

In the year 1908–9 the commitments include eight estates, containing 101,634 acres, for which about £336,155 have to be paid; and there are several other large estates under consideration. The commitments for the current year and the negotiations in progress will require for land-purchases not less than £500,000.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE CLASSIFICATION.

As honourable members are aware, "The Public Service Classification Act, 1907," came into operation on the 25th November of last year, and by its provisions all Departments of the Public Service (except the Post and Telegraph Department, the Police, and the Government Railways Department, which have separate classification schemes of their own) have to be classified.

This was a boon long looked for by the service generally, and the fact of it becoming law has created a general feeling of satisfaction, not only among the permanent officials, but also among those who prior to the passing of the Classification Act had been employed as temporary officials and who had neither any claim to a pension nor any hope of their back service being of any use to them. All this has now changed, and all such temporary officers of five years' continuous service prior to the 25th November, 1907, have now become permanent officers of the Public Service.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION.

The Public Service Superannuation Act, which came into operation on the 1st January, 1908, has also proved to be a popular measure judging by the number of public servants who have become contributors to the Superannuation Fund.

Under this Act permanent officials, as also those temporary officials who have been continually employed for five years, become entitled to a retiring-allowance after reaching a certain age, or after having served for so-many years. Provision is also made for a pension for their widows, as also a weekly allowance for each child under fourteen years of age. They were also allowed to count as service the years they had served as temporary officers, provided the service was continuous. The number of contributors up to the present amounts to 7,028. This must be considered distinctly satisfactory, as showing a desire on the part of the Government officers not only to contribute towards a retiring-allowance, but as also evincing a wish to provide in some way for those dependent upon them.

The revenue derivable from the deductions made from the salaries of contributors, so far as can be ascertained at present, is over £40,000, and may safely be estimated at nearly £50,000 per annum—which, with the £20,000 contribution from the Consolidated Fund, should put the fund in a healthy condition.

A Board has been set up under the Act, consisting of a Minister of the Crown, four persons nominated by His Excellency the Governor, and five persons elected by and from the contributors, and regulations have been carefully prepared by the Board and approved by the Governor in Council, which will no doubt be of service in carrying out the responsible duties of the Board.

A certain number of amendments will be necessary to make the working of the Act more effective, and an amending Bill will be laid before the House shortly.

#### NATIVE LAND COURT.

During the period under review the work of the Native Land Court has shown an increase as compared with former years. There have been issued 147 notices of sittings of the Court, which notices have reference to a total of 16,799 cases. The Native Appellate Court has, during the same period, been called upon to deal with 267 appeals against decisions of the lower Court, and of these 213 have been disposed of. The work of coping with such a heavy press of business has taxed the judicial staff to a large extent; and for this reason, and for