

“WORKERS’ DWELLINGS ACT, 1905.”

The carrying-out of the provisions of this Act is under the control of the Right Hon. the Minister of Labour, who directed that the putting in hand of the preliminary surveys of the acquired areas, and the formation of the streets and other works, should be carried out under the direction of the Minister of Lands prior to the erection of workers’ dwellings by the Colonial Architect. Surveys and street-construction are well in hand at Ellerslie and Otahuhu, near Auckland, and at Petone, near Wellington, also at Sydenham, Christchurch, and Windle, near Dunedin. Considerable areas have also been secured in the Lower Hutt District, Wellington. A special parliamentary paper will be laid before Parliament by the Right Hon. the Minister of Labour.

DOMAINS (UNDER ACT OF 1905).

Some four hundred domains are now under the control of this Department, and the various trustees are also more or less in touch with the Head Office. A special report dealing with the whole of these domains will be placed before Parliament.

CEMETERIES.

The setting-apart and vesting of all new public cemetery-sites is also dealt with by this Department, as is also the general oversight of all public cemeteries vested in trustees appointed by the Governor. Small grants towards fencing and clearing new sites are also made from appropriations granted by Parliament, and in cases where the present roads leading to cemeteries in use are found to be of impracticable grades, assistance is given towards surveying and procuring suitable deviations.

SCENERY PRESERVATION.

The Commission appointed to make recommendations under “The Scenery Preservation Act, 1903,” brought its business to such a point that, without public inconvenience, its operations could be brought to a close on the 31st March, and by direction of Cabinet this Department took over charge, and is now carrying out the several recommendations made to the Governor, which have received approval. It is intended to ask for a slight alteration in the Act to enable a fresh Commission to be set up, consisting of the head of the Tourist Department, the Surveyor-General, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands of each land district to be an *ex officio* member. The Commission will then resume its labours.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO SETTLERS IN SPARSELY SETTLED DISTRICTS.

The pitiable conditions of many settlers and their families in the back settlements for want of medical aid has led the Government to materially increase the amount given by way of subsidy towards this desirable end, but at the same time to safeguard these contributions by insisting that the settlers do their share in contributing to the salary of a resident medical man. When application is made for a subsidy the first condition imposed is to the effect that the settlers must form themselves into a medical club or association, elect a chairman, through whom they communicate with the Department, and then state what amount will be locally raised and paid to a medical man. The amount of subsidy, of course, varies as the needs of the particular district and the scattered nature of the settlers demand.

LANDLESS NATIVES OF THE SOUTH ISLAND.

The final report, together with schedules of names of Maoris entitled to participate in the several awards recommended by Messrs. Percy Smith and A. Mackay, the Commissioners, has been received; the lengthy list of names and areas have been carefully checked by this office, and again revised by the Commissioners, and a Bill to give effect to the recommendations will be laid before Parliament, and, if passed, the awards will be gazetted. The total area in the South Island allotted to landless Natives is 142,118 acres, to be divided amongst 4,064 persons, or averaging slightly under 35 acres to each Native.

DEPARTMENTAL AND GENERAL.

The retirement of the Surveyor-General (Mr. J. W. A. Marchant) on the 31st March, after forty years of yeoman service both as Commissioner of Crown Lands in Wellington and Christchurch, has led to a rearrangement of the Department by the Government, who have made the Under-Secretary for Lands the head of the Department. The land administration being one of the chief points in the Government policy, the growth of the Department and the management of the various offshoots requires the whole time of one administrative head, whilst the Surveyor-General will undertake in future the direction of the survey side only. In appointing Mr. Thomas Humphries to the position of Acting