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and was out of the room within the time limit. Levine followed him, and from the front door watched him steal away.

When Harvey Levine returned to the library, he received another severe shock, for, on opening the door he saw his daughter Pat sobbing quietly in the arms of Guy Allenby, who was kissing her hair, and murmuring soothingly to her.

They were too much wrapped up in themselves to notice the entrance of the millionaire, who, being a man of common sense, with a shrewd knowledge of human nature, stepped back into the hall again and lighted a cigar.

Five minutes later, after a severe fit of coughing upon the threshold he re-entered the library.

The young couple had profited by the warning of his coming, but their faces betrayed them only too well what had passed between them.

The millionaire placed a hand upon the shoulder of each of them, and looked into the face of the young artist.

There was a catch in his voice when he spoke.

"You have given me a wonderful picture of my little Pat, Allenby," he said. "And now, in return, you are going to steal the original of it from me. But I think I can understand now the inspiration which prompted your masterpiece. God bless you both!"

The end.

N.Z.R.S.A.

LAND COMMITTEE MINUTES.

A meeting of the Lands Committee of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association was held in the office, 292 Lambton Quay, Wellington, on June 28th, 1920, at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Lt.-Col. Geo. Mitchell, M.P. (chairman), and Mr A. P. Whatman. The general and assistant secretaries were in attendance.

LAND POLICY POINTS.

No. 1.

1.—That all large estates in the Dominion be tabulated according to their size and suitability for settlement.

2.—That such large estates as are necessary for the settlement of soldiers, be compulsorily acquired under the provisions of the Act of 1908 (it was found that there was a flaw in the Act of 1908 therefore it was decided that this resolution be re-drafted by Col. Mitchell, Messrs Stat-ham and Downie Stewart).

3.—That the estates of £100,000 and over in value be reduced to £75,000, after those in this category are exhausted, those of £75,000 be reduced to £50,000, and if required from £50,000 to £35,000 such a system to be continued until all soldiers are settled.

4.—To expedite the settlement of these estates after acquisition, we suggest that the peg system of survey as suggested by Mr Jardine be adopted.

The above is Mr A. P. Whatman's scheme and has been adopted at the Wellington Farmers' Provincial Conference at Marton, and later unanimously by the Dominion Farmers' Conference held on 24th and 29th July, 1917, at Wellington, forty delegates being present farmers themselves and representatives of the farming community of the whole of New Zealand.

(a)—It will minimise competition in the purchase of land.

(b) It will stimulate (instead of reducing) production.

(c)—It will provide sufficient land for settlement of all soldiers.

The committee recommends further that:—

5.—The principal of communal settlements (fruits farms and similar branches of activity) for T.B. and P.D.I. soldiers, be approved and the Government be urged to extend the system at once.

That Colonel Mitchell's scheme for the settlement by fit men of bush and native lands be approved, and the Government be urged to put it into operation at once in the Urewera lands or other suitable country.

7.—It is proposed that the amount of advances for the purchase of stock and implements be increased to £1250.

8.—That the loan to settlers for building a home (now £250) be increased as under: Single man, £250; man and wife, £400; for each child £50 extra.

9.—To protest against the power of discrimination vested in the Land Boards and to affirm that all soldiers be given equal opportunities to acquire sections of land, providing they have the ability and experience to work it.

10.—That the Government be urged to transfer the administration of advances to returned soldiers for purchasing and build-

ing houses from the Land Boards to the Repatriation Boards.

11.—That no section be loaded with cost of roading, draining, etc., and interest be charged to settler until the money has actually been spent.

12.—That in all cases where a soldier is placed on land after its productive period of the year, the half year's rent be remitted.

SCHEDULE No. 2.

1.—That the N.Z.R.S.A. considers that the delay on the part of the Government Lands Department in settling the liabilities of soldier settlers to private firms is detrimental to the soldiers' interest and recommends that a more expeditious method in dealing with these accounts be adopted.

2.—This N.Z.R.S.A. recommends that the Government be urged to remit the stamp duty on transfers to soldiers who obtain loans under the D.S.S. Act.

3.—That the N.Z.R.S.A. views with regret that the Government has not given effect to the resolution with regard to the supply of fencing wire and building material at cost price to the soldier settlers, and the same remit is again urged this year.

4.—That the N.Z.R.S.A. strongly urge that the R.S.A. district secretaries be supplied by the Land Department with a list of all Government leases falling due within the next three years.

5.—N.Z.R.S.A. recommends that the maximum sum advanced by the Government for the purpose of felling bush on soldier sections should be increased in all cases to cover the actual cost of felling the bush, the maximum advance of £2 10s being insufficient to cover the cost of felling the bush in a good many cases.

6.—That Land Boards should be empowered to appoint local sub-committees to deal with returned soldiers' applications for land.

7.—That in order to expedite business the Land Boards and District Purchase Board should have power to make final decisions without reference to the Minister excepting in cases of difficulty.

8.—That the Minister of Lands be requested to make a clear statement regarding the duties and powers of the Land Purchase Boards throughout the country.

9.—That the regulation regarding the balloting of lands to Pakeha and Maori ex-soldiers is hereby strongly endorsed, and that same be adhered to especially in connection with the Hoskins estate.

10.—That the Government be strongly urged for a reply as to when the Hoskins estate is to be made available for selection, upon selection to be asked for. (Referred to headquarters by Conference).

11.—That the attention be drawn to the great demand by returned soldiers for grazing leases and pastoral runs, and urged that this class of land be thrown open for such, and that where the leases of grazing and pastoral runs expire, no renewals be granted provided returned soldiers are prepared to take them up and that all such leases falling in be advertised at least three months before becoming available.

12.—That such areas of any section with fern, scrub, manuka, shall be free from all or part rent, based on its carrying capacity until such areas are made productive, but such remission shall not exceed three years.

13.—That the Government be urged to make provision for a representative nominated by the Executive of the N.Z.R.S.A. to sit upon the various Land Boards throughout the Dominion.

14.—That the valuation fee under the D.S.S. Act be reduced.

15.—That the Minister of Lands be urged to give more prompt effect to the six weeks option obtained to purchase lands and houses in view of the numerous complaints received of options running out before the purchase is completed.

The remaining resolutions in the report were dealt with as follows:—

1.—In the event of property being applied for on more than one occasion during a period of six months, only the last valuation fee be retained by the Land Department, the previous fees being refunded to the unsuccessful applicants.

It was reported that such is the case. Providing that the application is genuine there is no difficulty in obtaining a refund of valuation fee in respect of an unsuccessful application, but the refund must be applied for to the Lands Department concerned.

2.—That the election of all members to represent Crown tenants on the Land Boards be by secret ballot.

The method of voting as set out in an extract from the N.Z. Gazette of the 13th February, 1913, was considered, and it was decided that the ballot could not be made any more secret than at present.

3.—That the incoming Executive be instructed in conjunction with the Standing Lands Committee to prepare a Land Bill to be introduced during the next session of Parliament embodying the proposals laid down in the report of the Lands

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Committee at the last meeting of the Dominion Executive. This resolution was deferred.

4.—That the Government be urged to give discretionary powers to Land Boards to grant applications for sale after the expiry of five years.

It was considered that as the aim of the association was to settle the men, this resolution was against the policy and therefore should not be proceeded with in the meantime.

5.—That the Government be urged, in Land Ballots to give preference to men who have proceeded overseas against those those who have not.

According to the regulations governing admission to ballots under the D.S.S. Act, the only men who, having not proceeded overseas, are entitled to participate in the D.S.S. Act ballots, are men retained in the N.Z. military camps as instructors. Therefore it was decided that the resolution be not proceeded with. (Note:—Men in camp at armistice time are not entitled to participate in ballots).

6.—The committee recommends that the Government be urged to bring down legislation forthwith with a view to obtaining an intermediate classification of lands and in the meantime to provide a further special grant for improvements, including buildings for the Wairere block, and the blocks similarly situated. This resolution was deferred for further discussion.

7.—That in view of the acute shortage of houses this Conference urges the Government to continue the protection given to returned soldiers by the War Regulations Act of 1914, against ejection from rented dwellings for a further period of twelve months as from August 2nd next.

It was reported that this resolution had been placed before the Prime Minister and a reply was being awaited. Lt.-Col. Mitchell undertook to interview the Prime Minister regarding this matter on the following day.

8.—The question of mining rights was referred to the incoming Executive. This resolution was not discussed.

TE KURI ESTATE.

The case of D. Ferguson was considered, Ferguson, after being advised that he had been successful in the ballot for a section of the Te Kuri estate, was refused the section on pretext that there was a quantity of gum on the property. It was reported that the Minister of Lands had been communicated with on this case and a reply was being awaited.

HOUSES FOR SOLDIERS.

POLICY OF ASSOCIATION.

The policy favoured in dealing with the claims of permanently disabled soldiers is set forth by the executive of the Auckland Patriotic Association in its annual report. This states that the executive has been opposed to assisting in the purchase of houses for the disabled men, and would have preferred to advance the money to enable the applicant to erect a new building, but it was found that the Government offers of assistance to acquire properties was being taken full advantage of, and the committee was unable to insist upon the erection of new buildings. The policy was, of course, wrong, as the finding by the Government of large sums of money to assist in acquiring existing houses could have no other result than the raising of values all round, and, what was worse, causing the eviction of persons occupying such houses without any corresponding provision to meet their requirements. The association, recognising the difficulties attaching to the procuring of timber and other materials to erect new houses, was inquiring into the question of erecting homes of earth, which was apparently being carried out with some measures of success in England. The committee would be glad of any information which would throw light upon what was a very serious question, not only to the disabled soldier, but to the whole community.

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