

the Imperial Government is not disposed to make any more long-range purchases, a fact which the butter producers should not forget even while they are jubilant over the present position, and the admission of their right to get the world's market price for the whole of their production. The fact that butter at 2s. 3d. for the local consumer involves a subsidy from the public funds of about £600,000 during the coming year is causing concern to the Minister of Finance, who showed it by throwing overboard his promise not to increase taxation, introducing a measure which will take at least a quarter of a million more out of the death duties and gift duties. He had commenced to speak hopefully of a reduction of taxation next year, but this promise, too, has been withdrawn. If the wool situation does not improve within the year, he will not enjoy another six million revenue from income tax, and will have to adjust his plans accordingly. We notice that Mr. W. T. Irvine, Secretary of the Dominion Sawmillers' Association, has made a statement to the press contrasting the favourable treatment of the butter producers with the restriction of prices to the sawmiller, and the almost total cessation of his export trade, so that the New Zealand user of timber may benefit. Mr. Irvine makes the following comment: "Contrast this position with that of the dairy farmer, who, while advocating restriction of price for the sawmiller, demands the world's market price for his product sold in the Dominion, and contrast it with the position of the flourmiller, whose wheat is subsidised, to enable him to sell at a fixed price. There is nothing of that sort with the sawmiller, who is limited as to export, and is restricted as to local price without subsidy or compensation of any kind—all for the benefit of the community. The sawmiller is therefore compelled to become a public benefactor, and, while paying heavy taxation in the ordinary course, is mulcted in the difference between the export price and the local price. That implies double taxation. Is this the Government's square deal, or in any sense fair play? The principle of the payment of subsidies I do not desire to discuss for the present, but if it holds good for the butter producer, it must, in common fairness, apply to the sawmiller." However, there is little hope for the sawmiller. The Government has reached its limit in the way of resources, and has become so anxious about the future that a little matter of injustice to the sawmiller will trouble it not at all. The return to sane trading conditions throughout the world seems to be well under weigh, and when this has been accomplished the cost of production should decrease, competition will become active, and the necessity for Government control should cease to exist.

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A TOWN PLANNING POWER.

Until the Municipal Corporations Act was taken in hand for consolidation this session, Wellington City was the only municipality in New Zealand which had any real power to interfere with sub-

divisions which, while keeping within the edge of the law, were not in the general interests of a district. There has been no statutory power to insist upon provision of reserves, or any proper regard for the future requirements of a developing district. A subdivision might lie awkwardly across the route from a city to a great residential area, but the street plan adopted by its owners could disregard the wider interests of the community so long as the thoroughfares gave the necessary access of the stipulated width. Now the law will enable enlightened municipalities to apply town-planning principles, backed by a statute, for the Municipal Corporations Act contains the following important clause, which in proper hands constitutes an effective little Town Planning Act:

Subdivisions of Land.

(1.) Where any person holding any land in a borough proposes to sell or lease part thereof, a plan of subdivision showing the several allotments and their dimensions, and the streets and reserves, if any, proposed to be made, shall be prepared by a licensed surveyor, and approved by the Council, before any part of the land is so disposed of or is advertised or offered for disposition.

(2.) In any such case the Council may, before approving any plan of subdivision, require the owner to make further provision for the construction of streets, or the making of reserves, or may require such other alterations of the plan as it thinks proper.

(3.) Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Council under this section may appeal in the prescribed manner to a Board, to be appointed in that behalf by the Governor-General.

(4.) The said Board shall consist of the Surveyor-General or other qualified surveyor in the service of the Crown, and of two other persons.

(5.) On any such appeal the decision of not less than two members of the Board shall be the decision of the Board, and the decision of the Board shall be final.

(6.) Every person who disposes of any land to which this section applies, or advertises or offers for disposition any such land otherwise than in accordance with a plan of subdivision approved by the Council, or, in case of an appeal, in accordance with a plan of subdivision approved by the Board under this section, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred pounds.

(7.) In no case shall the plans of any land to which this section relates be deposited under the Land Transfer Act, 1915, or the Deeds Registration Act, 1908, nor shall the transfer of any allotment or subdivision of any such land be registered under either of those Acts unless the plan has been duly approved under this section.

(8.) Nothing in this part of this Act shall apply to land to which section three of the Wellington City Empowering Act, 1917, applies.