

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

July 22 to 29.

In the House of Representatives, Mr Bathgate moved the second reading of the District Courts Act Amendment Bill. He explained that the Bill was intended to extend the equity jurisdiction of the District Courts to £300, and thus cheapen litigation. After discussion the second reading was agreed to.

The Gold Mining Bill was read a second time, as also was the Canterbury Waste Lands Bill.

The Bill for constituting Native Councils and defining their functions provides that the Bill be permissive, at the option of a majority of the natives whose title to land is not extinguished. The Councils are to have power to inquire into petitions regarding land disputes, and to facilitate the amicable settlement and adjudication of such cases. They are to be recognisable by the Native Lands Court. The Councils are to report to the Government relative to the observance of Native rights and customs. The Council may frame regulations for health, the cleaning of houses, nuisances, drunkenness, public property, the prevention of fires, dogs, cattle branding, cattle trespass, boundary fences regulations, and may impose penalties. When the Act is brought into operation in Native districts, the Provincial Ordinances are to cease to be in operation.

On a motion asking for leave of absence for a member for three weeks being made, Mr Buckland contended that the time was too long, and would virtually disfranchise his constituency. Mr Fitzherbert suggested that the sessions of Provincial Councils should be restricted to the recess.

In the Legislative Council, Mr Waterhouse, in moving the appointment of a Select Committee to report upon the reconstruction of the Council, said the Council could not offer resistance to popular pressure, and could not maintain itself against the elected body. He was in favor of an elective Chamber, which should bear a resemblance to the United States Senate. After further discussion, the motion was postponed.

In the House of Representatives, Mr Fox asked the Government whether, in response to petitions, the Government intended to introduce a measure amending the Licensing Bill.

Mr Vogel replied that Government were not able to give any definite promise upon the subject raised by Mr Fox, but they would consider the question during the recess and draft a Bill.

Mr Richardson promised to obtain a return of the amount paid to owners of private property for land taken for railway purposes.

In reply to a question by Mr O'Neill, Mr Vogel said that the despatches received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies were unfavorable to the establishment of a New Zealand Mint.

In reply to Mr Bradshaw, Mr Vogel said the Government did not intend to introduce a measure this session authorising mining for gold and silver on private property. They desired to watch the operation of Victorian legislation on the subject.

In regard to the Volunteer Land Scrip Repeal Bill it was said that in the Province of Auckland the persons who bought up the scrip bought up blocks of land at auction at half-a-crown an acre.

Mr Gillies said he did not appear as the leader of the Opposition, as there was no organised Opposition in existence.

A letter from Mr Finnimore, formerly Government Auctioneer at Wanganui, to Mr O. R. Haughton, Under-Secretary for Immigration, was read. Mr Finnimore proposed that land should be sold to him at the upset price and then sold by auction, and the net profits divided between Mr Haughton and himself. He offered to deposit £1000, but the transaction was to be strictly private and confidential. He said that if Mr Haughton joined him, a large sum would be made. The letter was headed "private and confidential," and signed "Finnimore." Mr Haughton replied, stating that he could not regard the letter as confidential, and therefore handed it to the Native Minister. The latter thereupon dispensed with Mr Finnimore's services.

The Imprest Supply Bill for £250,000 was passed through all its stages.

Mr Vogel moved the second reading of the Provincial Councils Powers Bill. He said the Bill was intended to grant the Councils power to constitute courts of judicature and prescribe their procedure, having power to deal with scab disease, the sale of liquors, the sale and impounding of cattle, thistles, the making and repairing of highways, levying and recovering rates, and boundary fences. After discussion, the Bill passed its second reading.

The House agreed to the production of a return of the travelling allowances to Ministers, and the allowances to the Governor during the five years ending March, 1873.

Mr Fox moved the second reading of the National Bank of New Zealand (Limited) Bill.—Sir J. Cracroft Wilson presented a Petition from the Bank of New Zealand, against the name of the Bank.—Mr. Bathgate said the Government would propose some amendments in Committee; particularly one providing that a list of the shareholders be deposited.—Mr T. L. Shepherd suggested the publication of the names of the depositors not claiming their interest or principal within three years.—The Bill was read a second time.

Mr Vogel made his Financial Statement on Tuesday evening, showing the affairs of the Colony to be in a very prosperous state.

IMMIGRATION.

FROM a memorandum of Mr O'Rourke to Dr. Featherston, under date of 5th July, we make the following abridgment:—"Your letter of 31st April last, in which you 'submit that the expectations as regards promoting emigration to New Zealand which you held out to the Government had been more than realized, and that the system of emigration inaugurated by you has been, on the whole, attended with satisfactory results, and promises better results in the future,' opens up the whole question of the present state of emigration to New Zealand, and compels the Government to express their full and free opinion thereon.

I was very much struck by the paragraph No. 1 of this letter, in which you state that the earliest specific instructions you received in regard to emigration did not reach you until 1st February, 1872;

without instructions either oral or written on the subject of emigration from the date of your appointment in Wellington 1st April, 1871, until the date above referred to, 1st February, 1872. It may be true to the letter that you were without specific instructions till 1st February, but it is clear that you were not insensible to the spirit of the instructions that would be communicated to you by the Government on the subject. Nearly three months before you received what you term your earliest specific instructions in regard to emigration, you informed the Government, by letter of 16th November, 1871, that since your arrival in England, at the latter end of July, your time had been mainly devoted to emigration, believing, as Mr Vogel said, "that the keystone of success of the Public Works policy is the contemporaneous increase of the population of the Colony;" and you add, "I telegraphed on the 4th instant from Frankfort—'Emigration during next two years of 6,000 Germans and Scandinavians arranged.' You will perceive, from the brief report I now make of my proceedings, that I have acted more from my knowledge of the mind of the Ministry, than from any positive or definite instructions." With this knowledge of the mind of the Ministry, coupled with the fact that, in November, 1871, you felt yourself armed with sufficient power to arrange for an emigration of 6,000 souls from Germany and Scandinavia, I am at a loss to conceive how eighteen months after, in April, 1873, you can attribute the smallness of emigration to the Colony during that period to the absence of any specific instructions till February, 1872. It appears to me, from the general tenor of your early correspondence, that you felt yourself perfectly unfettered in promoting in whatever manner seemed best to you, emigration, not only from Great Britain, but from the Continent.

I admit to the full the difficulties you had to contend with in entering on your duties in finding yourself surrounded with different sets of Emigration Regulations for the several Provinces. I am not able to say whether I agree with you that no other Australasian Colony has ever attempted emigration on such a scale as New Zealand has for the last two years; but this I can say, that it is patent to everyone that the supply of immigrants is lamentably short of the requirements of the Colony, and of the number ordered by the Government during the last two years. I may add that, if my memory does not mislead me, the forty-acre system established in the Province of Auckland, some fifteen years ago, under the Superintendency of Mr John Williamson, yielded in the course of fifteen months, without pecuniary cost to the Province, some 4,000 souls, which contrasts favourably with the dribbles—they cannot be called a stream—that have been up to the present flowing to the entire Colony. You lay such stress in your correspondence upon having sent out 6,974 souls or 5,923 statute adults between July, 1871, and 31st December, 1872, that it is requisite to analyze the figures in order to ascertain the precise number of these emigrants directly due to your agency. Of the 5,923 statute adults above referred to, there are—

Nominated immigrants	...	...	...	861
Brogden's immigrants	...	...	...	1,860
Total	...	...	...	2,721

—leaving 3,202 as the direct contribution of the Colonial Agency, with its large staff and ample funds at its disposal.

I confess I find it difficult to reconcile the assurances which you have repeatedly given the Government that you would establish a large stream of emigration to the Colony with the statement you now make, that you never held out to the Government the expectation that you could execute an order for any specific number of emigrants within a given time. Had that announcement been made to the Government when it assumed office, it would have been their duty to have taken steps to insure the arrival of the number they thought requisite for the Colony during the year; but your promises of a large flow of immigrants buoyed them up, and prevented them sending home special agents to collect the number and class of immigrants deemed absolutely necessary to meet the demands for labor throughout the Colony. The Government cannot, with the stream of emigration amounting to a quarter of a million flowing annually from the United Kingdom, and with the command of sufficient money at your disposal for the requirements of the year, admit that the execution of their order for £0,000 or 13,000 emigrants should have presented insuperable difficulties. It remains for me to say, that while your letter states that you never held out to the Government the expectation that an order for any specific number of emigrants within a given time could be executed, a telegram of more recent date, 25th April, 1873, conveys the gratifying intelligence that the "emigration order will be executed during current year."

It remains to be seen whether the promise in the telegram is not as delusive as the others.

THAMES.

(From our own correspondent.)

THE Rev. J. A. Norris, our newly appointed pastor, on last Sunday, 13th July, at 11 o'clock, sang High Mass in the Grahamstown Church, and preached a very instructive sermon on the epistle and gospel of the day. After Mass had been concluded, a number of ladies came forward to present him with an address of welcome to the parish, and Father Norris thanked them, and expressed a hope that he would obtain the same amount of good-will and respect that his esteemed predecessor (Father N. Jourdan) had. In the Shortland Church, Rev. J. Golden celebrated Mass at 11 o'clock, and explained the epistle and gospel of the day to those present. His Lordship the Bishop is expected to be down here in the course of next week, as his last visit to us was just a flying one, having remained only a couple of days, including one Sunday. Father Norris called a meeting of the parishioners on Sunday afternoon last, for the purpose of electing a Church Committee and devising a method of managing the affairs of the Church. There was a good attendance at the meeting, and twenty-one gentlemen were elected as a Committee to act for the ensuing twelve months.