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N.Z.R.S.A.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTES.

1.—To ask the Government whether they will repeal the regulation which compels people of the Dominion who wish to leave for Great Britain to obtain a permit to do so. Note.—Many people wish to visit the graves of their sons who gave their lives for the Empire, but have to beg for a permit to do so.—(Mr Witty).

Reply.—The Hon. Mr Anderson replied that it was presumed the Hon. Member referred to the issue of passports. These were essential for the reason that no person could enter Great Britain without a passport, and a person could not enter France without such passport being vided by the French consular officer.

2.—To ask the Minister of Railways whether he will give instruction that in future all tarpaulins which are not fit for use on the railways shall be offered for sale to farmers and others, instead of destroying them as at present.—(Mr Witty, M.P.).

Reply.—The Rt. Hon. Mr Massey, replied that there were serious objections to the sale of railway tarpaulins under any circumstances. His investigations on the subject showed that the best parts of condemned tarpaulins were used for repair work, and such portions as remained were quite unsound and quite unfit for use. In the earlier days when a limited number of whole tarpaulins was disposed of, the very greatest difficulty was experienced in preventing good tarpaulins being removed from railway premises and converted to private use. For this reason it was decided as a matter of policy to scrap condemned tarpaulins and only dispose of scrap material to paper mills for paper making.

3.—To ask the Government whether, in view of the fact that arrangements were being made to bring out numbers of ex-service men and women to the Dominion, they will increase the poll-tax on Chinese, also that the education test on Hindus be made more stringent.—(Mr Glenn, M.P.).

4.—To ask the Minister of Customs what are the details of the educational and other qualifications required from Chinese and Indians entering the Dominion.—(Mr Kellett, M.P.).

Reply.—The Hon. Sir W. Herries, replied, that it was undesirable that the details of the education test prescribed for Hindus should be published. Such a proceeding would give to those interested all the various forms which have been prescribed and which a Hindu might have placed before him, and, although there are blanks to be filled in in these forms and questions to be answered, the Hindu could learn the answers to the questions before hand. Chinese are required to pay a poll-tax of £100, and to pass an education test consisting of ability to read a hundred words in the English language selected by the Collector of Customs. The standard agreed upon was reading matter equivalent to the fourth standard in the schools. Both Chinese and Hindus must be in good health and able to pass the doctor.

5.—To ask the Minister of Lands whether in order to perpetuate the memory of the great fights that the New Zealand Division took part in in the Great War, he will allow the different estates acquired under the soldiers' settlement policy to carry the names of those famous battles, such titles to be selected by vote of the soldier settlers concerned.—(Mr Burnett, M.P.).

Reply.—The Hon. Mr Guthrie, replied that the suggestion seemed a good one and would receive his immediate consideration. It was, however, absolutely necessary for the name to be given immediately after the purchase of the property, and it would not be possible to wait until the settlement was selected.

6.—To ask the Prime Minister whether he would set up a committee to consider and report this session on the question submitted by the N.Z.R.S.A. to Parliamentary Candidates at the last general election.—(Hon. Mr Hannan, M.P.).

Reply.—The Rt. Hon. Mr Massey, replied, that the setting up of a committee of the House as suggested was not at present deemed necessary.

7.—To ask the Government whether they will take into consideration the removing of the war regulations relating to the letting of houses as it is having a detrimental effect on the building of new houses for letting purposes.—(J. R. Hamilton, M.P.).

Reply.—The Hon. Sir W. Herries, replied that it was not intended to remove these regulations at present. It might be pointed out that the restriction, of rent to 8 per cent on the capital value did not apply to new houses.

8.—To ask the Government whether they will, this year, amend the miners' phthisis act to provide that the pension shall not be cancelled by reason of the recipient visiting Australia for the benefit of his health. Note.—By the present law, a pensioner under the miners' phthisis act loses his pension if he leaves N.Z., and

as a result several pensioners who have been ordered by their doctors to go to Australia have been unable to do so as they cannot leave their wives and children penniless. This provision is a brutal one, and should be abolished at once.—(Mr Poland, M.P.).

Reply.—The Hon. Sir W. Herries replied, that the question of allowing miners' pensions to be paid during the temporary absence of the pensioner from New Zealand would be considered in connection with any amending legislation submitted this session.

9.—To ask the Minister of Lands whether he will state what steps he has taken or proposes to take to acquire for soldier settlement the Hakatarama Estate, consisting of some 60,000 to 70,000 acres, which is owned by the N.Z. and Australian Land Company, an absentee. (Note.—The Member for Waitaki has been assured by a returned soldier, a practical farmer, that the sub-division of this estate would provide homes for at least 50 men.)—(Mr Bitchener, M.P.).

The Hon. Mr Guthrie replied, that the acquisition of this property had been under consideration on several occasions during past years. The report showed that it was liable to heavy falls of snow; consequently, sub-division into comparatively small areas would be a very risky proceeding. The Government was at present dealing with the adjoining country, and the question of acquiring Hakatarama was also being considered.

10.—To ask the Postmaster General, whether taking into consideration the present shortage of material for the erection of country telephone lines, he will, when material becomes available, give preference to returned soldier settlers.—(Mr Hockly, M.P.).

Reply.—The Hon. Mr Coates, replied, that the Department was already giving preference to returned soldiers in the matter of material for private lines and it would continue to do so.

SHAMROCK IV.

The journal "Land and Water" has arrived by the last English mail and contains some interesting references to Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht, Shamrock IV. There are also interesting references to Captain Sycamore, who is possibly one of the finest helmsmen in England, and who has had long associations with Sir Thomas Lipton.

A great number of the returned soldiers who were in the Engineers will remember when we left Christchurch in Hampshire, and left for Brightlinea in Essex. Our principal object was to do pontoon work on the Colon River. Brightlinea is a very cold place and gets the cold winds which blow from the North Sea. The water is always "choppy" and affords good practice for pontoon work. We were placed in "billets" and started bridge-building at a place called the "Hard" or the "ard" as the old salts used to call it. There need be no doubt about where the "bulldog" breed come from after seeing these hardy old sailors. I have seen them sit down on a seat in the sleet and rain, with an oilskin on, smoking a stump of a pipe, and finding more enjoyment in life than we would seated in the gardens on a beautiful summer's day. I may incidentally mention that when the fleet was firing at sea, the plaster ceilings would crack with the concussion and on several occasions the glass windows were broken. Most people will remember the incident of a Zeppelin coming down and falling between an old lady's cottage and an apple tree. It was near Brightlinea that this happened, and the Huns came out and asked for a bed. However, I must return to Captain Sycamore who lived here, and on several occasions invited some of us up to tea. There are a great number of yachts here and if I remember correctly Shamrock II. was there, also the White Heather and others. The captain is one of the finest fellows you could meet, but stern and self-possessed, showing signs of having weathered many a gale. He was a long time captain for Sir Thomas Lipton, and is recorded as one of the oldest lieutenants in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve to go to sea, and served with the fleet during the latter half of the war. "Land and Water," records that Captain Sycamore has raced against Mr Burton, who handled the Shamrock IV, in the recent American Cup Race, in what were known as 19 metre cutters. The Shamrock IV went out for her first trial off Long Island on June 1st. She was built for British racing and prior to the "Cup" race, was handled by Captain Sycamore. The Shamrock IV was one of the fastest and most successful of British racing cutters. Below decks she is much the same as all big racing yachts. The crew of 20 men live on board; the skipper has a cabin to himself. There are a splendid cooking gallery, pantry, and large dining saloon, owner's and guests' cabins, a ladies' cabin, an exceedingly fine bathroom, a deck house, which is a very nice smoking room, and is fitted with electric light.

Her decks are broad and white, and exceedingly thick and strong, and just in front of the wheel, she has a comfortable cockpit where anybody can sit during a race and keep dry even in the worst weather. In British racing, yachts are not entirely a shell without any cabins or comforts whatever. It is only in that much "boomed" event, the America Cup, that the yachts are skinned out inside and have no cabins. Unfortunately in the America Cup there are no regulations to oblige the yachts to be suitably built or to have fittings, and consequently the yachts for that race have nothing inside them and their decks are so thin that they bend up and down when you walk on them, and if you jump you feel as if you would break the lid of a box. From the press reports of the race, we naturally understood that Mr Burton was the skip, but Mr Burton is only regarded in yachting circles as an amateur. Mr Burton was at the wheel but his skipper Albert Turner was crouching silently at his elbow; the crew of 20 lie flat upon the deck and only the mate's head is raised above the deck watching the head sails. Perfect silence. The opposing yacht just astern, perhaps so close that they can hear the wash under her bow. Round she comes, and her head sheets rattle like thunder as she meets the wind. Not a man moves in Mr Burton's boat, or even turns his head, save Albert Turner; a whispered word in Mr Burton's ear, "Lea O!" shouts Turner, the wheel spins round, men dash to their stations, the head sheets clatter and are trimmed instantly with accuracy (but not too hard), and the yacht is about on the other tack without the slightest fluster. But the opposing yacht astern, she is covered and blanketed to perfection. The exact moment chosen, the tack made, not a fraction of a second too soon or late. And so the race goes on. Unfortunately Sir Thomas Lipton was unsuccessful in taking home the cup, but Sir Thomas is a keen sport, and has already intimated that he will build another boat next year and challenge for 1922. The Resolute has won, and no one appreciated their win more than Sir Thomas, who states that he was beaten along the lines of true sport, and expressed appreciation of the manner in which he was treated by the Americans. Good luck to him, and may good fortune enable him to take the cup to good old England's shores.

DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL.

The monthly meeting of the Council was held on Friday evening, those present being Mr J. Alsweiler (in the chair), and Messrs F. Forbes (Tramwaymen's Union), L. L. Petrie and J. Winders (Storemen's Union), Gillies (Furniture Trades Union), and T. O'Byrne (Sawmill Workers' Union).

The Secretary reported that he had waited on a drapery firm in regard to the complaint of the Softgoods' Union that non-unionists were employed. The Secretary stated that the employers had refused to ask the employees to join the Union but he had no objection to them becoming members.—Received.

The Secretary reported that seven unions were affiliated to the Council—The Storemen's, Typographical, Sawmillers, Drivers, Milk Condensers, Furniture Trades, and the Tramwaymen's Union. All were financial. The income up to the present was £84 19s 7d and the expenditure £80 17s 4d, including a debt of £44 6s, which had been handed over by the previous Secretary. There was a credit of £4 1s 3d. Members commented favourably on the position.

Mr J. Alsweiler was appointed to represent the Council in the election of a member to fill the vacancy on the Town Council. On the motion of Mr Alsweiler, seconded by Mr J. Winders it was decided to protest against the employment of indentured Chinese labour in Samoa.

It was decided on the motion of Mr Winders seconded by Mr Petrie to support the Southland League in its effort to secure the establishment of cement works in Southland.

Several members stated that the price of hides had recently shown a considerable decline but there had been no corresponding reduction in the price of boots. They mentioned that as soon as a rise took place in the unmanufactured article up went the price of boots but the same alacrity was not shown when there was a drop.

Grasshoppers are reported as having been picked up in swarms at sea, in some cases no less than 1200 miles from the nearest land.

A Main Trunk traveller says the frost on Tuesday night was a record in its severity. Icicles hanging in the vicinity of Raurimu glistened in passing like a crystal chandelier in the glow of the engine furnace. At Taihape there were very numerous bursts in the water pipes.

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