

Over 1,500,000 acres of land in the Taupo District have also recently passed the Court, and the Government is negotiating the purchase of several blocks within this district which are contiguous to the railway and otherwise suitable for settlement.

Sketch-maps and returns giving full details of the complete and incomplete transactions of this department are in course of preparation, and will be shortly laid before the House by the Minister for Native Affairs.

IMMIGRATION.

The number of immigrants introduced for the period between the 1st June, 1885, and the 30th April, 1886, was 545.

This shows a considerable falling-off from the numbers given in last year's Statement, but the falling-off can be accounted for by the fact that the engagements with persons whose passages had been held over were, as stated last year, nearly all fulfilled, and, further, by the increased rate of payment for passages required to be made on making the nomination in the colony.

Fresh regulations for nominated immigration were issued on the 28th September, 1885. By these a payment of £10 was required towards the passage of each adult, and £5 towards the passage of each child over twelve years of age. These sums it is estimated represent half the total cost to the colony of an immigrant from the time he leaves his home in Great Britain until he becomes a settler in New Zealand.

Since the date of the regulations 658 nominations have been received and forwarded to the Agent-General, and an average of from 50 to 60 nominations are sent monthly, on which cash payments are made in the colony of sums varying from £400 to £500.

From this it would seem that the settlers in New Zealand are not loth to induce their friends to join them, and that they are willing to prove their earnestness in the matter by paying half the cost of the expenses to which the colony is put in assisting them.

A new feature in the regulations is the assistance which is given towards the emigration of farmers and agriculturists possessed of small capital. Under this scheme intending emigrants are assisted by the Agent-General to the same extent as persons who may be nominated in the colony. They are, however, required to prove that they are possessed of £100 in cash, and a sum equal to £50 for each child over twelve years of age. The steps taken by the Agent-General to give effect to these regulations will be found in the correspondence which will be laid upon the table.

The total number of immigrants of all classes introduced into the colony since the inauguration of the immigration scheme by the Colonial Government is 112,493. A return will be laid before the House giving the details of the classes and the nationalities of these immigrants.

TELEGRAPH EXTENSIONS.

The telegraph extensions during the year consisted of the erection of 199 miles of new lines and 545 miles of additional wire, less $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of line and 88 miles of wire dismantled.

The telegraph lines in use in the colony at the end of March last extended to a total length of 4,463 miles, carrying 10,931 miles of wire, of which 2,820 miles is duplexed.

Telephone exchanges were set up during the year at Napier, Wanganui, and Timaru, making the exchanges now in operation ten, namely, at Auckland, Napier, Wellington, Wanganui, Nelson, Christchurch, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill; and they yielded a gross revenue during the last financial year of £12,294.

The expenditure on new works and extensions of all classes last year was £36,009, and the vote proposed to be asked for this year is £21,700.