

### The Group System.

Regarding the group system (if by this is meant the socialistic idea which was tried some years ago in South America and failed utterly), I may say I am certain that such a system would not work as applied to agricultural pursuits in New Zealand. The man who tackles work on the land in New Zealand must be prepared largely to rely on his own individual industry and hard work.

### New Zealand's Need for Skilled Labour.

The people who are in demand at the present moment in New Zealand are tradesmen—builders bricklayers, and carpenters; they are the people whom we want. I have returns showing that for quite a long time past bricklayers and carpenters have been earning an average of 2s. 6d. an hour, and some of them considerably more than that. There is quite a demand for them, and there is going to be a demand for the man who is not exactly a tradesman but a handy-man and accustomed to any sort of work. He can get plenty of work; so can the man who goes out into country districts and takes to draining or fencing, and he is all the better for the experience which he gains in that way. We have a lot of that work waiting to be done.

### Tax on Unoccupied Land.

We have a law on our statute-book which has only come into operation this year which provides that a man who keeps his land in an unoccupied state is required to pay 50 per cent. more land-tax than the man who improves his land. An addition of 50 per cent. is a very serious item; it is a much bigger tax than the income-tax, but it is going to have a very good effect. It will prevent the holding of land for speculative purposes, and it will make more land available for settlement. Before I came away the owners of several blocks came to me and they said, "You are making it impossible to hold this land." It is being offered to the Government for settlement purposes, and it will help us to find land for the new settlers from other British countries. I do not mean that we want to steal settlers from Canada or anywhere else. We have had a few come down, and they are good men and are doing well.

### New Zealand Housing Scheme.

I am glad to see settlers coming to Canada and to New Zealand if they are going to be successful. I do not care how many come if we can absorb them. Our immigration laws are very drastic, but where British countries are concerned there is no difficulty at all. However, that is the position, Mr. President. As for the difficulty in regard to housing just let me say this: There is a labour man out in New Zealand whose name, I believe, is not unknown in the House of Commons. I have forgotten it, but he is out there reporting upon the possibilities of settlement, and he calls attention to the difficulties in New Zealand about housing. Every country, of course, has had this difficulty, and it is very hard to account for it. I know you have been providing bonuses for house-building in England. I have been surprised to see the number of residences that have been built in the suburbs of London during the last two years. I am thinking more of the cities than of country districts for the moment, whole streets of houses have been built during the last two years.

We have recently brought into operation a scheme in New Zealand which provides for loans to industrious people and people of good character who are anxious to become their own landlords, and we lend them money for the purpose. Last session I asked Parliament to agree to an amendment, and Parliament agreed to it, providing that a decent man with good character and who wanted to provide a home for himself and his family could borrow 95 per cent. of the money required to pay for the building, and to pay for the section on which the building is intended to stand, and we let him have the money at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Even before I left the Dominion the applications were pouring in, and I believe that is going to remedy the difficulty to a very great extent. The scheme will provide houses where it would not be possible for the applicants to provide them for themselves, and by this means the housing difficulty will disappear before very long. The improved financial position of the Dominion enabled the Government to provide the necessary capital.

### Dairy-farming in New Zealand.

Then, in regard to dairy-farming, which is becoming the most important of our primary industries in New Zealand, that is where most of the people with a limited capital, but who are able and willing to undertake hard work, go. They go dairy-farming, and the history of hundreds and thousands of these dairy-farmers is intensely interesting. I do not think you will find one in twenty who did not start as a working-man practically without any capital, but with the exercise of thrift, industry, and hard work on the part of themselves and their families in a very few years these people are owning dairy-farms themselves. Most of the dairying-farming is done in this way: A man who has good land, land fit for dairy-farming purposes, buys dairy stock up to the carrying-capacity of his land; then he looks around for a family to milk, on shares. The family looks after the milking and carts the milk to the nearest factory or creamery, and they get half profit, half the price of the milk and half the value of the young stock they are able to rear. They are often able to save £200 or £300 a year, and after working for a few years they look around for land for themselves. They do better than any one else, but I do not advise any one who is not prepared to tackle hard work to go to dairy-farming. It means seven days a week or twelve to fourteen hours a day. If they choose to go to it it is their business, but I do not take the responsibility of advising them. If a man comes to me and says he is going to farm in New Zealand and he wants advice as to what to do, I say go to sheep-farming. They do not need to work so hard for so many weeks and so many months in the year. It is very much easier and quite interesting; but there again experience and capital are wanted.