

light of this experience we submit our proposals, with the full confidence that the country is ripe for them and will accept them.

CONCLUSION.

Before concluding, I consider it my duty to direct the attention of the Committee to the lesson conveyed by the census returns of the population recently issued. Briefly, the rough results of the census, as shown by enumerators, give a population, subject to revision, of 623,352 persons, not including Maoris, against 578,482 persons in March, 1886, making an increase for the five years of 44,870. But the natural increase for this period, being the excess of births over deaths, is 64,168 persons; so that the loss by excess of departures over arrivals is 19,298.

Rough results of the census.

The arrivals recorded in the five years were 73,386, and the departures 83,948, giving a loss of 10,562 persons. It would thus appear that the unrecorded departures amounted to 8,736 persons.

Arrivals and departures.

The full outgo of population from the colony has evidently not been returned to the Registrar-General in the monthly statements; and it is well known that in the years 1888, 1890, and of late, the steamers for Australia were greatly crowded, owing to a disposition on the part of the floating population to leave—mainly for New South Wales.

Returns of emigration not reliable.

Now, here is a loss of wealth and wealth-producing power, in the departure of so many people from our shores to seek employment in other colonies, which demands the serious consideration of Parliament. We naturally congratulate ourselves on the increase of the exports, but the reason for congratulation suffers serious abatement when the discovery is made that more people are leaving than arriving in the colony. If we cannot retain our population, we should know the reason why, in order that the remedy for such a state of affairs may, if possible, be applied. The returns of the census took us all by surprise. No one imagined the loss had been so great, or that the exodus had made so large an inroad on the New-Zealand-born population. It is not satisfactory merely to repeat the cry that the cessation of public works has been the cause of the exhausting emigration which has been going on. Doubtless this may be one of the causes, but, if so, there is the greater reason to shape our policy to overcome the difficulty.

Serious consideration of Parliament demanded by the loss arising out of emigration.

It appears to the Government that the first thing to be done is to obtain an accurate knowledge of the facts: how many people are unemployed; why employment does not exist for all; whether labour should not be organized by the assistance of the Government so that it may be more equally distributed, and more easily find employment. In a word, what is wanted in this respect is a system under which statistics may be furnished to a central office at frequent intervals—weekly or monthly—of the state of the labour-market in every part of the colony. The “unemployed” evil appears to be centred principally in the large cities, to which men out of work seem to be attracted. As the first step in the treatment of a disease is to submit it to a careful diagnosis, so we must know the conditions surrounding the “unemployed” malady before we shall be able to overcome it. We are thus naturally led to the practical consideration of the establishment of labour bureaux in the different centres of population, under the charge of a Minister of the Crown.

Proposal to establish labour bureaux.

Having obtained our information, the next step, of course, is to apply it so as to utilise this wealth in the form of human beings who are wandering through our streets in search of work, or who are leaving us altogether because there appeared no gleam of hope if they remained. I have referred to the cessation of public works as one of the assigned causes of the exodus. Does it not show that the method of carrying on public works has been radically vicious, when they no sooner cease than those engaged on them are compelled to emigrate? If the public works had been made subordinate to settlement, they would have created a demand for population: on the other hand, in the way they have been conducted, they have been instrumental in driving it away. I submit, as a subject for the earnest consideration of the Committee, that not a mile of road or railway should be constructed by the colony in the future without provision being at the same time made for the location of the people engaged in the work on land, if

Reproductive public works to be put in hand with the view of giving immediate relief.