

AGE OF SELECTORS.

While the demand for land on the part of our adult people is so great, many of whom are carrying the responsibilities of wife and family, the age at which applicants may become selectors of or acquire land under our land laws should be raised. At present the age must be not less than seventeen, and I propose to provide that no selector hereafter shall be under the age of twenty-one years.

SMALL GRAZING-RUNS.

Provision will be made for abolishing the present right to perpetual renewal of small grazing-runs, and in future cases it is proposed that the right will be limited to one renewal only upon revaluation at the end of the first term.

PROCEEDS OF SALE OF ORDINARY CROWN LANDS.

In all cases where a freehold is granted of existing unalienated Crown lands under any of these land proposals the title will be impressed with a reference to the limitations as to area allowed to be owned or occupied. I am convinced that the proceeds of the sale of such portion of the national estate as remains outside our national endowment should be devoted exclusively to the development of this country by means of public works, and therefore I propose to provide that all surplus money received in respect of the sale of the fee-simple of Crown lands, whether now under lease or not, other than settlement lands, shall be paid into the Public Account to the credit of a separate account called the National Development Account, and that these moneys shall be applied only in the development of this country by roads, bridges, telegraphs, telephones, and railways, subject, in each case to appropriation by Parliament. The proceeds of leases and sales of settlement lands will, of course, as hitherto, be paid into the Land for Settlements Account.

NATIVE LANDS.

The proposals of the Government with regard to the settlement of Native lands will be put before you in a measure dealing specially with that important subject. The Bill is in part a consolidation and an amendment of the existing law, so as to conform to existing conditions, to the present needs of the Native race, and to the demands of the Dominion as a whole. The consolidation affects seventy-one statutes (public, private, and local), dating back to the year 1871. These do not contain the whole of the law relating to Native lands. It has not been found possible to prepare for submission to Parliament this session a consolidation of the special enactments dealing with Native reserves administered by the Public Trustee, or with lands administered by a Commissioner under the East Coast Trust Lands Act, or with lands in the Thermal Springs District, or with lands vested in trustees for special purposes. I desire to assure the House that a consolidation of these measures, with necessary modifications, will be introduced early next session, so that the whole of our statute law relating to Native lands will then be completely revised and brought up to date.

The process of ascertaining Native titles and partitioning the same into convenient areas will be greatly improved. It is found that the process has been greatly delayed in the past, because surveys have not kept pace with the operations of the Native Land Court. It is intended that the Government will undertake all future surveys, charging the cost to the Native lands affected. The duty will be cast on the Chief Surveyor of completing all surveys required by the Native Land Court or Maori Land Board. Proper road-lines will be laid off wherever necessary before partition. Exchanges of interests in Native lands for other Native lands, or for European or Crown lands, will be greatly facilitated and unhampered except by a condition that the power be not abused and sales effected under the guise of exchanges. An important feature of the Bill is the proposal to consolidate the scattered interests of individual owners or groups of owners. The Court will be empowered to formulate schemes for the purpose which, after approval by the Governor in