at the present time is against the interest of the New Zealand farmer; but, at all events, we ought to conserve his interests to the utmost, and, if the Government propose to purchase land for settlement, I wish to point out that it should not be done in extended areas under the grazing-run system. When we see that one single settler costs the colony under this system from £3,000 to \$6,000 to put on the land, it is evident that the colony, in the near future, will have a very great responsibility for a very small result. The Government have indicated that they are considering the advisableness of assisting producers by purchase of

steam-ships to carry produce to the United Kingdom. There is another question of equal importance- the question of storing produce in London or Liverpool, or any other port. This would be largely in the interests of the settlers, perhaps even more to the benefit of settlers than shipping. Shipping at times is, of course, naturally costly, for reasons over which the shipping companies themselves have no control ; but, while we must as far as possible guard against any monopoly of shipping interests to British markets, we must look to the benefit of our settlers. and provide for them more storage-room, and have New Zealand produce sold as such by one - trading trade into as few channels as possible. I and not allow traders to sell produce from the Argentine and elsewhere as New Zealand, and thus defraud the colonial producer of his justly earned profit. If the Government would make an effort in this direction the result would be satisfactory. With regard to the provisions of the Bill, there are only two clauses which I take exception to- clauses 6 and 8. I am strongly in favour of small settlement. and the land-for-settlements policy, which will benefit the small settlers. At the same time I deprecate the large expenditure to settle small grazing-runs, which is altogether too costly, and which is no material benefit to settlers who have only small amounts of money at their disposal. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) .- This debate has resolved itself into a general debate on the land-for-settlement policy. I thought that that question was quite settled. As far as the enlightened members of the House are concerned, I think we are all agreed that that is a good policy- that is, to break up big estates. The majority of the settlements, I believe, have been a success so far ; but, of course, there are some that have not been a success ; in every experiment there must be mistakes. To go into this Bill, it seems to me that it gives to the Minister considerable powers, and it is for the House to consider whether the powers given to the Minister are such powers as should be exercised by him, or whether it would not be opening the door to arbitrary interference on the part of

<page>555</page>

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the Minister, and whether, at any rate, it does not open the door to a large expenditure of money which has not been approved of by the House. It seems to me that clause 4 gives the Minister power to spend money in what he may call the expenses incidental to the administration in the buying of estates over which the House has no control. It is quite possible that we may find various sums put down as amounts necessarily incurred in the administration of the Act, which really do not belong to the Act; and the Auditor-General, when he calls attention to this and objects to it, will probably be met with the opinion of the Solicitor-General- which is always in favour of the Government -- under the Public Revenues Act of last year, and the consequence is that this House will lose control over the expenditure under the Act. In the same way, I think clauses 5 and 6, if strictly enforced, are very arbitrary in their character, and it seems to me that it is quite possible that a great injustice may be done to good settlers. who, for various reasons, do not want to sell their land, and who would be subjected to very great hardship if this clause is strictly carried out. There is one clause I particularly object to, and that is clause 9. I do not think that any set of regulations the Minister or the Governor in Council may set out should have power to override the statute-law. Clause 9 says that the regulations- as to which the members of this House never have a chance of expressing an opinion, and which are only laid on the table of the House later on- - these regulations may modify the provisions of " The Public Works Act, 1894." I do not think it is right that any regulations issued by the Governor in Council should have that power, because regulations are only supposed to be an amplification of the statute-law. And this House should not pass a clause which gives any regulations the power to override the statute-law itself. The statute-law is the law of the land, and the regulations are a sort of exorcism on it. There is at the present time far too much government by regulations, and by the Governor in Council, and it will be only intensifying the evil if we pass this clause, because it will enable the regulations to override the statute-law of the colony. It is simply giving up your powers into the hands of the Governor in Council. Well, to address myself to the general question of

lands for settlement, I am quite in accord with the buying-up of large estates and distributing them among the people ; and. Sir, I think at the same time care should be taken that in districts not congested the settlement of the country should not be retarded on that account. In the north we do not suffer as they do down south from these large estates. We are not congested ; and the greatest sinner in that respect up north is the Crown itself. and what we wish to urge upon the Government is that the Crown should cut up its own estates. In the north we have the Crown estates and the Native estates, and we have the estates of the Assets Board. Those three "social pests " are like a millstone around the neck of settlement up north. I did hope that in this Bill some amendment would be found in order to compel the Assets Board and to compel the Govern- ment and the Natives to cut up their lands just as the Government are compelling private indi- viduals to do. There is not the slightest diffi- culty about it. As far as the Assets Board are concerned, I believe they could sell nearly every acre in their hands. I know of a property close to me that has been bought up by a private in- dividual from the Assets Board. Its area is, I think, about nine thousand acres, and it is known as the Hungahunga Block. The pri- vate speculator who bought it cut it up and sold every acre of it almost before he had paid for it, and yet the Assets Board have been try- ing to sell that ever since they have been placed in charge of the estate. I trust the Premier will bear with me for a while, because I wish to point out that the methods of the Board of which he is a member are not such as are calculated to sell a property. Mr. MEREDITH. -- They do not want to sell. Mr. HERRIES. - That is the general im- pression. For instance, there is another estate called the Locherbie Estate. When the Board wish to sell it they do not go to work in the ordinary way. They do not cut it up and put a price on it. They cut it up and call for ten- ders from individuals, so as to find out what price they will give for each section. Mr. SEDDON .- Is not that what a private individual does ? Mr. HERRIES .-. No. A private individual sets a price at the start. We know that if any one tendered for a section at \$4, the Assets Board would say, " We want £5." And if the tender was \$5, they would want \$6. That is the kind of thing that goes on. If any one wants to buy land from the Assets Board they approach Mr. Foster ; but he does not say what he wants for the land ; he says, " What will you give?" Then, if you name a price he will always say the price is 10s. or €1 above what you have offered. That is the regular system. Take the Karatino part of the Fencourt Estate. They arranged with an auctioneer to cut it up. The farmers were all there ready to buy ; but before the auctioneer commenced the sale a lawyer gets up and reads a whole string of con- ditions. Now. those conditions had never been published previously, and. of course, the farmers say, " We are not going to buy a . pig in a poke.' We have never seen those conditions before." The consequence was that there were very few bids, and only two sections. I believe, were sold. The Government bought that pro- perty ; it was cut up. and, while I must confess it was badly valued, all the good land was sold at once. I want to point out that immediately the Government bought it it was all sold, because you know exactly what you are doing with the Government. You know exactly what you are doing with a private speculator, but you do not know what you are doing with the Assets Board. I speak feelingly on this subject, because I think the bulk of the estates

<page>556</page>

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of the Assets Board are in my electorate. I think there are about 300,000 acres, so far as I can remember, in my electorate, and I am perfectly satisfied that, so far as the Waikato properties are concerned. they could sell 150,000 acres at the present moment, so long as dairy- ing goes on. If the Premier would give me the chance, and if I could go to the bank and borrow a little money, I would not mind specu- lating in one of the estates myself. I am quite satisfied that if I cut it up I could make a nice profit out of it. Now, all these estates, which are blocking the progress of the country, only carry a few sheep and shepherds, and they are chiefly worked by Maori labour-not that I object to Maori labour; but the Premier is always talking about giving the white man a chance, and yet he will find that on his own estates the work is almost

entirely done by Maori labour. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why ? Mr. HERRIES .- Because I believe it is cheap. Then, the Premier will find, notwithstanding the boasted reductions he has made on railway freights, especially for sheep, that every sheep on those estates goes down by water, and is not carried by rail at all, except the short distance to get to the river, and then they go down by special boat. Then, so far as the boasted reduction on wool-freights by railway is concerned, he will find that not a bale of wool from those estates goes down by railway. They can get it carried cheaper the other way ; but, when the Premier boasts about the reductions he has made, he should look at his own estates, and he will see that they are not using the railway at all. Mr. SEDDON .- Perhaps the railways do not like our price. Mr. HERRIES .- There should be no difference of price. The price should be the same for the small settler as it should be for the big Assets Board-the big Assets Board should have no right to a reduction that the smaller settlers of the country could not get. I say that so long as the Assets Board conduct their sales in that way they will never get rid of the estates, and the conviction begins to grow that they do not want to sell. Now, I should like to have thought that in this Bill there would be a remedy for this, and I am not sure that when in Committee it will not be possible to produce a clause to compel the Assets Board to sell at a certain price, in the same way as private individuals are compelled to. Then, coming to the question of Native lands, all round the north these Native lands are held, and, as every one knows, we passed an Act last session to enable these Native lands to be sold. But has a single acre ever been sold yet under this new Act ? No ; because the new Act has not yet come into operation. For some reason, of which I know nothing, this Act which was going to benefit the Maoris, and which was going to enable the settlers to take up land, has not yet come into operation. The consequence is that every acre of Native land and every transaction in Native land are hung up until this Act comes into operation. Why it Mr. Herries is not in operation I do not know-the Government, no doubt, will explain ; but in the meantime the settlement of Native lands is retarded, and settlers who are wanting land cannot get it. But all the while the Government says, adopting the Maori policy, " Taihoa, wait a bit, and then you will see what you will see." The consequence of this is that a lot of the land is going back in briar and gorse, and settlers do not get any benefit from the Native lands. Then, take the Crown lands -- take the district I represent, the Bay of Plenty : there is any amount of good Crown lands there, but it has never been cut up, and there has never been an opportunity given to settlers to go on it. Mr. SYMES .- The Land Board will not part with it. Mr. HERRIES .- Well, I do not know about that : but at the same time I think the Land Board wants stirring up as much as the Assets Board. I believe they have got large tracts of land if they would only induce settlers to go on them, and these inducements should be the same as those given in the land-for-settlements policy. I should like to say a few words about the alleged success of the whole policy. The alleged success is partly due to putting in the newspapers. Every one knows that when an estate is cut up it is stated in the papers that the policy is such a success because there have been a hundred or so applications for each section. But every one knows that these applications are like going into "Tattersall's " sweep : the people do not want the land ; all they want is to get a section and then transfer it and make a few pounds out of it. That is all this earth-hunger and rush for land amounts to-it is ad speculation. There are, of course, some settlers who want land : but what chance have they amongst all the speculators? I know people who have tried ten or a dozen times to get land -genuine settlers- - and who have been unable to get a chance at the ballot owing to the speculators who come from the towns, and who would be only too sorry if they were obliged to go on the soil. They do not want the land ; they merely want to transfer it. And this sort of thing is going on day after day in connection with every block of land that has been thrown open. Mr. SEDDON .- Wait till the Bill comes out of Committee. Mr. HERRIES .- Well, if the Premier will agree to the insertion of certain clauses he will have the support of every one who is desirous of settling the land. Mr. SEDDON. I only hope I shall have the assistance of every honourable member in endeavouring to stop dummyism. Mr. HERRIES .- I can assure the Premier that

every country member will support him in any arrangement of that kind, because we see how detrimental it is to the settlement of the land. It will only make our party the stronger, -the country party in the House ; the more the land is settled the stronger we shall be. and the Farmers' Union will be a power in the land. And I am very sorry to see there is no provision in the Bill for some means of enabling settlers

<page>557</page>

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to get the freehold. That has got to come ; sooner or later the Premier will have to face the question of the freehold, and the sooner he does it the better. It seems to me it is only a question of five or six years before we get the freehold. Mr. SEDDON. - You will get revaluation before you get the freehold. Mr. HERRIES .- Well, I am quite prepared to vote for the revaluation as well, because it is a step towards the freehold. But the Premier must know that sooner or later all settlers will get the freehold. The exigences of party politics in a democratic country, where every settler has a vote, will necessitate it; every settler wishes to reduce his rent, and all farmers will have to bring pressure to bear to get their rents reduced. Captain RUSSELL .- Revaluation will put their rents up. Mr. HERRIES. - But perhaps party pressure will see that the rents are reduced. We had last session a Bill introduced giving 10 per cent. reduction whenever rents are paid promptly. and if the Premier wants to introduce it again I will support him. An Hon. MEMBER .- But he did not get it. Mr. HERRIES .- No, because the Premier had no backbone ; he gave in to a small section of his own supporters, and very improperly, I think. We were quite prepared to back him up, and then we should have had a reduction throughout the colony. At present it is enjoyed in only one favoured portion-in Canterbury. In all the rest of the colony-in the North Island and in Otago-the Act is of no use to the settlers. Mr. SEDDON .- We will have it again this session. Mr. HERRIES .- I hope so; any support I can give him in stonewalling against his own supporters he shall have. Anyhow, it 11.30. is only the thin end of the wedge. If you give 10 per cent., why not 20 or 40 per cent. If the Premier would only look to the future he will see of necessity that what is going to happen is that as these settlers get more powerful their interests will become so large that they must get their rents reduced to a vanishing-point, and then they will get the freehold. Therefore I say that it would be far better to put a clause in the Bill by which these settlers could get their freehold if they paid for it. I do trust that the Premier will agree to the clause giving settlers the freehold. It would be a great benefit to the settler and to the country, and it would solve this difficulty, which is bound to crop up within the next two or three years whatever Government is in power. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka). Sir, the few remarks I have to make on this Bill will be in reference to clause 8. As clause 8 stands at present I am certainly bound to oppose it. All through my electorate people have been begging for land during the time I have been in Parliament, and if this clause is passed as it stands at present it completely debars them from taking advantage of the opportunity of getting land. I idea of. I think the Premier would act wisely And, again, any people from other colonies who might be married men would be able to answer the question " Are you a married man ?" in the affirmative, and they would get the land, while the sons of our own settlers, the sons of those who have worked hard to lay the foundation of the colony, would be bound to stand aside if not married, and anything that puts them in that position is, in my opinion, iniquitous. It would also be the means of driving our young men and women into the towns. That is the tendency at the present time. If any one will look at the parliamentary records they will see that there are between two and three thousand applications from young men and young women to join the Postal and Railway Departments alone. They are seeking employment in the Government service, and will not take service in the country, simply because wages are higher in the towns than in the country. Last year I wanted to get some land opened up in the Matakau district, and the Minister of Lands promised to visit the district, but he was apparently unable to do so. as he had to devote nearly all his time to the North Island. If he could have spared the time to go there he would have found a large number of young men who were anxious to get

married, and who were engaged to get married. If he had gone there he would have met a deputation who would have pointed out to him their views on the subject. I hope he will be able to visit the district on an early occasion and see the state of things in regard to the want of land for settlement for himself. The same remarks apply to the Tuapeka district. There are some settlers there with very large families. Some of them have ten or eleven daughters of marriageable age, and no doubt they want to get them into double harness, but they are not prepared to undertake the responsibilities of married life until they can get a home of their own. Now, this Bill says to them, " You will have to look elsewhere for that home; you cannot get it here." Then, again, these young men and women are responsible for the mortgage on the lands the Government have taken up, and they have been contributing to the capital cost of such lands through the Customs just as much as the married people ; but this Bill will allow people to come here from foreign parts, and it gives the preference to them. I think, Sir, these are matters that should be considered. The Premier could not do better, to my mind, than take measures to prevent these bad effects. This particular Act has done a great deal of good for the colony, and it is a pity now that any steps at all should be taken that will result in the undoing of the benefits so far received. I hope the measure will not pass in its present form, and when it is in Committee I shall do what I can to improve it. Section 9 certainly wants alteration. It is not right that such a power as is contained in that section should be put into the hands of the Crown, and it should not be allowed by this House, because it would put the colony in a position that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill has really no

<page>558</page>

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if he withdrew that section. As for the rest of the Bill, I think no exception can be taken to it. Mr. NAPIER (Auckland City) .- Sir, I desire to make a few observations on the measure now before the House. It has been suggested that this is a Bill with which country members are mainly concerned. Sir, I take exception to that statement, because if land-settlement does not progress in the country the towns and the large cities must necessarily wither and decay. Therefore the city members are just as anxious to see proper settlement going on in the coun- try as any representative from the country dis- tricts may be. I regard the Bill as an attempt, though it will have to be followed by more stringent measures, to suppress the evil of dummyism, which I know is rampant through- out the country, and is certainly in the pro- vince from which I come. I have personal knowledge of the fact that bona fide settlers have been for several years kept off the land through the fictitious system of ballot at pre- sent prevailing-the putting-in of applications by those who do not intend to bona fide occupy the land. The chances of the legitimate appli- cant are very small indeed under the existing system. I should like to see a provision introduced that no sale of a lessee's interest could take place until after the lapse of a certain fixed period -- say, five years from the date he had entered into possession of the land. I will give an instance to the House of land-speculation in connection with leases in perpetuity in the northern Wairoa. There was a block of land there called the Tokatoka Swamp, which was settled by the Government some time ago. The land has so gone up in value that leaseholds that were considered by the Lands Department to be worth nothing but the fixed rent a few years ago have recently brought as much as \$1,100 for the good-will of single sections of about two hundred acres. The sections have brought \$1,100 for the good-will after four years of occupation. That is to say, an unearned increment of \$200 or \$250 per annum has been added to those lands. Mr. MONK .- It was a fancy price. Mr. NAPIER -It may be a fancy price. I would regret very much if it were characteristic of the whole of the settled land. At the same time it is a symptom ; and what is the conse- quence ? That there has been an amount of speculation in the Tokatoka Swamp lands that has almost been as bad as gambling in mining shares. Now, Sir, the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty insisted that the Go- vernment must inevitably give way and re- introduce the freehold system of land-tenure. I do not think the people of this country will ever again approve of a reversion to the frechold

system for the settlement of the remaining Crown lands. I have in my hand at the present moment a communication from a gentleman well acquainted with the Waikato district. who tells me that there are hundreds of young men in that district-the sons of old settlers who are anxious to get land, and who have not succeeded in getting any of the free_ Mr. Bennet hold land which was lately cut up and offered for sale for cash by the Assets Board. They could not purchase the land because the whole of their capital would be absorbed in paying for the fee-simple. And he tells me in this letter that if that same land, or other blocks in the vicinity which are now in the occupation of the Assets Board, were put up under the leave-in- perpetuity system or the perpetual-lease system, all those young men would immediately become settlers and proceed to stock the land. The freehold system, applied as it has been in selling the national heritage, has been the curse of New Zealand; it has been a millstone round the neck of many of the settlers from the day they It has enabled entered upon their holdings. the money-lender and the usurer to fatten upon the exertions of the small settlers. An Hon. MEMBER .-. And the lawyer. Mr. NAPIER. - Yes, and the lawyers. in many cases. I could give you instances also of that fact. Settlers have often been kept under by high interest and charges for repeated mort- gages. The Government Advances to Settlers Act has now put an end to that. I say that the settlers of the country are a class we should strive to protect, for the State practically rests on the shoulders of the producers, and our legislation should be directed to aid in every legitimate way the producer, the man on the soil, without whom there can be no national growth. I hope there will be no attempt made to reintroduce the 10-per-cent. reduction to Crown tenants Bill. I regard that measure as a most vicious one. It will tend to accomplish the very purpose that my honourable friend who represents the Bay of Plenty wishes, and to stultify the land policy of the Liberal party, because when you give away one-tenth of the freehold of the land without consideration there is no logical reason why you may not similarly give away ten-tenths. I trust that those people who have received a large unearned increment on their sections will not again re- ceive a 10-per-cent. reduction of the rents they contracted to pay. I think that in legisin- tion affecting land, as in legislation affecting other matters, we should endeavour to adhere as closely as possible to fixed principles of some kind. We all know, of course, that politics consists of a series of compromises, and that it is impossible to have a really logical Act of Parliament : but at the same time we ought not to entirely lose sight of or discard principle. but by introducing a 10-per cent. reduction to Crown tenants we are violating a cardinal prin- ciple of Liberal policy. Though I do not approve i generally of a very large extension of the pur- chase of cultivated lands until the lands in the hands of the Government in the King.country and in other parts of the North are settled. yet at the same time there are exceptions where the operation of the Act would result in a large and immediate gain to the country. I do not think it is to the interest of the country, for instance. that an immense block of land -- because I regard the lands to which I refer as one block- con-ist- ing of 238,556 acres, should be practically in the hands of one proprietary-that is to say, should

<page>559</page>

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be in the hands of the Assets Board. In the Provincial District of Auckland there are the following estates, which might support hundreds of thriving families, which are now, I may say. only semi-cultivated-if even that can be said of them-in the hands of the Assets Board :- Area in Acres. Lockerbie .. 21,700 Matamata. . 55,016 Paparamu .. 7,073 Okoroire and Tirau .. 16,294 Mangapouri 2,728 Paeroa 8,728 Richmond Downs 12,498 Okauia 7,719 Waitoa 22,924 . . Bay of Plenty District- Ohauiti .. 6,547 . . Rangiuru 6,746 4,850 Waimana .. Maraetai .. 59,164 Waotu 319 Waotu 1,988 . . Matanuku .. 252 . . Maukoro .. 2,680 1,330 Maungatapu Total .. 238,556 Mr. HERRIES .- Rangiuru is sold. Mr. NAPIER .- Oh, indeed. I think only a portion of it was sold up to a few days ago. Of that large area of land there are 65.733 acres absolutely lying dormant, upon which there is

no fencing, no draining or grassing being done by the Board. An Hon. MEMBER .- Is the land not in occupation ? Mr NAPIER .- Only in the occupation of the Board-good fertile land, most of it. I have a report here from a competent gentleman about the quality of the various estates, and he says that most of the land is well adapted for settlement. With regard to Lockerbie, he tells me. " About 5,000 acres of this property is very suitable for close settlement." With regard to Matamata, he says, " Practically the whole of the land is suitable for farms of from 200 acres up to 500 acres." He speaks similarly of Paparamu, Okoroire, Mangapouri, Paeroa, Richmond Downs, Okauia, and Waitoa. The other blocks are good dairying land. Now, I would express a hope that the Government will use greater expedition in securing the settlement of these lands. This is practically dead land. There is no energy displayed in the management ; the overseers have no interest in developing the properties, or in the way of increasing settlement, or of carrying out improvements. All their endeavour is to remain in possession, and, if possible, to pay something towards interest. But the system of allowing this land to remain in the hands of a Board the members of which are to get salaries so long as the land is unsold is, I think, a most pernicious one. It would possibly be better if arrangements were made by legislation to vest the necessary power to deal with these lands in the Land Board of the district in which they are situated. I admit, as an honourable member has suggested, that the mode of appointment to the Land Boards leaves something to be desired. I think it would be better if the Land Boards were elective and in touch with public opinion. Greater energy would then be shown in the settlement of the country. It has been suggested in the debate that the time would soon arrive when there would be a revaluation of the lands held under the lease-in-perpetuity system. Well, Sir, I am in favour of the principle of the perpetual lease, and I have always been opposed to the system of lease in perpetuity ; but I hold it would be a breach of public faith with the lessees who have taken up land under that system to subject their properties to periodical revaluation. An Hon. MEMBER .- It would be confiscation. Mr. NAPIER. -- It would be just as wrong to revalue it without compensation as to take freehold land without compensation. It was a bad system to introduce, but we understood from Sir John Mckenzie, who was responsible for the Act, that, while he was not actually in favour of the system, it was really the only compromise that could be effected at the time in order to get a measure through Parliament to prevent dummyism. In future let the country be settled under the perpetual-lease system ; but where the State has entered into contracts, where the public faith has been pledged, it would be dishonourable, it would be a violation of the elementary principles of fair dealing, to revalue those lands. But, it may be said, how are you to get any contribution for the State out of the unearned increment of such lands ? I answer that the land-tax can legitimately be assessed on the unearned increment of leases in perpetuity, just as in the case of freeholds. The State can legitimately impose a land-tax upon the unearned increment of the land held by leases in perpetuity. Mr. J. ALLEN .- It would be as much a breach of faith as the other. Mr. NAPIER. - I submit not. The land-tax is a general tax imposed upon the unimproved value of all private lands in the colony, and it does not, therefore, violate any contract. Mr. J. ALLEN. It violates a contract made with the lease-in-perpetuity holders. Mr. NAPIER .- There is not a single syllable in the leases in perpetuity which says that lands held under that tenure shall not be taxed under the ordinary taxation system of the colony. The honourable member's objection thus in no way applies to the taxation under the general law of the unearned increment of the leases in perpetuity. I would point out, with regard to the properties to which I have referred, that most of them are near constructed railways -- in fact, the whole of them, with only two or three exceptions, are connected with existing railways by excellent roads, which in nearly all cases are macadamised. Hence, all you have to do is to put your people on the land, for you have the estates, you have the railways, and you have the roads. Moreover, the lands are nearly all in grass, and are eminently suitable for

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close settlement. That is the information I | colony, irrespective of the fact that we represent Besides, if the lands were have received. settled there would be an immediate increase in the producing-power and the wealth of the country, because stock could at once be put on them, and a speedy return in produce be obtained. As an illustration of the success that has attended the taking-over of estates in the vicinity of these lands by the Government, I would mention the case of Fencourt, which is land of similar quality to those referred to, and was in the hands of the Assets Board. I think Fencourt contains about twenty thousand acres. It is near Cambridge. Mr. BOLLARD .- Twenty-three thousand acres. Mr. NAPIER .- That land was taken up at once after it was subdivided. Mr. BOLLARD .- Not the whole of it. Mr. NAPIER .-- Practically the whole of it. There is very little left, and when it was first thrown open for settlement the number of bond fide applicants-those living in the vicinity of Cambridge-was larger than could be supplied with sections. If, therefore, we wish to increase the country population, -and there is no one who believes in the necessity for that more than I do, as a city member,-as I have said, I recognise that the growth and prosperity of the City of Auckland depends on the success and settlement of the Waikato and the surrounding districts. If it be a good thing to people the land, I trust that the Minister of Lands will infuse a little greater vigour into his department now that he has got fairly in the saddle, and that during the coming year we shall see a strenuous effort made to settle those lands of which I have spoken. I shall do all I can to support the Government in this great work, and I do not think the Govern- ment have anything to fear, either as to their own position or that of the Liberal party, from the progress of close settlement of the land. The vast majority of the smaller settlers are behind the Liberal party, and they recognise the great work of this party. Therefore, to my mind, the facetious suggestion of the honour- able member for the Bay of Plenty that the Government were faltering in the land-settle- ment policy because they knew that the country settlers were supporters of the country party, as he termed it, had nothing in it. regret that any honourable member should have referred to a country party as existing in the House. I do not think there is any such thing, nor do I think there is a city party. But we have seen an attempt on the part of the gentle- men opposite to form a country party to secure the support of the country electorates by mis- representing the aims and objects of the Liberal party, and alleging that it was dominated by the Labour party and the people of the cities. But I may say, speaking as a city member, that I have no desire, and I do not think that the city members of the colony have any desire, to subordinate the interests of the country to those of the cities. We ought all to work together as a united body for the prosperity of our entire urban or rural constituencies. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City). - Honour- able members, I fear, when they see me rise. will be reminded of the heading so often seen to the psalms, and they will probably say to themselves, " Here is 'another of the same.'" I always feel a certain amount of uneasiness in speaking to a question affecting land, because the honourable member for Hawke's Bay and some of the honourable members on the other side regard members from the city as if they were a sort of poachers on their preserves. I have heard it argued by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that men returned by city constituencies cannot be expected to know much about the land question. But to that there are a great many answers indeed. In the first place, it is quite possible for a member, although he may have been returned by a city constituency, to have a knowledge of country work. I can only say, as far as I myself am concerned, that I spent a great many years of my life in the country, and know something at least of farming operations and the way in which land is worked. Again, there is ako this to be said: that it does not follow that the economie aspect of the land question cannot be dealt with by one who is not a practical farmer. The ablest authorities and the greatest writers on the subject of land and its disposition are not practical farmers. Men like Dr. Wallace and J. S. Mill, who are recognised authorities all the world over, are not and were not actual farmers. The fallacy of the argument may be seen by an illustration. The honour- able gentleman and those who think with him might as well argue that no one

ought to say anything whatever about the management of our railways except the porters and guards and engine-drivers. The fallacy of the argument is clearly seen by an illustration of that kind. There has been much criticism of the administration of the land policy and administration in this country, and some complaints have been made of the Government. but I think the greatest danger and the source of complaint of the most serious character is the way in which the fee-simple of our land is slipping from the hands of the people. It is, I think, an impression that is widely spread abroad that we are keeping the fee-simple of the land in our own hands as far as possible. Looking at the figures, it seems to me that that is an entire delusion. I find that for many years past the land has been disposed of mainly in three ways-namely, land sold for cash. of which last year there were 23,936 acres : disposed of on occupation-with-right-of-purchase system, of which last year there were 117,771 acres: disposed of under the lease-in-perpetuity system. of which last year there were 153,531 acres. Under the perpetual-lease system only 624 acres were disposed of last year : and under special-settlement improved farms only 7,393 acres. In fact, the amount disposed of under every other system is infinitesimal compared with that parted with under the lease-in-perpetuity system. Of course, the cash system

<page>561</page>

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means the fee-simple, and occupation with right of purchase is also practically the fee-simple. The lease-in-perpetuity system is practically better than the fee-simple, and as an authority for that statement I will quote the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who used these words on the second reading of the Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Bill last year : - " When we granted the lease in perpetuity it was supposed to be not only a qualified freehold but something better than the freehold." I believe that is quite right. Honourable members know that the disposing of land in fee-simple and the holding of the land in fee-simple has been condemned, and the evils have been pointed out time out of number -- more particularly of recent years. The system has resulted in England in this: that one two-hundredth part of the population are the owners of the whole of the land of England-that is to say, the other hundred and ninety-nine two-hundredths of the population practically exist on the sufferance of the other two-hundredth part. Every kind of evil-millionaires and pauperism -every kind of suffering and trouble, has been traced to the ownership of the fee-simple in land : and I believe it should be a plank in the platform of every true Liberal in this country that we should not allow to be reproduced in this country on any consideration whatever the system of land-tenure which has brought about the state of things that exists in the Old World. Now, it is hardly necessary to point out that the land will in all probability rise in value in this country, and the holder of a lease in perpetuity, who gets his land at 4} or 5 per cent. on the capital value of the land, in the course of a few years will have a property immensely increased in value. As has been said by the honourable member for Waihemo, it may be that there is a mild land-boom just now, and prices may be somewhat higher than they ought to be; but I would again refer to the testimony of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in the same speech I quoted from before. He says : "There can be no doubt in the mind of any person who has lived in the country but that the value of land will persistently rise." Now, if the value of land will persistently rise, we are simply giving our birthright away -we are giving away the only asset this country possesses to a privileged few, under this lease-in-perpetuity system, and the result will be that by-and-by, when we come to look for our national assets and our wealth, we shall find them in the hands of a privileged few, and we shall bitterly and deeply regret the day when such a system became general in this country. I have said before, and there are many who think with me, that the best system of land-tenure is that of periodical revaluation. It cannot be said that there is any practical difficulty about such a system, because it is a matter of common private arrangement --- an arrangement we see every day in force by virtue of mutual agreement. The Glasgow leases or perpetual leases are quite usual in the city I come from, and I dare say they are perfectly the

colony; and if it is a system which com- mends itself actually to private persons as & matter of bargain between themselves for their own mutual advantage, what possible objection can there be to such a system being adopted by the State as between itself and the cul- tivor of the ground. Now, something has been said about workmen's homes. Well, I do not think it will be of very much use merely getting land for those homes. I do not think it will be of very much use offering a workman a certain piece of land and saying, "There is a section of land for you at such-and- such a rent : Do what you like with it." He has got to build a house, and he cannot always do that. What I say is this: that, as far as the cities are concerned, at all events, I think the Government should simply build the houses, and then they ought to let them to these tenants like any other landlord. An Hon. MEMBER .- Furnish them as well ? Mr. BARCLAY .- No; I do not think that it is necessary to furnish them ; but I say this : What reason is there, if other landlords find it a very profitable thing to build houses, why the State should not do so ? An Hon. MEMBER. - The London County Council does it. Mr. BARCLAY .- Yes ; and it is done all over England. The Borough of West Ham provides a very striking case : they have an enormous number of houses which they have built and let to people. There is no earthly reason, if private people who have to pay a long price for the land find it profitable to build houses for tenants, why the State, which simply desires to allow workmen to have the use of these houses at a rent which will cover interest on the cost of the land and construction, should not do so. It seems to me that that is the way in which it will have to be carried out. I regretted to hear the honourable member for Waihemo utter what seems to me a fatal and vicious fallacy in connection with the question of fixing rent for land. The honourable member's theory was that if the land costs so much to buy, then, so long as we get from the tenant interest at 3, or 4, or 5 per cent., or whatever it might be, on the capital which was spent in purchasing the land, we ought not to ask anything more- that ought to be sufficient. Now, I say this is a fatal and vicious principle, because it has the same effect as the lease-in-perpetuity system. If the capital value of the land always will be what it is now-if it did not increase at all-it is true there might be no objection to that principle; but, if the value of the land in- creases, of course it is a false basis on which to fix the rent. An Hon. MEMBER .- What clause of the Bill are you dealing with ? Mr. BARCLAY .- I am not aware what par- ticular clause in the Bill the honourable member for Waihemo was referring to, but as he gave utterance unchecked to this vicious fallacy I consider it my duty to refute it in the most thorough manner possible. If the capital value of land increases, I say that the basis of rent

<page>562</page>

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less the cost of living to the cultivator and a ! fair return to him for his labour and exertions and cash invested. Before I sit down I might put in a word wi h regard to a portion of my own province. In Central Otago, so far as I am aware, little or nothing whatever has been done by the Government in the way of cutting up estates or taking land under the Land for Settlements Act. Now, I admit that in Central Otago part of the land is certainly not suitable for agricultural purposes, but, on the other hand, there is some land, and a con- siderable portion too, that is suitable for settle- ment purposes. For instance, there is a run called Patearoa which is suitable for cutting up, and I should like to see the attention of the Government directed towards it, with a view to taking it over and subdividing it under this Act. Now, I do not think that I shall detain the House any longer. It was said of a famous Roman once that he always wound up his speeches by saying, "Carthage must be destroyed "; and all the speeches I make on the land question I feel inclined to wind up by saying that "the fee-simple and any tenure resembling it must be deleted from the statute- book, and from the land system of this country." Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) .- Sir, I under- stood the House was discussing the second reading of a short amendment of the Land for Settlements Consolidation Act of last session, but, since hearing the speech of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, I am not sure what we are discussing. I am afraid, so far as he is concerned, we

are discussing any- thing and everything except the Bill before the House. Mr. BARCLAY .- All have done the same. Mr. GRAHAM .- The honourable gentleman says, " All have done the same," consequently he has followed suit. It appears to me a general discussion of the land-settlement of the colony would be more appropriate to a debate on the Financial Statement, when the whole question of the administration of the Government is before the House. We appear to lose sight of the special provisions of the proposed amendments in the Bill that is before us by becoming involved in a general discussion. The Premier himself was not very clear, to my mind, in his explanation of some of the clauses of this Bill. Perhaps he did not mean to be ; perhaps it was his policy not to be any clearer than would be necessary to effect his purpose ; and I am sure many members of the House have not tended to make more clear by their speeches those portions of the Bill which the Premier failed in making clear himself. The few remarks I shall make will be strictly in reference to the provisions of the clauses in the Bill now before the House. I do not intend to discuss the general policy of land for settlements. The Bill is a short one of six or seven operative clauses, and I am going to look at what appears to be its intention and objection-how far it appears to be justifiable and desirable in the interests of the people. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay complained-and, I think, justly - when he spoke upon the Bill, that it had not been in the hands of members long enough to enable them to study the questions it dealt with. That may have led the honourable gentleman perhaps into an error when he stated that under the Bill he believed if a person who owned property left the colony on a visit to Australia for a month he might come back and find himself dispossessed of his property. Captain RUSSELL. - Hear, hear. Mr. GRAHAM .- I think that is wrong. Captain RUSSELL .- Oh, no. Mr. GRAHAM. - I think the honourable gentleman is wrong ; but if I am mistaken in making the statement I hope the Premier, who ought to be possessed of special knowledge, will correct me. If the honourable member for Hawke's Bay is right, I think it would be a disgrace to the colony that such a thing should be possible. I do not think, however, that such a result is possible under the present Act. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) .-- WID the honourable gentleman allow me for half a moment ? As I understand the Act, the very moment the Gazette proclamation is published the estate passes from the individual to the Government. Mr. GRAHAM .- I feel convinced such is not the legal effect of this Bill, and I will give my views with regard to absence from the colony when I come to the clause dealing with it. Clause 2 of the Bill is permissive, and provides that lessees prior to the passing of the Act of 1896 may come under the conditions that have been mandatory since then. Clause 54 of last year's consolidating Act is simply a re- enactment of clause 7 of the Act of 1896. In clause 54 it states, -- " In every case where buildings are situated on the land at the time when it is to be disposed of by way of lease, then, notwithstanding any thing to the contrary contained in this Act. the Minister shall cause the buildings . to be valued separately from the land, and the rental shall be computed on the capital value of the land apart from the buildings.' The next subsection goes on to state that. -- " The value of the buildings shall, together with interest thereon at the rate of five per centum per annum, be paid by the lessee by equal half-yearly instalments in advance." et cetera. That was a provision made so that tenants should purchase any improvements on the properties right out. That has been the law since 1896, and clause 2 of this Bill is a permissive clause which makes it optional for lessees prior to 1896 to come under conditions which have been mandatory since that time. Clause 3 extends the Minister's power of making improvements on lands purchased, prior to disposal for settlement. This appears to me a power that is necessary in some cases. Clause 65 of the Consolidating Act of last session provides as follows : - " For the purpose of utilising and developing land acquired under this Act and preparing it for settlement the following special provisions shall apply :-

<page>563</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=591></url>

" As soon as practicable after any estate has been acquired the Minister shall, where necessary. cause

it to be surveyed, classed, and sub ■ colony, were repealed, and if instead there was divided, and may lay off such roads and set aside such reserves as he thinks expedient." It appears evident it has been found that that section is not extensive enough. This Bill provides that the Minister's power shall be extended. " To construct roads, bridges, drainage-works and river - protection works, and such other . regard to the forty-two days and 150 days works upon or in respect of land acquired under the principal Act as the Minister thinks expedient in order to facilitate the proper settlement of the land or to protect it from injury from floods, river encroachment, or otherwise." Now. I think it is quite right that, in the case of any property acquired by the Government for settlement, they should be able to take such steps as may be necessary to construct roads and necessary protective works; and if the clause in the Consolidation Act of last session does not give them the power which is necessary, then it is only right they should obtain it. With reference to the statement of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, that an owner absent from the colony for twenty-one days might come back and find his property taken from him, I take it that the provision in clause 5 of this Bill is in addition to, and not in substitution of. the provisions in section 15 of last session's Consolidation Act, which provides that notice of intention to take the land must be gazetted. It also provides that notice must be given to the owner of the property proposed to be taken within twenty one days of gazetting, and notice must be given by the owner of his claim for compensation within forty two days of the gazetting, if he is within the colony ; and if he is outside the Colony of New Zealand, then he has a hundred and fifty days in which to make his claim. An Hon. MEMBER .- That is repealed altogether. Mr. GRAHAM .- Where is it repealed in this Bill? That is where we differ on the question. My opinion is that it is not repealed, because this Bill, in clause 5, says, "In any proceedings under section fifteen of the principal Act for the compulsory taking of land the claimant shall, not later than twenty-one days after service of the claim for compensation." He has to make his claim for compensation within forty-two days of the gazetting if he is in the colony, and he has to make it within 150 days if he is without the colony. This Bill says, " not later than twenty-one days after the service of the claim for compensation." Therefore, if the owner is outside the colony, and does not know anything about the notice, and has not made his claim for compensation, he has five months' time in which to make it. I hope the Minister will make this perfectly clear when he replies or in Committee. If I am wrong, then I can be corrected ; but my reading of the Bill is that the period of twenty-one days given by section 5 is absolutely in addition to that given in the principal Act. It would be an atrocious thing if the present law, which gives a man forty-two days if he is within the colony or 150 days if beyond the an arbitrary provision made that, no matter what part of the world a man might be in. in his absence his property could be taken from him. Captain RUSSELL .- Read subsection (3) of that clause 5. Mr. GRAHAM .- I suppose the honourable gentleman does not doubt my statement with which are set out in the Consolidation Act ? Captain RUSSELL. - I am afraid that it would take too long to explain. Mr. GRAHAM .- Very well, I will show the honourable gentleman that it is so. Clause 15 of the Act of 1900 says, - " Whenever it is intended to take land compulsorily under this Act the Minister shall cause notice of such intention to be gazetted." Clause 16 says, - " Within twenty-one days after the gazetting of the requisition the Minister shall serve the same on the owner of the land to be taken, and also on every person who, so far as is known to the Minister, has any estate or interest therein." Section 17 says,- "Not later than forty-two days after the gazetting of the requisition in the case of a claimant who at the time of the gazetting was in New Zealand, or one hundred and fifty days in any other case, each claimant shall serve on the Minister a claim in the prescribed form setting forth, with all such plans, descriptions, and particulars as the circumstances may require," et cetera. He has therefore, it is quite clear, 150 days if he is out of the colony in which to make his claim for compensation. Then, in the Bill now under discussion it says distinctly that in any proceedings under section 15 of the principal Act the claimant shall, not later than twenty. one days after service of the claim for compensation, file in the Supreme

Court a copy of his claim. I therefore contend that it is quite clear this clause does not in any way repeal or abrogate the provisions of the main Act. Subsection (3), to which the honourable member for Hawke's Bay referred me, makes provision in case the claimant or the Minister fail in appointing an Assessor. It says :- " If the claimant makes default in making or serving his claim, or if the claimant or the Minister makes default in appointing an Assessor, or in doing any other act, matter, or thing by the principal Act or by this Act required or directed to be done, then, on summary application in that behalf by the party not in default, the Chief Justice may, on such terms as to costs and otherwise as he thinks fit, appoint an Assessor, or give such directions and make such orders as in his opinion are necessary or expedient to enable the claim to be heard and determined by the Compensation Court." A remedy is therefore given by putting the matter into the hands of the Chief Justice to do what either or both of the parties have neglected to do.

<page>564</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=592></url>

Captain RUSSELL .- Within twenty days. Mr. GRAHAM .- I do not think so. I do not agree with the honourable member in his reading of the clause ; but I hope the Premier will make it perfectly clear, because he is in a position that neither the member for Hawke's Bay nor He knows what are the objects myself are in. desired by the Bill, and he has in addition the advice of the Law Officers who have drawn up the Bill as to what it really means, which is an advantage we do not possess. Captain RUSSELL .- Might I be allowed to say that the Premier, in opening, stated that the object was to avoid similar delays to that caused by serving the owner of Hatuma in Europe. Mr. GRAHAM .- Well, I hope the Premier will make clear what is meant ; and, should it differ from my interpretation, I shall support the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, if necessary, in getting that provision altered. With reference to clause 6 of the Bill, it seems to me to be a very arbitrary provision. It says that in order to prevent any evasion or avoidance of the main Act the area of the estate shall be computed as at the commencement of the negotiations for the purchase. Sir, I know of properties held by owners who have considerable families of sons and daughters who are assisting them. If these properties were cut up and divided amongst the different members of the families in equal shares, none of them would have the amount fairly allowable to them by law. A parent does not necessarily cut up his property and divide it among his children while he is with them. The sons work together on the farm with their parent. They all work in common, well understanding that it is the intention of their parent to divide that farm among them when the time comes that he shall be with them no more. Now, if the object of the Government is to settle people on the land, I cannot conceive for the life of me why the sons of a settler who has worked and struggled perhaps for a lifetime to clear and improve a property -- that if divided among his family, would give them perhaps not so much as the law would allow them to take, -- should have that land peremptorily taken from them to be divided among other people, while those who have struggled for years upon it are to be rendered landless for the benefit of others who had made no struggle at all. object to that. Sir, and I shall join with members of the House who will support an alteration of such a provision. A parent may have no desire or necessity to divide his property among his children while he is alive: but if this Bill comes into operation, and notice is given to a man such as I have described that his land is to be taken from him for subdivision, I want to know why the owner should not have the chance of dividing that place, which he has worked for perhaps all his lifetime, between his own sons and daughters? He should have the right to do so. This would be a most arbitrary provision, Sir, and I shall oppose it. With reference to clause 7 of the Bill, which makes provision for land being purchased at auction, I see no objection to it, with the proviso, which says : " Provided that the purchase-money shall not in any case exceed the amount recommended by the Board." With reference to clause 8, I think it requires material amendment. It adds something new to our land legislation. It is more than an amendment of the consolidating measure of last year. It is a new

proposal. It says, - "In disposing of land by way of lease the Board shall, unless directed to the contrary by the Minister, give preference to married men with families, provided they are landless." Now, the section does not even say they have to be married men with families, who have resided in the colony, and who have been a benefit to the colony. A married man with a family may come into the colony, and he is at once to have priority over men who have laboured here for perhaps a lifetime. How does the Premier reconcile that with his statements that the young men who have come back from South Africa are to be given every preference to go on the land, and opportunities and preferences in many other ways ? Most of these are single men, and they are to be precluded - 12.30. actually precluded-by this Bill from having an opportunity of going upon the land. And why should the Land Board, a body of men responsible for this work and appointed to do it, why should they be compelled to give the preference in every case and under all circumstances to married men unless directed to the contrary by the Minister ? That is surely putting an arbitrary and despotic power into the hands of one man, and it leaves him able to give favours to those whom he desires to give them to. As to the Land Boards. the Bill prohibits them from allowing any single man, no matter under what circumstances, from going upon the land ; but all he has to do is to get the Minister to help him, and then the Land Board may be directed, notwithstanding that the applicant may not be married. Mr. SEDDON .- Where do you get that from ? Mr. GRAHAM .- It is in this Bill. which says, " In disposing of land the Board - has 1. unless directed to the contrary by the Minister. give preference to married men." Am I to understand from the Minister's interjection that he does not know what is in this Bill? He asks me where I get that from, and here it is in so many words. An Hon. MEMBER .- He knows all about it. Mr. GRAHAM. - I am reminded by an honourable member that the Premier is not quite so simple as he looks, that this is pure bluff ; he knows all about it, and he does not want members to know more than they can discover for themselves. There have been next speeches on the general question of land-settlement, and that is the sort of speech the Premier likes : he does not like speeches that dissect the clauses of the Bill. I suppose the honourable member is now satisfied that if the Minister directs the Board to give the land to a single man that he must have it.

<page>565</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=593></url>

Mr. SEDDON .- No, no. Mr. GRAHAM .- I mean the Minister of Lands. I do not mean any Minister. If the Minister of Lands so directs it must be done, and I suppose that really means the Premier. I think that clause is wrong. There are many young men in the colony who are judicious and careful enough to desire to prepare a home before marrying or incurring the responsibility of a family. Why should such young men be prevented from having at least an equal chance with those who are married ; and I think if it had to be that married men should get the preference, I think it ought to be required that they should have resided in the colony for some time. An Hon. MEMBER .- Will you not go further and say that a man with five children shall have preference over one with none ? Mr. GRAHAM .- According to the Bill the Minister would have power to direct that a man with not one child, or even a wife, may-but only in his discretion-have priority over those with five or even fifteen children. Mr. SEDDON. That is a matter of regulations. Mr. GRAHAM. - I do hope the Premier will realise that clause 8 is so objectionable that he himself will move to amend it very considerably or five thousand acres. I know of several who are in the Committee or strike it out of the Bill altogether. If he does not, I hope the members of the House will themselves, in the interests of the settlement of the country and of the people, take steps to prevent such objectionable clauses as clauses 6 and 8 passing into law without very material amendment. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) .- I agree with the speaker who has just sat down, and also with the member for Kaiapoi, in their condemnation of clause 8, where it is laid down that married men are to have preference in taking up land in this colony. Sir, in my district-and I am now, I confess, speaking for my own part of the colony-I may say this : The great desire of the people is that the young men should settle

upon the land and make homes for them- selves, and afterwards gather a family around them when they have made provision for that family by going on the land. And I entirely agree with the words that have fallen from the honourable member for Nelson City, when he condemns utterly this idea of giving power to the Minister to say who shall or who shall not be accepted as coming under the working of this clause. It is perfectly plain it is so in- tended, as has been already emphasized by the honourable member for Nelson City ; and let me emphasize it once again by quoting the clause in question : " In disposing of land by way of lease the Board shall, unless directed to the contrary by the Minister, give preference to married men with families." Clearly that leaves it in the hands of the Minister to say whether or not a preference shall be given to the married man. I say distinctly that no preference whatsoever of that kind should be given. We want to see the young men of the country settled on the land of the country. We want to see them making homes for themselves and remaining in settled estates in this country. We do not want them, as they too often have to do at the present time, putting "bluey " on their backs and travelling out of their own districts and ultimately out of the colony altogether. Many of the young men who have come back from South Africa tell me that, although they do not care about going back to have another "cut in " -as they term it- they are prepared to go back to settle in South Africa, " because," they say, " there is a better opportunity for us there." If that is so, I say it is a reflection, a very grave reflection indeed, upon this country and the Government of this country. If after having made use of these young men we refuse to them the opportunity of settling on the land, and in that way keep here the bone and muscle and very heart. blood, as it were, of this colony. we shall be doing a gross act of injustice. Now, Sir, some reference has been made, also by the honourable member for Nelson City, to the question of the cutting-up of lands -- that is to say, the natural division of property amongst the members of a family -- and I must say that I sympathize very much indeed with the remarks that have fallen from that honourable member, and for this reason : In various parts of the country there are men with families who own, say, four thousand families in that position. Well, since the land referred to was subdivided, after the father's death, the members of the family who are there at the present time have from three thousand five hundred to five thousand acres apiece. Now, they themselves have got families growing up, and in course of time they will naturally subdivide their present holdings, and the sons of these families will, in their turn, become the owners of not more than, at the very outside, a thousand acres of land apiece. Now, I say this mode of subdividing property is perfectly in keeping with the desire of any honest man to see the land in New Zealand thoroughly well settled. It is the proper way of subdividing property. So long as the aggregation of large estates does not continue, I say it is a good thing that the sons of these settlers should ultimately become the possessors of small estates, where many years ago comparatively large estates were held by one individual. I say, therefore, before we touch the men who have got four thousand and five thousand acres let us deal with the men who have thirty thousand acres, and-as we unfortunately have in this country-men with even one hundred thousand acres. These are the men who ought to be first molested in their occupation of the soil, before we ever think of dealing with those men who have only got four thousand or five thousand acres, and have sons and daughters growing up who will only in part become the possessors of those estates. An Hon. MEMBER .- Especially companies. Mr. HORNSBY. - Yes, " especially companies " ; and more especially those people who live out of the country. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- The owners of ab-

<page>566</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=594></url>

Mr. HORNSBY .- Yes. We have had some facts in connection with the estates held in the Auckland Province by the Assets Board, and no doubt a similar story could be told of other parts of the colony. If the facts are as stated, then a decided attempt ought to be made to obtain the whole of those estates as quickly as possible and have them settled. There is a certain agitation going on in connection with land

settlement, having for its object this : that the Government shall not buy any more private estates until the whole of the Crown lands are taken up. Now, Sir, I say this: If the Government is true to its principles, and if this House is true to its principles, of conserving what is one of the greatest assets of the colony -- much of which we have already destroyed -- then we ought to object to another acre of forest lands being touched. Mr. SYMES .- Rubbish. Mr. HORNSBY .- No doubt the utterance fits the utterer. Hon. MEMBERS .- Oh, oh ! Mr. HORNSBY .- Everybody who has watched settlement in the bush districts knows full well that we have wantonly destroyed millions of pounds' worth of property which we shall never be able to replace. An Hon. MEMBER .- Hear, hear. Mr. HORNSBY .- It was all very well for the member for Egmont just now to say " Rubbish." I say we ought to conserve every forest we have in the colony. If we do this, and we find afterwards that there is a certain portion of the forest land which is admirably adapted for the purpose of land-settlement, the Government ought to deal with the valuable timber and have it carefully cut out. The land can after that be partially cleared and roaded, and then offered for settlement. We should, under those circumstances, not have families shut up in the back blocks for two or three months every winter as they are at present, struggling up to their middles in muck to get out to civilisation. I say, Sir, that this sort of thing has gone on for many years. Those of us who belong to the back blocks-and the member for Egmont knows perfectly well that he has any number of people in his constituency who are struggling in mud year after year-I say, Sir, that honourable members from such districts have vainly endeavoured to get roads to enable these unfortunate people to get out. That ought to be a warning to us to do something in the way of roading before placing settlers in such country. And now as to the forests : I say that it is worse than a crime, it is a blunder, to destroy them. A great blunder has been made, and we ought to try to prevent that sort of thing occurring again in this colony. Now, Sir, with regard to freehold, there has been a good deal said during the course of this debate on that very debatable subject. It may, perhaps, be startling to some of the members of this House when I say that I believe that if the freehold could be surrounded with safeguards so as to prevent the creation of large estates it would be the best way of disposing of the land. I am one of those who have said on the platform again and again that, after all said and done, if you could give the freehold with safeguards it would be better to do so. But now the question comes, Is it possible? I have been assured by men who have made this question almost a life-study that it is possible to so surround the freehold that you can prevent -absolutely prevent - the aggregation of large holdings. Well, then, if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying this : that I would very much rather see the system grow up in this colony of small freeholds, where every man would have his own property, than I would see continued what is going on in many parts of this country to a large extent, and that is the harrying and worrying of settlers, who are, God knows, harried and worried enough to make a bare living out of their properties. Mr. MASSEY --- You are coming round. Mr. HORNSBY .- Sir, I have held these opinions for many years, and it is not a matter of coming round at all. The only thing that I object to in the freehold is this: I object to anything that makes for the aggregation of large holdings. It has not been only the possession of the freehold in the older countries of the world which has been such an evil. It was not the freehold in Prussia and other countries, where the land was cut up and peasants put on the soil, but it was the aggregation of large estates that proved such a terrible curse, and, rather than see that curse obtain in this country, I would prevent the possibility of any man having a freehold ; and, were it possible to begin all over again, I would be in favour of nationalising the land of the colony, nor would I then be a party to selling one foot of it. But, seeing we are as we are, I am willing, if we can so safeguard the freehold as to prevent any man holding a large estate, to allow the settlers on the land to acquire the freehold of their property. I am opposed entirely to the periodical revaluation of leases. It would be nothing less than a crime to periodically revalue the holdings of the settlers who own these small leases in perpetuity. They would give up their holdings to-morrow if they were certain that every now and again the department would come

along and revalue their property. I tell you what the revaluation would amount to. It would amount to the same thing as the valuation under the advances to settlers law of this country. The way. . . in which that department of the Crown i worked is a perfect scandal. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why ? Mr. HORNSBY. " Why?" Sir, it is it !! one of two things : it is either that the derati- ment itself is not properly otheered. or it is :he in that department there are men who bet re they go out to value the land are told they are not to put on a certain value for improve mer so that the applicants will not get the anci :: of money they are asking for. I say that :d. videdly. I know in my own district, and I know in the districts of other members of ti: - House, there are men who have asked for lo :: - men with any amount of grit ; men h.

<page>567</page>

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want to improve their holdings ; men who have plenty of security --- but because they happen to be poor men they cannot get a loan. An Hon. MEMBER .- That is all nonsense. Mr. HORNSBY .- It is not nonsense. I have the proof, and I can produce it. I am not talk- ing at large, but from the book, and if I am challenged to do it I shall produce documents to show that Lam stating what is absolutely cor- rect. The debate on this amending Bill has led to a very profitable discussion so far as this House is concerned. We now know the minds of the members on some of the most important questions of the day. We know what those members are prepared to do in regard to the furthering of the disposal by the Crown of lands that they may obtain, and I say that I wish to join with other members in resisting, at any rate, to the utmost this clause. I shall with- hold any further criticism of the Bill until it comes into Committee, and there I hope to see some very important amendments made in the various clauses; but, above all, I say distinctly this : that I hope every member who desires the betterment of the people of this colony, and especially the young men of this colony-who desire to see families growing up in this colony on these areas of land which are to be settled --- I hope they will join with me and others in resisting to the utmost the passing of this ob- noxious clause which I have referred to. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I am, owing to a severe cold, labouring, as honourable mem- bers well know, under a disability in reply- ing to what has been said during this debate. I do not understand why. when dealing with amendments such as are contained in this Bill -- which are purely of a technical character --- we should have had the whole general policy of land for settlement traversed. Captain RUSSELL .- You did not give us time to look at it. Mr. SEDDON .- Nothing of the kind. Mem- bers are not speaking to the House, but they are speaking to their constituents. First, we had the leader of the Opposition. That honour- able member, it is well known, has been at all times an opponent of the land-for-settlement policy. He is to-day as bitterly opposed to it as he was the first time the Bill was sub- mitted to the House, but public opinion has to some extent had its influence, and the honour- able gentleman has, perforce, to bow to the in- domitable will of the people. And he tells us, as one reason why we should not proceed further, that there is some poor unfortunate widow from whom the Government, in their hard-hearted- ness, had taken land. The honourable member did not say that she was a widow with a small family, or that she was a widow with a grown- up family : neither did he lead us to believe that she had means. He said she was a widow who desired to reside on the land, and that the Government under this legislation ejected her. It is better in a case of this kind that I should meet the statement directly, so that members may understand that there is no hardship at all. Captain RUSSELL .- Can you deny my ac- curacy ? Mr. SEDDON .- You know that you can make a statement that may be correct, so far as it goes, but you may keep back certain facts which would put a very different complexion on the matter; and that is what the honour. able member did-he kept back facts within his own knowledge. The honourable member did not tell us-what he must have known-that it was the trustees who came to the Government and asked the Government to purchase the The offer came from them; they estate. offered the estate at \$4 10s. per acre. We had to get the estate reported upon by our own officers. That takes a little time. We practically offered \$4 an acre. Then, when it came to a question of going before the

Court they said, "Things are changed; we do not now want to sell, we want to buy." The land was wanted, and it is now wanted, in that locality. The land was suitable, and we therefore decided to go on with it. Captain RUSSELL .- How long afterwards ? Mr. SEDDON .- I will tell the honourable member. I wish to place it on record. The following is from the Land Purchase Officer, giving an explanation of the transaction :- "Mr. Sidney Johnston, as trustee in the estate of the late Colonel Herrick, offered to sell to the Government the above property of 8.200 acres at the price of \$4 10s. per acre. The Land Purchase Board recommended the acquisition of the property at \$3 17s. 6d. This offer was made and declined. Mr. Johnston was asked if #4 would be accepted. He replied that #4 10s. was the price they would accept. After an interval of three or four months, he wrote withdrawing the property. But a few days before the Government had decided to take the land compulsorily. The requisition and claim have both been served, and the sitting of the Compensation Court is fixed for the end of September .- JAMES MCKERROW." I say if a land-purchase transaction was to be treated in a different way from what we have treated this where would we find ourselves? I myself saw the trustee, and he told me he ought to have taken action sooner ; but he did nothing of the kind until we had decided to take over the property. And if you are going to allow withdrawal after an offer has been made, then where will you get to? I treated the matter in all fairness. We did not ask for the land in the first instance. The land was thrown at us, and we said we would take it under the law. We have kept within the law, and the law must take its course. The only difference between us was as to the value. The owners wanted €4 10s. an acre, which was 10s. an acre, or \$4,000, more than the land was reported to be worth. If we had given 94 10s. there would never have been another word said about it in this House ; but as the law stands the price had to be adjusted by the proper officers. Now I come to another speech. I have been rather double-banked. I have two Russells to reply to-Captain Russell, the member for Hawke's Bay, and Mr. Russell, the member for Riccarton-as both of them have, I think, attacked the Government somewhat severely

<page>568</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=596></url>

in respect to this measure. The honourable member for Riccarton, in his attack, told the House we had a black-book, and he described how the black-book was taken round from member to member. Sir, it is well to have a recording angel. Members make their speeches to their constituents defining the lines upon which they are coming to Parliament, and they are sorry sometimes to find we have as a matter of necessity to show them how they are departing from the pledges they gave to their constituents. That is why the honourable member does not like a recording angel. That is why this black-book is not appreciated by the honourable member. But, Sir, I have here something which is taken from a journal of another colour. It is taken from a red journal -The Spectator. Here we find these words : "Then up rose the member for Riccarton, and he held the House for the hour allowed by the Standing Orders." Mr. PIRANI .-- I rise to a point of order. ask you, Sir, if it is in order for the Premier to read an extract upon a debate on this question that has taken place this year. Mr. SPEAKER. - I thought the Right Hon. the Premier was referring to something that took place during the past year. Mr. SEDDON .- The debate is past and gone. Mr. PIRANI .- It is referring to a debate of this session. Mr. SPEAKER .- If it is referring to a debate of this session it is not allowed. Mr. SEDDON .- Then, I shall not press the matter further. Sir, at the luncheon adjournment I was alluding to the misrepresentation made by the honourable member for Riccarton. And, Sir, I do not think it could be accidental. I think it is a great pity the honourable member is not more careful in respect to statements that he makes, or that he should apparently take figures from the public records of the colony and apply these figures in the way he does, when he ought to know that the application he gives them is now, the entirely fallacious and wrong. honourable member made this statement : "I say that under the Premier's management "- he was desiring to make a contrast for the last and the preceding twelve months, and he took it for granted that I had only

been twelve months in charge of this department - that presumably I had only looked after it for the previous twelve months. It will surprise the honourable member when I tell him that practically I have had a general supervision of these purchases of land off and on for nearly three years. The fact is that last year land was purchased to the amount of \$350,193. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .-. Is that the financial or calendar year ? Mr. SEDDON .-- Sir, the honourable member takes the amount that has been paid, and he says, " That is the amount of land purchased." But I tell him that the payments sometimes do not come in for fifteen months afterwards. Then, the year before there were 79,000 acres purchased, costing \$353,000. There is only a difference in the amount of land purchased in the two years of £2,000; so that will sur- prise the honourable member. And the honour- able member went further than that when he said, " The total land purchased last financial year amounted to £186,000, but if the amount of the Hatuma purchase-£141,000-is taken from that it only leaves about \$45,000 as the total amount of land purchased." Sir, here is a statement by the Land Purchase Officer of the land purchased last year, and I think it will go as far as the word of the honourable gentle- man :-- Price. Acres. Hawke's Bay- Hatuma 26,350 141,618 . . . Mangatoro 87,975 19,550 Wellington- Langdale 9,406 30,669 Mangawhata 1,226 16,129 Maungaraki 423 3,000 . . Epuni 103 9,146 . . Marlborough- I 3,600 8,250 Waipapa . . Canterbury -- 15,750 Lyndon 4,243 . . Kohika 3,864 28,003 . . . Raincliff 2,424 745 . . . Taranaki 2,855 32 . . . Pukaka 39 981 . . 100 Mrs. Delargy . . . Otago - Earnsclough . . 3,000 1,152 . . Total .. 70,833 \$350.193 . . " In a former statement ' North Bank Estate. 12,800 acres, cost €6,750,' was included in error. the date of agreement to purchase being the 14th March, 1900, and date of completion the 31st March, 1901. This accounts for the dis- crepancy from the former totals - namely. 82,974 acres, and \$356,850. " Of the above sums, \$87,442 was paid in April. 1901. Mangatoro and Mrs. Delargy not paid yet .- J. MCKERROW." Now, to contrast the last two years' pur- chases : In 1899-1900 we purchased 79.5 acres, valued at \$353, 718; last year, as will be seen by Mr. McKerrow's statement, we pur- chased 70,883 acres, of the value of \$350.793. So that the records prove there has been no serious falling- off. Now, Sir, to show the honourable gentleman again how he will wii- fully, as it were, endeavour to put things in a wrong position, he made this statement. using his own words :- " I say Earnseleugh, which cost \$3.100; Lyndon, which cost €17,750 ; Maungaraki Es- tate, which cost \$2.797 ; North Bank, which cost \$6,750; Tarawahi (that is Freeman's Estate), which cost \$2,857; and Waipapa (J. Bell's), which cost \$8,250; are the total pur- chases in New Zealand for the year for which the Government paid outside of Hatuma." It will surprise the honourable member when I tell him there are, in addition, Mangatore. \$87,975 ; Langdale, \$30,669 ; Mangawhata, €16,129; Epuni, £9,146; Kobika, ■28.083; Raincliff, \$2,424; Pukuka, \$981. Sir, the

<page>569</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=597></url>

honourable gentleman is only out in his | expenses. He thinks members are to be gulled reckoning by the small sum of £163,572. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .-- Those are the very figures I took from your own returns in the Gazette. Mr. SEDDON .- I am glad the honourable member owns up so nicely. The total land purchased, according to the statement made by the honourable member, amounted to \$186,000. Now, the total land purchased, according to the official return from Mr. McKerrow, amounted to \$350,000; take off \$186,000 and the honourable member is wrong in his statement to the extent of #163,000. The honourable gentleman only gives the amount paid over, and has taken that to use for his own purposes. If the honourable member will use figures for the purpose of misleading the House his statements must be taken cion grano salis in this House. I wish to show the honourable gentleman how he fell into this error. He takes these small payments that were made in connection with the following properties, and to prove this I will quote from a statement given by Mr. Collins of the Treasury :- £ d B. Earnsclough* 3,100 0 .. Hatuma 141,618 0 0 .. Karapiro" 253 0 0 . . Lyndon 15,750 0 0 .. Maungaraki* 2,797 0 0 . . North Bank

6,750 0 0 . . Ohakea* 5,245 10 () .. Tarawahi 2,857 10 0 . . Waipapa 8,250 0 0 .. 0 0 . £186,621

Purchased early in 1900, but were not paid, except estates marked ., until March, 1901. Here is the exact statement from the Treasury showing the amount of the purchase-money and expenses :- Nine months Twelve Months ended 31st March, 1901. Dec., 1.000. £ Purchase-money 186,621 11,396 11,652° Expenses 14,305 Interest .. 50,910 21,903 . . £44,950 \$251,836 * For survey of estates acquired in 1930. but not paid for till March, 1901; also for roads and lime-kilns, Shag Valley. But the honourable member again was wrong, because he must add the total expenses to the cash paid for the estates, and together these amount to \$251,836. It does not matter which-way you take it the honourable gentleman is absolutely wrong. He then tried to make an unfavourable impression, because he said the purchase-money was only \$11,000 in the first three quarters of the year: but he said there were €8,000 of expenses. Why, Sir, there were \$11,000 of expenses. You have to pay the interest on the whole of the money and the expenses in connection with the land bought the year before and the lands bought during the year, and the \$11,000 is the whole of the expenses. The honourable gentleman wanted to make a point out of the \$11,000 and \$8,000 by statements of this sort. It is a well-known fact that we purchase estates at the beginning of the year, and the proper time to put settlers on the land is from March to April in the next year. There are twelve months in which the owner has to remove stock and give up possession. Perhaps we may buy in March, but we do not get actual possession till April of the following year. There is no payment till we take possession. The honourable member would see the position if he took the trouble to go into the Public Accounts. But what he has been doing-I will not say wilfully, but for want of knowledge has been to mislead himself and try to mislead the members of the House and the country. It is like a statement made by the honourable member which appears in the black-book. He made a statement last year in Christ-church to this effect : He said there would be a deficit of \$200,000, and that the reason why the surplus was shown was because we had never transferred last year's surplus to the Public Works Fund, and if you took off the Public Works Account you would find a deficit which he estimated to be . \$200,000. The surplus came to \$550,000, and, as usual, the honourable gentleman is \$300,000 out in his calculation. Why on earth does the honourable member for Riccarton go out of his way to make such ridiculous statements, and to put his statements so that one cannot take any notice of them ? They are utterly fallacious, and you cannot depend upon them for a moment. Mr. PIRANI .- You seem to take great notice of them. Mr. SEDDON. -- It is necessary for me to point out these glaring mistakes. He ought to be a good deal more accurate. We know the honourable gentleman's weakness for railways, and he must show that he has some knowledge of finance. But he will be out of place as Colonial Treasurer if he cannot do differently from what he has been doing in connection with these figures. Then, the honourable gentleman complained about Canterbury. say that last year we had a hundred and fifty homes as against fifty for the previous year. Mr. TANNER (Avon) .-- You mean sections, not homes. Mr. SEDDON .- No, I mean homes. I give the term given me by the officer, who says " homes." There is the position. Take the provincial districts. Since the Act started there have been- Price Paid. Area. Acres. Auckland .. 35,885 89,500 . 317,996 Hawke's Bay 58,855 .. Taranaki .. 1,500 31.500 .. Wellington 15,606 106.190 . . Nil Nil Nelson . . Marlborough 159,700 64,450 3,230 Westland . . 3,634 137.660 774,660 Canterbury .. 336,300 Otago 59.615 Southland. . 88,030 34,165 . . 410,966 £1,610,510

<page>570</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=598></url>

This does not include the cost of roading and , Estate. We have simply doubled the money surveying. The total is £1,610.510, so I do not : that we had ourselves fixed as the upset price. think the honourable member has much to complain of in that respect. I will go further, and say this: In the debate that has taken place in respect to this Bill I much regret that those who are so favourable to the land-for-

settlements legislation should be led away by specious arguments, and practically, as it were, abandon what they had done before. There has been an attack made during the debate on the Assets Realisation Board, and there has been an attack in respect to the administration of Native land, and the Natives holding their land. I can only say, as far as the Assets Realisation Board is concerned, that the Board is there to realise to the best interests of the colony, the guarantors, and those connected with the shareholders of the Bank of New Zealand. Had the Board done what some in one family for land. If you have twenty members had urged, and forced the land into the market at a time when there was no demand, the result would have been a heavy loss ; and who is that going to fall upon ? On the contrary, if we had kept all the land and never sold an acre, the Board to-day, comparing the present prices with those when the land was sold, would have been €150,000 to the good. Those who would force the hands of those administering the estates seem to forget this ; and if you force sales it is all right enough for those who want to buy land, but it is against public policy. I have always understood that we want to get people on the land, and close settlement, and if we part with the land it should not be in large areas. An Hon. MEMBER. -- Cut it up. Mr. SEDDON. -- Then you cannot sell against the Government. Your land - for settlement policy and the policy in regard to perpetual leases of Crown lands euts against the realisation of the Assets Board's property. Well, Sir, we have tried it. We cut upland into suitable-sized farms and offered it, and we had only two or three buyers. We have sold that estate to the Government, and every farm was taken up. Why? Because we could only give a short lease, with the loans secured on the purchase-money. We had to have some cash, and therefore the terms we can afford to offer as compared with the Government are such that you cannot even on equal terms dispose of the land. Then, of course, you offer it to the Government, and to say we have not done that is incorrect. We have offered every other estate we had to the Government, and we can only sell that which : not have gone on the Land Boards of the they were prepared to take. The total amount realised for sales of land for the period from 1895 to 1901, including stock, amounted to : \$685.282, and, from the properties that are not finally realised, \$387.163. On this there has been a loss as compared with the book value of \$180,000- that is, taking the book value and the amount realised. Now, I can only say this : that no reasonable offer has been refused. I wish now to follow what has been stated in this debate- namely, that you must sell by auction or fix a price Take the estate which is just outside Auckland --- Williamson's We sold by sections, holding back the others as the land got built upon and taken up, and so increasing the value of the remaining sections ; and the remaining sections are exactly double now what they were when we offered them and fixed the upset price. Therefore we are dealmit with the realisation on business lines. I say. when we have disposed of land and stock (x- ceeding \$100,000 a year, you cannot say that the Assets Realisation Board have not been doing their duty. Regarding the remarks that have been made in this debate respecting the unmarried men, I want to know how you are going to deal with such cases. I say you have young men taken from different parts of the colony, with their relatives, eight or ten and as high as twenty in number, applying therefore, taking up that one piece, and you find that they can afford to pay the deposit-moms, why should the unfortunate man who has no friends and has not the deposit-money. it- cause he cannot duplicate or make himself into twenty, be unable to get the section ? You must do something. You start with the married men. I say you should not shut out the widow, but you might shut out the girls who have been put in as dummies. Any Land Board, when they have applications of this kind, must know that they are not doing their duty when they allow these people to go into the ballot. They know it as well as I do. I will go further, and I will say that, in respect to the young men who are unmarried when the land is opened for settlement, under clause S they will give the Minister the opportunity of saying in that case whether they should be accepted as applicants or not. Althotel there is this privilege proposed to be ex- ferred in the case of the married men, the intention is not to debar unmarried men as I applicants. The very objection which is taken to clause 8 is the one that ought to recommend itself to

those who oppose it. I find in the Land Act that you have powers given to the Land Boards; their decision is final. It has been held by some Boards that a person with six hundred pounds' worth of land is landless. The Government have had cases brought before them which disclose a shocking state of things. I say that if my worthy friend and colleague Sir John McKenzie had remained on these benches members of this House would be wiser. Why? Because, instead of considering themselves administrators, they have indulged in politics and matters of policy. That has been the difficulty: but let us hope that, whilst there has been nothing ungenerous & that, by and by, they will understand that the thing to do is, as my colleague told Mr. McLachlan, to "be straight," and do their duty faithfully, and in the best interest of the colony and the settlement of the people on the land. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) - I wish to make a personal explanation. The Hon. F. Premier has stated that I have misrepresented

<page>571</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=599></url>

two different matters to the House. The first is with regard to the purchase of land for settlement, and the second is with regard to the financial position of the colony as at 31st December. I hold in my hand the New Zealand Gazette of 16th May, No. 48: "Statement of Receipts and Expenditure under the Land for Settlements Account for the Year ended 31st March, 1901," and in that I find that there is a table stating the acquirement of estates. Opposite that there is another table stating the purchase-money, giving the names of the various estates that are reported in this statement to have been acquired and the purchase-moneys paid. The amount stated therein as having been paid during the financial year is \$186,621. I therefore state that, in having informed the House that these were the purchase-moneys, and that these were the blocks that had been acquired and purchased by the Government during the year, I was speaking under the authority of one of the Government's own returns, published by them as part of the financial accounts of the colony. I do not see how they can be said to have purchased lands until they have paid for them. With regard to the second matter. I regret to say that the honourable gentleman did not in this case produce the black-book. Had he done so he would have seen that I never stated that there was a deficit; neither did I say there was a debit balance in connection with the accounts of the colony. What I did state was this: that at the 31st December, according to the Public Accounts of the colony, the balance in the hands of the Treasurer was \$397,000. I find here, on page 303 of the New Zealand Gazette of the 31st January, 1901, that the position was that \$397,542 16s. 5d. was the net balance in hand on that date, after deducting £870,000 of Treasury bills. An Hon. MEMBER - You said the end of the financial year. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL - I never said the financial year. I was speaking at Riccarton before the close of the financial year. I spoke at the end of February. I was only able to deal with the published accounts up to the 31st December. Although the Government started the financial year with £605,000 of a surplus, \$500,000 of which was to be passed over to the Public Works Fund, down to the 31st December they had not paid over one penny to the Public Works Fund, and I said that, as their total credit balance at the 31st December was \$397,000, it would follow that, if they had paid the \$500,000 to the Public Works Fund, they must have absorbed the whole of the cash balance they had at that period and borrowed \$103,000 to make the \$500,000 due to the Public Works Fund. The Premier spoke shortly afterwards at Hokitika, and said that the money was paid over to the Public Works Fund, but he admitted that the first payment made during the financial year to the Public Works Fund was made on the 13th January, and the last was on the 27th March of this year. That is my personal explanation. Mr. SEDDON - Well, Sir, it is a very long one, and I hope you will allow me the same length of time. In the first place, I will commence where the honourable member left off. He was misstating the position when he said that there was only a credit balance of \$397,000; and then he said, take the \$525,000 due to the Public Works Fund and it shows a deficit of nearly \$200,000. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL - I never said so. Mr. SEDDON - The honourable member says he never said so. He said that there was a deficit at

that stage, and he wants to make out that during the last three months the \$530,000 of surplus came to the colony. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- So it did. You read your own accounts. Mr. SEDDON .-- The honourable member is only misleading the public, because between the 31st December and the 31st March the \$500,000 was transferred to the Public Works Fund. Take the \$200,000 we were alleged to be behind, add to it the \$500,000 paid to Public Works Fund, and it means that in three months we pulled up \$700,000 of money. All I can say is, it is owing to the honourable member's ignorance of finance. I have the honourable member this time, as I have his exact words. Now, these are the words : "The total purchases for the last financial year amounted to \$186,621. Of that no less than €141,618 is made up of purchase-money for Hatuma." Is anything clearer than that he means the total purchases? He is now trying to add that he only referred to the amount paid. I will give the estates, as certified to by the Land Purchase Inspector :- Acres. Price. Hawke's Bay- 41 Hatuma 26,350 141.618 19,550 Mangatoro 87.975 .. Wellington- Langdale 9,406 30,669 .. Mangawhata .. 1,226 16,129 3,000 Maungaraki 423 .. . 103 Epuni 9,146 Marlborough -- Waipapa 8,250 3,600 .. Canterbury- Lyndon 4,243 15.750 .. Kohika 3,864 28,093 .. Raincliff 745 2.424 Taranaki 32 2,858 .. . Pukaka 981 39 .. 300 Mrs. Delargy .. 100 .. Otago- 1,152 3,000 Earnsclough .. Total .. 70,833 £350,193 .. "In a former statement, 'North Bank Es- tate, 12,800 acres, cost \$6,750,' was included in error, the date of agreement to purchase being the 14th March, 1900, and date of completion the 31st March, 1901. This accounts for the discrepancy from the former totals-namely, 82.974 acres, and \$356,850. Of the above sums £87,442 was paid in April, 1901. Mangatoro and Mrs. Delargy not paid yet."

<page>572</page>

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I would ask, Sir, where is the honourable member's €186,000? The total is \$350,000 for land purchases, and not €186,000, as the honourable member states. Then, Sir, as re- gards the other portion in which he has been misrepresenting me. He says,- " Under the Premier's management during the last year the total amount of land pur- chased for land settlement in New Zealand, excluding the Hatuma Estate and Ohakaea, amounted to \$39,758." That is the statement made by the honourable member, and I would ask him if he denies having made it. He cannot do so. Now, excluding the two estates he mentioned, there was pur chased two hundred thousand pounds' worth of land, not \$39,758 mentioned by the honourable member. The honourable member could not enumerate those other estates, for the reason that they have not been paid for, and therefore are not taken into account in the Public Accounts. The honourable member got his copy of the Public Accounts at the end of the quarter, and he should know that. He knows that we only put into the accounts the cash actually paid for the estates. I say that the Mangatoro Estate, £88,000, is not included, nor are the follow- ing estates : Langdale, \$30,000 ; Mangawhata, €16,000 ; Epuni, £9,000; Kohika, \$28,000 ; There- Raincliff. . €2,400 ; Pukaka, 6981. fore those estates which the honourable gentleman could not show were put into the Public Accounts amount to £175,418, so that to this extent the statement made by the honourable gentleman that during the year we had only \$186,000 was entirely wrong. There is a further misrepresentation which I cannot allow to pass, and so that there shall be no mistake I purpose going to the records, and ask leave to lay the paper that I have in my hand on the table :- Leave granted, and paper accordingly laid on the table. Bill read a second time, and ordered to be committed forthwith. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) .--- I would ask that a return be laid on the table showing the estates purchased in the different provincial districts. Mr. SEDDON .- I would ask leave to lay on the table of the House a statement by Mr. James McKerrow, Chairman of the Land Pur- chase Board, showing the amount of land bought last year. In reference to this, I desire to say that it is well known the Minister of Lands, on assuming office, said he would go round the country to see the estates, and ascer- tain the roads requirements in the different dis- tricts. Whilst he was away keeping that pledge it was natural that some one should attend to the land-purchase business, and as I

had been doing it before I continued it. I had already quite enough to do, but I could not see the interests of the country neglected ; and it is very wrong to twit my colleague and myself when both of us were doing our duty. Mr. HERRIES. - The Premier read a paper with regard to the distribution of money in the different provinces which I hope he will lay on the table. Mr. SEDDON .- I shall be most happy to do so. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Does the paper new laid on the table show the dates when the respective purchases included were completei. and does it also show when the purchase-money will be paid, so that we may know in what financial year the transaction will take place ? I should also like to say, with regard to the honourable member's remarks in reference to his colleague being twitted for not attending to the business of his department, that my attention was directed to this phase of the Department of Lands by some remarks which the Right Hon. the Premier made at Waipawa, where a depu- tation asking for land for settlements in that neighbourhood waited on him. The Premier gave the member for the district the greatest credit for doing his best to have the country opened, and the Premier twice stated that he. speaking not as Minister of Lands but as head of the Government, accepted the blame that was due to the Government for not having opened lands in that locality, where they had been so repeatedly urged to do so. At the same interview the Premier also said that on his return to Wellington he would take stops with the view of having more energy shown in the operations of the department. If the honour- able member had said at that place, . 1. as Minister in charge of the department. &- cept the responsibility," it would have been a different matter, but he said, "1. as head of the Government, accept the responsibility." It was therefore only natural to read in the newspapers a week or two afterwards that the colleagues of the Right Hon. the Premier were satisfied at the action taken by him in taking over the management of the purchasing department of the Land for Settlements Office -I saw that stated distinctly in one of the southern papers. It was stated that the action of the Right Hon. the Premier in taking over the Land for Settlements Purchase Department was approved by his colleagues. I am not responsible for where the reporter got his infor- mation, but under such circumstances it was not unnatural for one to suppose that the honour- able gentleman had taken charge of the Land Purchase Department in order to throw greier energy into the matter. I repeat that the honourable member said that he, as head of the Government, accepted the blame for that department in the matter of making purchases. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston). . I regret. Sir. that the House intends going into Committee on the Land for Settlements Bill so soon. be- cause I gave notice of a clause this morning that should be some improvement on our bahnt system, and I regret very much that it will not receive the consideration at the hands of honourable members that it ought to recese. owing to the Bill going into Committee immer- diately. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I should have thought that the veriest tiro in the House of political and constitutional matters would have

<page>573</page>

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known that the Premier was always responsible for the departments. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not constitutionally. Mr. SEDDON .- You take a vote of want of confidence, and, if carried. it applies to all. An Hon. MEMBER. - Each Minister is re- sponsible for his own department constitu- tionally. Mr. SEDDON. - If the Government is blamed, and is censured, the head of the Go- vernment, if he is worth his salt, says, "I accept the responsibility." An Hon. MEMBER .- He often dismisses his colleagues. Mr. SEDDON .- That has never been done by me. An Hon. MEMBER .-- It happened under Sir Harry Atkinson. Another Hon. MEMBER .- It happened under the Grey Ministry. Mr. SEDDON .--- Very well ; then, it shows that you have had two autocrats before you got me. I desire to say this: At the meeting at Waipawa they produced to me a statement that had been made by Mr. Ballance showing that he had promised that land would be taken in that district under the Land for Settlements Act, and so relieve that unfortunate county from its undesirable condition, surrounded as it was by large estates : and it was not at all in reference to the

administration of the Land for Settlements Act. I said, as Mr. Ballance's successor, as head of the Government, I would take the responsibility. That is what I want to say, and Mr. Hall, the member for Waipawa, was there at the time. As I succeeded Mr. Ballance, and as land had not been taken, as, I believe, Mr. Ballance had promised, I could say no more than I did as head of the Government who succeeded Mr. Ballance. At all events, it was not done. But I never said, as far as Hawke's Bay was concerned, that we had never done anything, because in that district we bought 58,855 acres of land, for which we paid \$317,996. Consequently, I could not say that there was much blame attachable to me, or the Government, or the Minister of Lands, because Hawke's Bay stands third. First comes Canterbury, \$774,900; next comes Otago, 5336,000; and Hawke's Bay comes next with \$317,000, paid for land in these respective districts. I have not much, therefore, to apologize for; but I do object to being held responsible for what may be telegraphed to some of the papers, particularly, may I say so, Sir, a paper near Christchurch. The honourable member made a statement that I as Premier, with the concurrence of my colleagues, had taken over the administration of the Purchase Department of the Land for Settlements Act. That statement, Sir, is absolutely incorrect. What happened was a matter of readjustment. Since Sir John McKenzie went Home, now nearly three years ago, that department was left practically to be administered by some one other than the Minister of Lands, and no one knows it better than the honourable member for Riccarton. As there is a very close affinity between this department and the Colonial Treasurer, who has to find the funds for the payment, I say that the Minister of Lands and the Colonial Treasurer must work together. If they do not work together you will find yourselves in a difficulty. But there is more than that. In respect to workmen's homes, I am Minister of Labour, and you cannot disconnect the Minister of Labour from workmen's homes. I say the two things go together. In respect to finding land for workmen's homes, as Minister of Labour I have done as much as is possible. I would have liked to have done more. I am not satisfied, myself, with the manner in which some lands that were bought were cut up, but that is easily rectified. But what I do say is this: that until you get these lands for workmen's homes, until you give these men whose employment is intermittent a piece of land on which they can work in their spare time, you will have constant difficulties, and you will have men crying for work with larger wages and a higher log. If you get them away from the towns and slums and give them a couple or three acres of land on which they can keep a cow and grow vegetables, and sell enough to make up the difference between what they earn and what it will take to keep them, I say if you do that you are doing a good thing.

Mr. TANNER .- Why not do it, instead of talking about it?

Mr. SEDDON .- The honourable gentleman talks about the Government not doing it. Canterbury has had more land bought for workmen's homes than any other place, My friend Mr. Bollard will say that Auckland has not been treated justly. What have we heard about Dunedin? Nothing at all. I simply say now, you are better off: you will have lower rents in Christchurch, you have not anything like the slums in Christchurch that you have in Dunedin, or Wellington, or Auckland. You ask me to take the four large centres of population and say which requires workmen's homes the least, and I say Christchurch. I am simply showing that in the acquiring of lands for workmen's homes I am, perforce, as Minister of Labour, connected with that; and in that respect I have nothing to apologize for. I never did apologize, and, what is more, I never will. I believe in doing what is right, and we have been doing what is right in this respect. In laying this paper on the table I ask members to contrast its contents with what has been said by the member for Riccarton. It is he who should apologize, and I hope to see him come to the table-to the penitent-stool-and say, "I will never do it again." Motion agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON .- I desire to move now, That the paper asked for by the member for the Bay of Plenty be also laid on the table. Motion agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON. . I have another paper, prepared by the Treasury, and I move, That it be laid on the table. Motion agreed to.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=602>

IN COMMITTEE. Clause 3 .- " The powers conferred upon the Minister by section sixty-five of the principal Act shall be deemed to include the power to construct, or to join with any person or local authority or with the Crown in constructing, road», bridges, drainage-works and river-protec- tion works, and such other works upon or in respect of land acquired under the principal Act as the Minister thinks expedient in order to facilitate the proper settlement of the land or to protect it from injury from floods, river en- croachment, or otherwise, or to agree with any local authority for the construction by such local authority of any such works upon such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit, and the provisions of that section shall extend and apply accordingly." Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) moved, after the words "the power to construct," the addition of the following words: "in respect of land acquired under the principal Act." Amendment negatived. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) moved the addition of the following proviso : " Provided that any powers exercised by the Minister under this section shall be subject to the provisions of ' The Public Works Act, 1894.'" Amendment negatived. Clause agreed to. Clause 5 .- " (1.) In any proceedings under section fifteen of the principal Act for the com- pulsory taking of land the claimant shall, not later than twenty-one days after service of the claim for compensation, file in the office of the Supreme Court in the district within which the land proposed to be taken is situate, or, if there are more than one such offices, then in the office nearest to the land, - " (a.) A copy of the claim ; and " (b.) A notice stating the name and address of the person he appoints to act as his Assessor ; and shall serve a copy of such notice on the Minister. "(2.) Within twenty-one days after receiving the notice of the appointment of the claimant's Assessor the Minister shall also file in the office of the said Court a notice stating the name and address of the person he appoints to act as his Assessor, and shall serve a copy of such notice on the claimant. "(3.) If the claimant makes default in making or serving his claim, or if the claim- ant or the Minister makes default in appoint- ing an Assessor, or in doing any other act, matter, or thing by the principal Act or by this Act required or directed to be done, then, on summary application in that behalf by the party not in default, the Chief Justice may, on such terms as to costs and otherwise as he thinks fit, appoint an Assessor, or give such directions and make such orders as in his opinion are necessary or expedient to enable the claim to be heard and determined by the Compensation Court, and, if the default con- sists of not making or serving the claim, to enable the order referred to in subsection one of section twenty-two of the principal Act to be made and acted upon in the absence of the claim as fully and effectaall as if the claim were properly before the Court. "(4.) In applying the provisions of section forty of 'The Public Works Act, 1894,' it >ball not be necessary for the Minister to offer the amount of compensation in the matter." Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) moved to insert. at the beginning of paragraph (b) of sto- clause (1), the words " Within twenty-one dass after the filing of the claim the claimant shail file." The Committee divided on the question "That the words be inserted." AYES, 15. Rhodes Bennet Lang Bollard Russell. W. R. Lethbridge Fowlds 'Telis. Massev Meredith Allen, J. Hardy Herries. Monk Heke Hutcheson NOES, 40. Hall-Jones Seddon Allen, E. G. Smith. G. J. Hanan Arnold Barclay Hogg Stevens Buddo Laurensen Svines Tanner McGowan Carncross McGuire Carroll Thompson, R. Mckenzie, R. Ward Collins McLachlan Wilford Colvin McNab Willis Duncan Millar Witheford. Ell Fisher Mills Morrison Tellers. Flatman Field Gilfedder Palmer Parata Hall. Graham PAIRS. Against. For. Mackenzie, T. Lawry Pirani. Houston. Majority against, 25. Amendment negatived, and clause agreed to. Clause 6 .- " (1.) In order to prevent al.y evasion or avoidance of the provisions of the principal Act as to the right of the owner to select and retain any limited part of any e-tale intended to be acquired under that section. it is hereby declared that the area of the whole estate shall be computed as at the commence- ment of the negotiations for the purchase under the said Act, and no subsequent disposition of the estate, or any part thereof, shall op rate to defeat the power of the Governor to acquire the land under that Act. " (2.) The date at which negotiations for the purchase shall be deemed to commence shall in each case be

determined by the Governor in Council." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved, in sub section (2), to omit all the words after the words "commence shall," and insert the following words in lieu thereof : " be the date upon which notice was given under the hand of the Land Purchase Inspector or other person duly authorised in that behalf intimating to the owner that the Governor has decided to acquire the land."

Amendment agreed to.

<page>575</page>

<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=603></url>

Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved to add the following new subsection :- .. (3.) If the Governor does not proceed with the purchase and the land is not acquired by him within twelve months after the date of the notice mentioned in the last preceding sub- section, then the restriction on the disposition of the land under that subsection shall cease to have effect." New subsection added. The Committee divided on the question, " That the clause as amended be agreed to." AYES, 41. Allen, E. G. Fraser, A. L. D. Palmer Arnold Parata Hall Russell, G. W. Barclay Hall-Jones Seddon Bennet Hanan Smith, G. J. Carneross Hogg Carroll Houston Stevens Laurensen Steward Collins Colvin Ward Lawry Wilford Duncan McGowan McKenzie, R. E. Willis Field Withford. Millar Fisher Tellers. Mills Morrison Symes Flatman Tanner. Fowlds Napier NOES, 21. Rhodes Allen, J. Hornsby Russell, W. R. Hutcheson Atkinson Bollard Lang Thompson, R. Fraser, W. Lethbridge Thomson, J. W. Grabam Massey Tellers. Mackenzie, T. Hardy Buddo Heke Monk Meredith. Herries PAIR. For. Against. Smith, E. M. McGuire. Majority for, 20. Clause as amended agreed to. Clause 8 .- " In disposing of land by way of lease the Board shall, unless directed to the contrary by the Minister, give preference to married men with families provided they are landless, and the provisions of section forty-nine of the principal Act are hereby modified accordingly." Jir. SEDDON (Premier) moved to strike out the clause. Motion agreed to, and clause struck out. Clause 9 .- " (1.) The Governor may from time to time make regulations prescribing the procedure and forms to be used in making and disposing of claims for compensation in respect of the compulsory taking of land, and for that purpose modifying the provisions of 'The Public Works Act, 1894,' in its application to such claims. " (2.) All regulations heretofore made, or purporting to be made, under the principal Act shall be deemed to be as valid as if they had been made under this Act." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved to insert the words "under the principal Act " after the words " compulsory taking of land." Amendment agreed to. The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause as amended stand part of the Bill." AYES, 33. Allen, E. G. ()'Meara Hanan Parata Bennet Hogg Seddon Carneross Houston Carroll Laurensen Stevens Colvin Symes Lawry Ward McGowan Duncan Field Willis Mackenzie, T. McKenzie, R. Withford. Fisher Fraser, A. L. D. Millar Tellers. Gilfedder Mills Flatman Hall Palmer. Napier Hall-Jones NOES, 28. Allen, J. Rhodes Hardy Russell, G. W. Arnold Hoke Hornsby Russell, W. R. Atkinson Smith, G. J. Barclay Hutcheson Bollard Tanner Lang Thomson, J. W. Lethbridge Buddo Collins Massey Meredith Tellers. E. Fowlds Herries Monk Graham Pirani Wilford. PAIR. For. Against. McGuire. Smith, E. M. Majority for, 5. Clause as amended agreed to. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) moved the following new clause : -- " Where an owner of land has children born in lawful wedlock, the areas limited by subsections two and three of section twelve of . The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act. 1900,' shall be increased as follows, that is to say : an additional area of five hundred acres for each such child ; of second-class land, an additional area of one thousand acres for each such child ; and of pastoral land, an additional area of two thousand acres for each such child." Progress reported. On the question, "When the Committee should sit again to consider the Bill," Mr. SEDDON said at half-past two next day. Hon. MEMBERS. - Oh, no. Mr. SEDDON said it was an interrupted debate. An Hon. MEMBER. - The Premier will be taking away from private members their right. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) would like also to point out that the Premier had taken away their right to ask questions on Tuesdays as well as Fridays. Next day-Wednesday-was the only day when they could ask questions, because on Thursday and Friday they could not be asked.

That meant that no questions could possibly be asked until Tuesday next, and even then they would have to get the Premier's promise to take them on that day. He did not think that was a proper thing, and he was sure if the Premier looked at it in the proper light he would recognise that there had been no

<page>576</page>
<url><https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106019788238&seq=604></url>

endeavour to block the Bill. Under the circumstances, it was rather hard to take away the few private members' days at the beginning of the session. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) might be allowed to make an explanation. He took it that the interruption at half-past ten that night in Committee was the same as an interruption at midnight on Saturday, and that the business in Committee must go on at the time of meeting on next sitting-day. Hon. MEMBERS. - No, no. Mr. SEDDON said, If that was not the case, he would ask, this Bill being one of urgency, what had they been doing since half-past seven ? How much further forward were they ? As far as private members were concerned, he did not want even to block questions or private members' business, and he had said he would give them another day. As to questions, if members preferred that they should be asked to-morrow afternoon and go on with the orders of the day at half-past seven he would not object. but he took it that the business interrupted at half-past ten must be resumed at the next sitting of the House, and that the Chairman ought to have left the chair, and taken his place in the chair at half-past two next afternoon. He understood that to be the order. Of course, it was a new procedure, and he would like to know, if that was so when the sitting was interrupted at half-past ten, if that could be altered by an order of the House. He would leave the matter to Mr. Speaker. In view of the arrival of the hour of half-past ten he thought the Chairman would have left the chair; and he had asked him the question, but the Chairman had said that they had better report progress. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) said he believed the practice in the House of Commons was that the Chairman of Committees, when the hour of twelve o'clock arrived, vacated the chair and reported progress to the Speaker, who adjourned the House; and it followed in the ordinary course that next day the House proceeded with the business set down for that day. and not with the business left over from Committee. Mr. SPEAKER said that it was for the House to fix a time for the consideration of the Bill in Committee ; but it was his duty to point out that there was a special Standing Order that private members' business was to have precedence on Wednesday. Of course, if the House fixed this Bill for half-past two p.m. next day it would interfere with that Standing Order. The question before the House was, That the Committee have leave to sit at half-past two next day. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he would ask leave to withdraw that motion, and substitute for it, That the Committee on the Bill be resumed at half-past seven p.m. next day. Motion for the Committee to sit at half-past two p.m. negatived. Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) moved, That the Committee have power to sit at half-past seven to-morrow evening. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) desired to say that he would take the Bills as they appeared on the Order Paper for to-morrow, and give a Government night for the same Bills. The House divided. AYES, 39. Guinness Allen, E. G. Palmer Parata Arnold Hall Russell, G. W. Hall-Jones Barclay Bennet Hanan Seddon Buddo Hogg Smith, G. J. Carncross Stevens Houston Carroll Laurenson Tanner Ward Collins Lawry McGowan Wilford Colvin Millar Willis. Duncan Mills Tellers. Flatman Field Fowlds Napier Witheford . Fraser, A. L. D. O'Meara Gilfedder NOES, 21. Allen, J. Monk Hutcheson Russell, W. R. Lang Atkinson Lethbridge Svmes Bollard Thomson. J. W. Massey Eli Fisher Mackenzie, T. Tellers. Pirani Mckenzie, R. Hardy Rhodes. Meredith Herries Hornsby PAIRS. For. Against. McGuire. E. M. Smith. Majority for, 18. Motion agreed to. Mr. SEDDON rose to speak- Captain RUSSELL said he rose to a point of order. According to the resolution agreed to the House must adjourn at half-past ten. The practice of the House of Commons was to rise punctually at the hour fixed for adjournment and allow no further business to be taken. He was sure that that rule was recognised that the House must rise at the hour fixed ; if they could go on till a quarter to eleven, he saw no reason why they should not go on till a quarter past eleven. Mr.

SEDDON said he only wanted to lay upon the table the proceedings at the opening of the Wainibokasi Hospital. Fiji. Captain RUSSELL .- No, I object. The House adjourned at a quarter to eleven o'clock p.m.