

Third Assembly of the League last year, and received commendation from the Commission appointed under the terms of the covenant to advise the Council of the League. The procedure of that Commission and certain criticisms contained in its report, especially in relation to Nauru Island (in which New Zealand is also concerned), led to protests by the New Zealand delegates at the Assembly against a method which creates an impression that New Zealand's administration as the mandatory Power is subject to public comment from subordinate Commissions appointed by the Council of the League. My Ministers are clearly of opinion that no Government which has accepted a mandate under the League can submit to public criticism of its administration or its conduct from any other body than the Council, though the mandatory Commission is free to advise the Council in any terms it thinks fit. The responsibility of control is conferred by the covenant upon the Council of the League, not upon its Committees, and the Council alone has the authority to determine whether the criticisms of the Commission are justified, and whether public comment on every detail of such criticism is desirable in the public interest.

It is a matter for satisfaction that the mandated territory of Western Samoa continues to make steady advancement under New Zealand control. The relations between the inhabitants, both European and Native, and the Administration are showing a very satisfactory improvement.

The result of our share in the control of the phosphate deposits of Nauru has been satisfactory, and the demand in New Zealand for phosphate-rock has increased. The quota to which New Zealand is primarily entitled—namely, 16 per cent.—has been approximately utilized during the past year.

Attention has been given during the recess to the important work of compilation of statutes, but the process has been somewhat delayed by the necessity for the services of an additional Judge of the Supreme Court, and the temporary appointment of the Compiler of Statutes, the Honourable Sir Frederick Chapman, to that office.

Bills consolidating the Companies Acts, the Chattels Transfer Act, the Land and Income Tax Act, the Harbours Act, and the Stamp laws will be laid before you. The very difficult and important work of consolidating the Dominion land laws has also been undertaken. As the result, a lengthy and elaborate measure will be submitted for your consideration.

Last year an Act was passed in the Imperial Parliament dealing at great length with the subject of simplification of the laws relating to title to land. In this Dominion there are two distinct but concurrent systems of title and tenure—namely, the Land Transfer system and the Conveyancing and Deeds Registry system. With regard to the latter system, the law is founded upon the land laws of England before 1840, as modified, first, by the Conveyancing Ordinance, and later by our Property Law Consolidation Act, 1908. In some respects the recent English Act by its amendments of the law creates further difference between the law relating to title and conveyancing in New Zealand and that ruling in England. My Government has given full consideration to this subject, and has decided to submit to you legislation which will have the effect of bringing titles to all lands in New Zealand under the provisions of the Land Transfer Act within a period of ten years. The method of deeds registry has already produced such a multiplication of volumes and records as to render search against encumbrances difficult. The proposal necessarily involves a temporary issue of provisional certificates of title, where surveys are incomplete or titles defective; but a limit of time is provided, after which the provisional certificate shall become absolute unless contested.

The possession by New Zealand and by Great Britain of ports and localities where whaling-vessels concentrate has induced the hope that some effective means of controlling that enterprise, with due regard to the interests of foreign vessels engaged therein, may be devised. I hope that it may be possible to lay before you during your present session correspondence which has recently taken place between His Majesty's Government and my Government on this subject.

During the past year immigration from Great Britain has progressed satisfactorily, special facilities being extended for farmers, farm labourers, and all classes of skilled artisans required for secondary industries. Under the Empire Settlement Act provision was made enabling the Imperial Government to co-operate in furthering British settlement in His Majesty's Dominions, and my Ministers have been able to arrange for a very low scale of passage rates, which should be the means of inducing the steady flow of British immigrants to our shores without disturbing the industrial conditions of the Dominion.