

The ordinary Establishments of the General Government, and the salaries of the Officers have been placed upon the Estimates at the same rate at which they were originally fixed, and at which they have for some time been paid; considering the continued high price of every description of labour, and the cost of the necessaries of life, the House will doubtless be of opinion that the Public Officers are at present inadequately paid. The Officer administering the Government will be glad to concur with the House in making any general augmentation of their salaries which may appear to be reasonable and just:—with respect to the salaries, charges, and expenses, now for the first time brought into the Estimates, and to the amount to be reserved for General Public Works, &c., he will be glad to be guided by the recommendations of the House.

During the short period which appears to be remaining at the disposal of the House, it can hardly be expected that the Assembly should exercise the power granted to them by the Constitution Act of regulating the disposal and management of the Waste Lands of the Crown.

Believing that the maintenance of uniformity in the mode of disposing of the Public Lands is not of essential importance, and indeed that no general system can be equally well adopted, or can long remain suited to the various and varying conditions of a country like New Zealand, the Officer administering the Government suggested for the consideration of the Assembly, in his opening address, whether it might not be expedient for the Assembly to delegate to the Provincial Legislatures the power of making laws for regulating the sale, letting, disposal and occupation of the Waste Lands of the Crown, and he would have been prepared at once to submit to the Assembly, a Bill to carry that object into effect. It may well deserve consideration however, whether any Act to be passed by the Assembly to authorize the Provincial Councils to legislate on this subject, should not, in order to secure to the General Government an efficient controlling power, contain a provision that on Ordinance to be passed by any Provincial Council, relating to the Lands of the Crown should come into actual operation until it shall have received the Governor's assent. Looking to the magnitude of the interests at stake, it may also be a wise precaution to enact, that the power of regulating the disposal and management of the Waste Lands of any Province, shall not be exercised by the local Legislature until there shall have been a new Election of its Members.

Until the Assembly shall Legislate on the subject, it will be competent for the Governor by virtue of the provisions of the Constitution Act, to regulate the sale, letting, disposal, and occupation of the Demesne Lands of the Crown. Pending legislation by the Assembly and aided by the best information which local knowledge and experience can supply, the Officer administering the Government will be prepared, as occasion may require, to adapt the existing general regulations to the particular requirements of the various Provinces, and as far as may be consistent with the interests of the Colony at large, in conformity with the wants and wishes of their several inhabitants, many of the subjects of the most pressing importance have already for some time been under the consideration of the house. Amongst the Measures which will probably engage their attention with a view to immediate legislation, are the Secondary Punishment Bill, the Naturalization Bill, the Dower Bill, the Nelson Trust Fund Bill, &c., &c.

With a general desire to work together, with a view to promote the interests of the Colony, the Assembly will be able by a close attention to the actual business of legislation to turn even a short Session to profitable account, and the Officer administering the Government in conclusion, has to assure the House of his most earnest wish cordially to co-operate with them, during the short period which may yet remain at their disposal, in the endeavour to secure for the people of New Zealand, the greatest possible measure of useful Legislation.

R. H. WYNYARD,
Officer Administering the Government.

Government House, Auckland,
4th September, 1854.