

The effect of the Meat-export Control Act, followed by the Dairy Industry Control Act of your last session, has been satisfactory to the producers. The establishment of Boards with statutory authority to negotiate for shipping and freights, and to control the rate of supply to markets abroad, has already provided many beneficial results. The fruit-producers of the Dominion have indicated a desire for the establishment of a Fruit Industry Control Board with similar powers, and legislation with that object has been prepared and will be submitted for your consideration.

The Main Highways Board has been established, and has done much valuable preliminary work, including the definition of a number of main highways. You will be asked to consider ways and means for providing sufficient funds to enable the important duties of the Board to be carried out.

The Mortgages Extension Acts expire at the end of the present year. It is not considered advisable to continue the automatic operation of extension beyond that period. The present Acts apply only to mortgages executed before October, 1919, and there is reason to believe that the great majority of those mortgages have already been the subject of arrangement between the several mortgagors and mortgagees, having the effect of excluding the statutory extension. But it is also believed that there are a limited number of cases where the immediate removal of all protection might create considerable hardship to the mortgagors. My Ministers will therefore submit to you legislation which, while allowing the general protection to expire at the end of the present year, will entitle mortgagors who can prove special hardship to apply to a Supreme Court Judge for a further extension not exceeding two years. Under the previous Acts the mortgagee has always had the right to apply to the Court for leave to exercise his powers, though very little advantage has been taken of the statutes in that respect. Under the measure to be proposed to you any mortgagor who desires extension is compelled to apply to the Court for an opportunity to prove his case, and to satisfy the Court that there are special reasons in his case which justify a brief extension.

Two measures of special importance, which were in part before you last session, will, my Ministers hope, be agreed to and become law during your present session. The first is a Bill to consolidate and simplify the land laws of the Dominion; and the second a Bill to bring all lands of the Dominion under the provisions of the Land Transfer Act within a definite period, with special provision for the issue of provisional certificates in the case of infirm titles.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The Royal Commission appointed to consider the system and incidence of land and income taxation in New Zealand has presented a unanimous report, which in due course will be laid upon the table of your House. The report of another Commission, appointed to consider the effect of forestry reserves upon the revenues of local bodies, has also been received by me, and will be made available for your deliberations.

The receipts of revenue during the last financial year have been satisfactory; economy has been practised in all Departments, the result being that the accounts of the year closed with a surplus of £1,812,366. Proposals for certain remissions of taxation will be submitted.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

Two specially qualified gentlemen from England are at present engaged in investigating the conditions appertaining to the railways of New South Wales. My Ministers propose to take advantage of their presence in Australia to institute a Royal Commission, of which they will be members, to carry out an exhaustive inquiry into the whole system and control of our New Zealand railways, and to advise thereon.