

the desirability of transferring the whole loan to the Advances to Settlers Board, making provision by law for the guarantee of the repayments. I am of opinion that this will not in any way weaken the security of those who lend the money. It would place this useful Department of the Dominion upon a basis that would more strictly represent the true position. Supposing any outside commercial concern were carrying on such a business, and could show results similar to the Advances to Settlers Department, they would not include the money borrowed as part of the commercial concern's direct liability. In its present form it allows a wrong impression to be conveyed.

#### ADVANCES TO WORKERS.

While I am upon this subject I desire to point out that the system of making advances to workers is more satisfactory to the worker who desires to have a home than that of the Government purchasing land in the country, erecting houses upon sections and leasing them to workers; and I am of the opinion that this system of purchasing land and building homes can, without any disadvantage to the workers, be eased off, and that the operations for helping workers to obtain homes could more advantageously be conducted upon the systematic basis that the Advances to Workers provides. The total number of workers' homes throughout the Dominion is ninety-four.

In one year under the Advances to Workers Act 1,179 homes have been provided for those who have availed themselves of its liberal conditions, while under the system of workers' dwellings only some twelve homes were established throughout the country last year. I am of the opinion that if we want to have a large body of our workers more contented and happy that much in this respect can be accomplished. It will likewise be a great factor in helping to solve the difficult rent problem, which is ever a source of anxiety to those whose necessities compel them to rent houses. I propose to increase the amount now authorised from £200,000 to £500,000 per annum.

#### SUPERANNUATION.

A proposal will be submitted for assimilating as far as practicable the systems of the Police and Education Departments with that of the Civil Service Superannuation. While effecting these alterations I propose to ask the House to enable the men who went out on strike in the Railway Department in 1890 to count for continuous service under certain conditions. There was no law in 1890 making strikes illegal, and, though these men were misguided in the course they took, still I think the penalty for superannuation purposes of the loss of all prior service is too great. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees is willing to help them financially, and I will ask the House to make provision that on payment of £1,500 to the Railway Superannuation Fund the present disability will be removed.

#### NATIONAL SUPERANNUATION.

A Bill will shortly be introduced inaugurating a National Superannuation Fund, to which all New Zealand residents under the age of fifty-five will be at liberty to contribute. I propose that the State shall also contribute towards the support of the fund, which will provide to the contributors, in return for moderate payments, pensions not exceeding £2 a week in any case, either on attaining the age of sixty or sixty-five, or on becoming permanently unable to work by reason of sickness or accident before reaching the pension age. The fund will also provide assistance to the widows and orphans of contributors. I propose that widows should receive £13 per year and their children 5s. per week, orphans also 5s. weekly, until each attains the age of fourteen years. I will also submit a supplementary scheme dealing specially with the low-wage earners with large families. I am of opinion that if we can establish a system by which