

No further land purchases along the line of the railway can with advantage be gone on with at present, but we propose next session to ask for authority to devote a further sum of £50,000 out of the North Island Trunk Railway Loan to this purpose, and if this is approved of by the House further very desirable land purchases can then probably be made.

By that time it is hoped that the title to the land in the Waikato District, along the line of railway, will be settled. The line runs through the block known as the Rohae Potae for 92 miles. This block, which contains 2,638,000 acres, has been before the Land Court for over two years, but the settlement of the title has been delayed from time to time by unavoidable adjournments. For some months past the Court has, however, been making good progress with the larger subdivisions, and it is expected that some portions adjacent to the line may soon be in a position to be dealt with.

### IMMIGRATION.

As regards immigration, as honourable members are already aware, the acceptance of nominations within the colony for passages was stopped on the 22nd December 1887. After that date no nominations were entertained, and the services of the immigration officers and their staffs have been dispensed with.

Since the date up to which information was given in my last Public Works Statement, namely, since the 30th November 1887, 623 souls have arrived, who had been nominated for passages prior to 22nd December, and towards the cost of whose passages the sum of £5,512 has been contributed by their friends in the colony.

Since the same date 47 small farmers have also arrived, with a known capital of £5,630. The total number of this class introduced since the commencement of the system on the 28th September 1885, is 397, with a known capital of £43,785.

The Agent-General on the 17th May informed all persons who had been nominated for passages that their nomination would lapse unless taken advantage of within three months from that date.

The outstanding liabilities, in the colony and in London, on the 31st March 1888, including cost of passages and incidental expenses up to that date, amounted to £8,000; some small contingencies in connection therewith will amount to £110; and a contribution proposed to be made towards the passages of some persons in England, who are separated from their families here, will amount to about £1,000; making in all £9,110; for which we now propose to ask for a vote.

The total number of immigrants, exclusive of small farmers, introduced since the inauguration of the immigration scheme by the Colonial Government, is 114,576.

Details of nationalities and classes of immigrants, introduced up to the 30th April last, will be found in Parliamentary paper D.—3, 1888.

### TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

On account of telegraph and telephone extension, the amount expended last year was £22,984, and the amount proposed to be asked for this year is £20,000, leaving £8,370 for future appropriation. Of the expenditure last year £13,029 was on account of telephone exchanges throughout the colony generally, and was principally for material imported for the purpose. The total capital cost of these exchanges amounted on the 31st March 1888, to £53,288.

The work of the year consisted principally of bringing a large number of small villages into connection with the telegraph system, by means of the telephone, as set forth in Table No. 8 accompanying this Statement. The most costly of these telephone connections were to Patumahoe, Mangamahoe, Tologa Bay, Kumeroa, Clevedon, Cambrian, Blackstone Hill, and Nightcaps.

During last year also, a telephone exchange was established at Blenheim.

The only important telegraph extension work done during last year was the erection of the fifth wire on the main north line between Woodville, Tahoraite, and Waipukurau, this being necessary for the proper dispatch of the large business on the North Island wires.