

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Thursday, 12th September, 1901. Election of Chairman of Committees - H. von Blaramberg-Companies Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. #

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES. The Hon. Mr. REEVES asked the Hon. the Speaker, Chairman of Standing Orders Committee, When the report of the Committee on the election of Chairman of Committees will be presented to the Council ? The Hon. the SPEAKER stated, in reply, that the Committee had agreed on the main points of the report, but they desired to give it some further consideration before bringing it up to the Council. Probably it would be brought up next week. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS moved, That the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of H. von Blaramberg, of Palmerston North, be referred back to the Committee for further consideration. In moving this motion he begged to disclaim any intention to cast a reflection on the Committee who reported on the matter. He believed that, on an analysis of the Committee who reported on the petition in 1895, it would be found that the members who were present on Tuesday last were the same, with the exception of one new member. The Committee in 1895 who dealt with it consisted of the Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker, the Hon. Mr. Barnicoat, the Hon. Mr. Bolt, the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson, and the Hon. Mr. Swanson. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Did I deal with it in 1895 ? The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- You were on the Petitions Committee that year. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I do not think you will find that I was present. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS said that, on looking up the records, he found that the names he had mentioned were on the Petitions Committee of 1895, and on Tuesday last those members were all present, the only new members being the Hon. Mr. Twomey and the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton. He would again say that he did not cast any reflection on the Committee ; but he had gone into this matter fully, and had read the details in connection with it, and he was satisfied that an injustice had been done to Mr. Von Blaramberg. This gentleman held the highest educational credentials. He was educated at the University of Gutenberg, and held the highest certificates and medals from the educational departments of Germany and Italy. On

Tuesday this gentleman, who had suffered so much from what had taken place, had come from a bed of sickness, having been ill for some weeks with influenza ; and one could see that he was ill and nervous. He (Mr. Jennings) was of opinion that one member, at any rate, of the Committee did not allow the old gentleman to give as full an explanation on the various matters as might have been expected under the circumstances. He found, on reading through the papers presented with the petition, that Mr. Von Blaramberg's prospects had unquestionably been blighted through what had occurred. The petitioner proved in one of his letters-and this was a substantial fact that he would ask honourable members to note-that the phrasing of one of his letters had been altered by one of the officials of the Wanganui Education Board. The word "promise," in a letter to the Board of Education of Wanganui, had been altered by one of the officials to "persecution." There was no doubt about that statement : and the fact was not denied. The petitioner showed also that his position in the education service of the colony had undoubtedly been prejudiced by a misstatement by an Inspector of the Wanganui district. The petitioner was bringing out this very strong point : that the Inspector in his report stated that when he was

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sent up for examination to pass the Sixth Standard, and that the whole of them failed. The facts were substantially proved by the members of the Committee that there was only one pupil in his school sent up to pass the Sixth Standard, and that pupil passed. Mr. Von Blaramberg was proceeding to bring up further statements in support of his petition when he was interrupted by a member, who said, "We do not want to hear about these statements at all." The petitioner was, in his opinion, further prejudiced by a letter sent by the then Minister of Education, which letter had been admitted to be a private one, being published in the Wanganui papers ; this letter had certainly been prejudicial to the petitioner as regards prospects of obtaining any position in the education service, or even if he wished to start a private school. The petitioner's contention was that the Minister sent the letter to the Board after refusing his proffered evidence, and when no inquiry had been held at all. The facts were so strong in connection with this case that, in moving the motion, he would ask to withdraw it if the Minister would see his way to grant the petitioner what he asked - namely, that a full and impartial inquiry should be made into the allegations which had been sworn to, and that if it were found that he had been injured he should be able to obtain redress. It was not asserted by any member of the Petitions Committee nor the department that the petitioner was not qualified to teach a school. An examination that was held in 1891 in the school of which he was then headmaster - notwithstanding the disadvantages which honourable members were aware attached to a country school or a new district- resulted in the average passes being 82.7. There was no one in the Council but must admit that to be a very high average. The Petitions Committee of the House of Representatives had reported in 1894 to this effect : "The Committee considers the case one

demanding diligent inquiry, and recommend the Government to thoroughly investigate it." He thought it was only in the interests of justice that a man who had the highest qualifications, who had proved himself capable in the public service of the colony, and who was labouring under a feeling of great injustice, that when he came to the highest Court of the land he should obtain that justice. If petitions were to be dealt with as they frequently were, it would be better for Parliament to say there was no use sending them. If this stand was taken up it would save trouble, anxiety, and expense to people. He hoped that the Minister, knowing the circumstances, and that there had been injustice done, would support him in altering his motion to the form that the Government should be asked to institute an inquiry before a Stipendiary Magistrate into the petitioner's allegations. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON said the facts, so far as he knew, were shortly these : In 1881 the petitioner was a schoolmaster in Wellington ; he applied for the position of third master went before the committee of the Education Board, and he was told by telegram from the committee that it was successful. The appointment, however, was refused ratification by the Board. The unfortunate part of the matter was that the secretary of the Board had in the meantime wired to the petitioner asking how soon he could be in Wanganui, which was rather a strange thing for the secretary to do. The petitioner replied that he could be there at the end of the month, or, if necessary, he could wind up his affairs and be there earlier. Before he received word that the Board would not appoint him he had wound up his affairs in Wellington with a view of starting to Wanganui. He then received word that the Board would not sanction his appointment, but that they offered him the position of master in the Matarawa School, which was in a growing district, and which would be probably as good a position as that he tried for. The petitioner accepted that position and was there for some years. He did not think any fault had been found with his teaching capabilities; but he was rather a difficult man to get on with, and appeared to make trouble in some way, and eventually he was appointed to a school at Terrace End, Palmerston North. Here, his own story was, that in a very short time the persecution of the Wanganui Education Board followed him. That was the petitioner's story. At any rate, the friendly feeling that should exist between the master and his Committee and the Board was remarkable for its absence, and the result was he left the school. He now came to Parliament with a petition for inquiry and redress. For Parliament to grant an inquiry would mean recommending the Government to appoint a Royal Commission of inquiry. This was what he asked for. Now, what further facts could be elicited by a Commission ? The facts were plain enough, and the whole trouble lay between Mr. Von Blaramberg and the Education Board, and, as the Board had statutory power in appointing or dismissing teachers, it was not a case for parliamentary inquiry or interference. The only point, perhaps, that wanted inquiring into was as to the substitution, in a letter of Mr. Von Blaramberg's, by an officer of the Board of the word "persecution " instead of "promise." The Committee did not know exactly what Mr. Von Blaramberg wanted on this point, and he was asked to explain. He was also asked to let the Committee have particulars as to the amount of hardship he had suffered owing to the substitution of the word "persecution " for the word "promise." That seemed to be the only point a Magistrate or Commission could inquire into. He seemed to have made a mistake in selling off his furniture and going to Wanganui before he had actually got the appointment ; but no inquiry could do anything in that matter. He (Mr. Jenkinson) thought that the letter written by the Minister of Education, Mr. Reeves, to the Education Board was simply a formal one, and was based entirely on

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department, saying that Mr. Von Blaramberg's request for an inquiry could not be sanctioned, and that the Minister blamed the Education Board of Wanganui for appointing him to a bigger school when he failed to give satisfaction in a small one. The petitioner said that that had hurt him very severely, and had cast aspersions on his character ; but he (Mr. Jenkinson) did not think it did in any way. It simply amounted to this: that the teacher could not get on with the Committee, or the Board, and he had to go.

Summed up, there had been a disagreement between a teacher and a statutory body, the Education Board. Was it right to ask the Petitions Committee to re- commend an inquiry in a case like that? He thought that the Committee had done right in finding that they could not grant the request of the petitioner; and he would vote against the motion to have the report referred back for further consideration. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER thought that it was very difficult to expect Committees to inquire into old grievances like this. They had had before them the whole career of the man since 1881, and they had found that he was always getting into trouble, partly owing to his impetuosity and partly owing to the fact that he fancied he was suffering under a grievance the whole time. He (Mr. Walker) thought that the Board had endeavoured to meet him fairly. As had been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Von Blaramberg threw up his employment at Wellington, and sold all his furniture at a moment's notice to enable him to go to Wanganui. This he did on the receipt of an unofficial and unauthorised telegram. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- No ; I will read it. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER replied that all he could say was, that, so far as he could make out, the only communication that the petitioner had received was a telegram which asked him when he could come to Wanganui. An Hon. MEMBER .- If required. The Hon. W. C. WALKER said he forgot whether the words " if required " were in the message or not. Anybody with common- sense would infer that the message was sent simply to enable the Board to come to a decision as to whether they would appoint him. He thought that the Board had recognised that a certain amount of hardship had been caused to this impetuous gentleman, by offering him the best school they could give him at the time. That was a country school in the neigh- bourhood of Wanganui. He did not know whether the Board intentionally did it, but they said that the prospects of the district were good, that settlement was spreading, and that, although the attendance was only thirty. there was every prospect of its growing. Mr. Von Blaramberg was never satisfied, and there was constant friction between him and the Board. The petitioner had a further grievance against the Board for doing him what was really a kindness. He had got into trouble with his Committee, and a certain letter had been circu- Hon. Mr. Jenkinson his returns had been interfered with, and that the word "promise " had been altered to " per- secution." But, reading that letter, he must admit that its sense had not been altered materially. He believed that in Mr. Von Blaramberg's mind the irony of the word " promise" might have conveyed a great deal more irritation than the word "persecution." The fact was that he was a difficult man to get on with, and yet the Board gave him a second chance, and promoted him to another school. He could not, however, get on there, and finally a separation was arrived at. He did not think that Parliament was a proper place to ventilate grievances between a statutory body like an Education Board and individual teachers. It was not a matter of money compensation, for the country should certainly not be expected to pay, and they all knew that Boards of Educa- tion were hardly able to do so. They were doing the best they could for the teachers and the School Committees. Occasionally they had found difficulties; and he did not know whether it was the petitioner's case or some other cases that caused his predecessor to intro- duce the Public School Teachers Incorporation and Court of Appeal Bill in 1895. That gave, within a limited time, every teacher an oppor- tunity of placing before the Court to be set up any complaint that he had against a Board. A complaint under the Act had, however, first of all to be indorsed by the Teachers' Institute of the district, so that if this particular case had been considered a proper one for appeal it could have gone before that Court. It was one in which there was now no remedy. It was a case where the petitioner was probably more to blame than anybody else, and, considering the length of time that had elapsed, it was not fair to ask the Committee to reconsider the statements in evidence made by the petition, or anybody else on the question. They had the petitioner's documents, affidavits, and other things of a most voluminous nature, but the whole of them were tainted by a certain disposition to construe in the worst sense what he (the Hon. Mr. Walker) really believed were conscientious actions. The man had evidently been, from the first time he got into the Wanganui district, determined to quarrel ; and yet the Board endeavoured, twice over,

to go out of its way to do more than it was bound to do for this man. He should be very sorry to think that this gentleman had been persecuted, and, if he thought there was any good likely to come out of a further investigation after so many years had elapsed, he would be ready to give the case further consideration. He did not, however, think that any good could come out of it. It was too old, and it was impossible to get to the bottom of grievances which were mostly, after all, of a personal character, and of a character which, after the lapse of years, it would be impossible for a Committee of the Council to probe to the bottom in a satisfactory manner. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said this was a man with whom he sympathized, and for whom he

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would like to do something, if it were possible. He did not, however, see that it was possible, and he thought his best friend was the man who would tell him straight out to give this up, as there was no hope for it. He was afraid Mr. Von Blaramberg was a man who laboured under mistaken ideas. One instance of that was that he told them that he had brought a case against the Secretary of the Education Board in the Supreme Court, and his lawyer, Mr. Jellicoe, told him that all the witnesses and the jury were bought over, and he suspected that even the Judge had been bribed. Now, he thought honourable gentlemen could appreciate such a statement as that at its true value. If Mr. Jellicoe had said such a thing to him, he thought Mr. Jellicoe had some reason for saying it, not that he believed it was true, but he used this argument in order to induce this man to agree to his wishes. As to the 1881 case, where he sold out here, that was completely condoned by the fact that he got an appointment. He applied for a certain appointment. and the Committee appointed him ; but the Board did not ratify the appointment. Then, the Board gave him another appointment, so that any loss he sustained in that respect was wiped out by the fact that he got an appointment. As regards these letters, there was no doubt that the word "persecution" was substituted for the word "promise," and this substitution made the letter such as would irritate a public body. It amounted to this : that for years he had been subjected to persecution and harsh treatment. There is no doubt that this word was changed, but he did not believe that it was changed with any intention to injure the petitioner. In his opinion the man who copied the letter simply wrote from his recollection, and "persecution" came in better with "harsh treatment" than "promise." Then, as to the letter of the Minister of Education of the day, the Minister was only discharging an official function; he had come to the conclusion that a sufficient case had not been made out to hold an inquiry, and he also blamed the Board for promoting this man from a small to a large school, because he had not given satisfaction. The Committee had before them the Under-Secretary for Education, and he brought along the reports of the Inspectors, and everything disclosed that this man did not get on well with his Committees. That was the case all over the country. Wherever one turned one would find that schoolmasters and the local Committees were very frequently at loggerheads. What could the Council do ? Who was the properly constituted authority to deal with these matters ? The Board of Education. And he could not see how Parliament could interfere between the Committees and the properly constituted authority -the Board of Education. It did not appear to him that that could be done. What happened was this: the Board of Education and the Committee had a perfect right to dismiss this man if he did not give them satisfaction. And if every man who was dismissed in this country by the Education Boards were to come to Parliament for redress, Parliament, by his lawyer. He produced a letter from VOL. CXVIII-30. would do nothing else than redress griev- There was nothing in the whole of the thing. The man was unfortunate, and he (the Hon. Mr. Twomey) sympathized with him, and wished he could do something for him. So far as he could make out, this gentleman was a highly-educated man, and he thought that his qualifications and attainments entitled him to a higher position than he had occupied. He was a man with a grievance, and possibly the fact that he was a foreigner had something to do with keeping him back. It was a pity if it was so ; but he was a man of attainments, and, in his own estimation, had never got into a

position worthy of his attainments. His best friend would advise him to let this matter alone, and turn his attention to something by which he could earn a livelihood. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS said it was very easy for the honourable member to say that, but the petitioner had one foot in the grave now. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said, Notwithstanding that, he did not see that anything could be done, and it was mistaken kindness to encourage him to go on as he was, when nothing could be done for him. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY said, From what he could learn from the petitioner's statement, it appeared he had a grievance against the Education Board of Wanganui, on account of alleged unjust treatment in his capacity as a teacher. Even if all his statements were correct, and they admitted he had sustained an injustice, his claim was against the Board, and not against the colony. The Education Board had a certain sum per annum from the Government to carry on the business of education, and, having received it, they were free to deal with it as they thought fit in the interest of education. He could understand a man of very high scholastic attainments being quite unfit for the position of a teacher, as he might not be able to maintain discipline, or impart his knowledge to the children, and be unable to maintain friendly relations with the Committee or the Board, and he apprehended that to be the case with respect to the petitioner. The Education Board was a perfectly independent local body, having power to appoint and dismiss its teachers if they were found to be unsuitable for the work the Board wished to be performed, and while teachers whom the Board desired to retain could terminate their engagement to the Board by giving three months' notice, the Board invariably gave a much longer notice, even to unsatisfactory teachers. The statement of the Hon. Mr. Twomey brought to his mind the fact that this gentleman had been before a Committee when he was a member of the Public Petitions Committee of the Council some years ago. He had examined him in regard to an action he had instituted against the Board or one of its officers, in which action he said he had spent £150. He had asked petitioner why he had been so injudicious as to risk an action on such a slender basis, and he replied that he had been advised to do so

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true, you have got a very good case." But all he said was not, in the opinion of the Court, entitled to any serious consideration ; and that act was an illustration of the judgment and reliability of the petitioner. When a man, in the opinion of his employers, is considered unfit for the duties which he is called on to perform, the Board—who is the employer . in this case—has every right, by proper notice, to dispense with his services. His experience with regard to Education Boards was that they never wished to get rid of a good teacher. He must say, that to refer this report back to the Committee would be a slur on it. The question was one entirely between the petitioner and the Education Board ; and the Committee, in his opinion, had no course to take except the one they adopted. He would vote against the motion. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS would like to say a few words in reply. Here were the telegrams from the Education Board and others to the petitioner in 1881. The first was a telegram from the Secretary of the Wanganui School Board :- " Wanganui, 25281. "H. v. Blaramberg, Te Aro Grammar School, Wellington. " How soon can you come if required ? Send your reply to Chairman, School Committee, Wanganui .- A. A. BROWNE, Secretary." And this was the reply :- "25281. "Current engagements end with March. Could no doubt arrange if required earlier .-- BLARAMBERG." Then, there was a telegram from the Committee :- " Wanganui, 26281. " H. v. Blaramberg, Bertram Villa, Wellington. "Glad Committee have chosen you for school vacancy ; three applicants .- W. P. CURRIE." This was a telegram from the Secretary of the Wanganui School Board :- " Wanganui, 26281. "H. v. Blaramberg, Te Aro Grammar School, Wellington. "What is the earliest time you can be in Wanganui ?- A. A. BROWNE, Secretary." And this was the reply :- " 26281. " Immediately." And this was another :- " Wanganui, 1381. " Dispute between Committee. Board think you will get appointment .- ALEX. TAWSE." Mr. Blaramberg, on the strength of these telegrams, sold his furniture, and he and his wife gave up their schools, which were worth to them over \$380 per year. It was necessary to go back to the first facts. This was the start of the whole trouble : On

receipt of the wires the petitioner did what any one would do- made arrangements to remove with his family to fill the new position. When he got there he found there was a dispute between the School Hon. Mr. T. Kelly take place frequently-with the result that he was sacrificed. There were the whole facts in a nutshell. He was offered by the Board a small school as a sort of quid pro quo to keep him quiet, and, under the circumstances he was placed in, he was compelled to accept. To show that the statements made by some honour- able gentlemen about his being impracticable and hard to get on with were unwarranted, the Inspector wrote :- "Mr. H. von Blaramberg is qualified to raise his pupils to a high degree of proficiency. He is a man of unassuming merit, and all his plans are based upon the best experience. Mr. Blaramberg secures voluntary attachment of "R. FOULIS, F.E.I.S., his pupils. Inspector of Schools. " Education Board, Wanganui, 31st December, 1883." There was an answer to these unwarrantable statements. Here was also a copy of a resolu- tion passed at a meeting of the Matarawa School Committee in reply to a communication from the Wanganui Board when they decided to reduce Blaramberg's salary :- "Copy of resolution passed at a meeting of the Matarawa School Committee, 6th January, 1888. " Resolved, That the Board be informed that a full attendance of the Matarawa School Com- mittee assembled to take into consideration the Board's recommendation to give the teacher three months' notice in consequence, it would appear, of a letter written to the Board by the teacher, a copy of which has been forwarded to the Committee by the Board's secretary. "That the Committee patiently and ex- haustively inquired into the whole subject. and, after hearing the teacher in explanation, conclude that they could not give effect to the Board's recommendation without inflicting an injustice upon the teacher, which under the circumstances they are unwilling to do. "That the Committee is satisfied with Mr. Von Blaramberg as a teacher. " That, in the opinion of the Committee, he has tangible grounds for complaint." The statements as to the petitioner being an impracticable man, and not being able to get on with the people, were completely shattered by the Inspector of the Wanganui District. and the Chairman and members of the Matarawa School Committee. It appeared to him that, owing to the action of the Board in taking up a stand against this man, he had suffered injus- tice, had been prejudiced, and had lost money. The petitioner himself had, further, been pre- cluded from obtaining employment in the pub- lic service owing to the letter sent by the then Minister of Education. He could not get em- ployment from School Committees after that letter. He held that a man had a right to seek redress for injuries done to his prestige, no matter whether those injuries were done re- cently or even a quarter of a century ago-time should be no bar to injustice. The Hon. M .. Twomey mentioned the Supreme Court pro- ceedings. The petitioner was a foreigner, and

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he thought he took the best course left open to him to preserve his good name. He entered upon the Supreme Court proceedings ; but the case was settled on Mr. Fitzherbert, solicitor for the Board, stating that Mr. Jellicoe, who appeared on behalf of the petitioner, had agreed that the letter sent by the secretary of the Wanganui Board would be termed a confiden- tial communication, and was never intended by the writer or the Board, by whose instruc- tions it was written, to be published. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON .- That was not brought into the question. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS said it was men- tioned by the Hon. Mr. Twomey. Blaramberg found that he would possibly lose his case be- fore the jury, and he therefore withdrew his action on the Board writing a letter, the terms of which were: The Board to furnish him a first-class certificate of service, together with a copy of the terms of settlement of the case under the seal of the Board ; he to pay £15 ex- penses. One of the impracticable points of the petitioner was this: There were a number of cigarette pictures on the walls of the school at Terrace End. He mentioned this for the in- formation of the Hon. Colonel Pitt, who might use it in connection with the Cigarette-smok- ing by Youths Prohibition Bill. The petitioner said he would not have the pictures in his school, and the consequence was that he had a row over this matter. However, the Chairman of the School Committee,

who inquired into the matter, empowered Mr. Blaramberg to re- move all pictures he disapproved of. He (Mr. Jennings) said, all honour to petitioner for taking the stand he did. He was sorry that the Minister would not permit a further inquiry by the Government. He was strongly of the opinion, after going through the printed pamphlet containing a statement of the whole case, that the petitioner had a substantial grievance, that he had been injured to the extent of losing his money and his position, and that he should, in consequence, obtain some redress from the Government. He did not bring the trouble upon himself. When he had charge of the Terrace End School, with an attendance of three hundred pupils, the results obtained at the examinations were very high - considerably over the 60-per-cent. pass required by the Wa- nganui Board. He would ask the Minister to again consider whether he would allow the resolution to be amended. If not, he would probably stand alone in his support of the motion. He would ask the Minister to allow the resolution to be so amended that the last line would read, "be referred back to the Government for further consideration and inquiry." That meant striking out the words "back to the Committee." The resolution would then read, "That the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of H. von Blaramberg, of Palmerston North, be referred back to the Government for further consideration and inquiry." He should be glad if the Minister of Education would inform him if he would accept it in its amended form. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- No. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS said, in that case he would move the motion standing in his name. The Council divided. AYES, 10. Feldwick Kelly, W. Taiaroa Gourley Tomoana Morris Smith, W. C. Williams. Harris Jennings NOES, 20. Baillie Louisson Scotland Barnicoat Smith, A. L. McLean Bolt Swanson Montgomery Jenkinson Ormond Twomey Johnston Pinkerton Walker, L. Jones Pitt Walker, W. C. Kelly, T. Rigg Majority against, 10. Motion negatived. # COMPANIES BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Clause 25 .- " In every case where, after the coming into operation of this Act, a company is ordered to be wound up by the Court under the principal Act, the Official Assignee under 'The Bankruptcy Act, 1892,' of the district wherein the company's principal office is situ- ate shall, by force of this Act, and without the necessity of any appointment or order, be the sole and official liquidator of such company." The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY moved to insert, after the words "wound up," and before " by the Court," the words " or is already in course of being wound up." The Committee divided. AYES, 16. Barnicoat Smith, A. L. Jones Smith, W. C. Montgomery Bolt Feldwick Pinkerton Taiaroa Gourley Rigg Tomoana Scotland Twomey. Harris Jenkinson NOES, 13. Swanson Bowen Louisson Walker, L. Jennings McLean Walker, W. C. Ormond Johnston Williams. Kelly, T. Pitt Kelly, W. Majority for, 3. Amendment agreed to, and words inserted. Clause 18 .- Appointment of auditors. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY moved to omit the clause, with a view of inserting the following :- "The accounts of all companies shall be audited by the Audit Office, and the Audit Office shall have the same powers in respect to the moneys and accounts of the company, and of all persons dealing therewith and liable to account for the same, as it has in respect of the public moneys, and all persons dealing therewith, under the provisions of ' The Public Revenues Act, 1891.'" The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be retained."

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AYES, 17. Pitt Barnicoat Kelly, T. Smith, A. L. Kelly, W. Bolt Smith, W. C. Louisson Gourley Swanson Morris Jenkinson Walker, W. C. Ormond Jennings Pinkerton Jones No, 1. Twomey. Majority for, 16. Clause retained. New clause 5A .- " (1.) It shall not be lawful for any director to receive or for any company to pay any directors' fees or other remunera- tion to any director who is indebted to the company in respect of calls on his shares, or who has been absent from the meetings of the directors for a period of three months or up- wards, unless he was so absent with the leave of the directors. "(2.) Every director who receives any pay- ment contrary to this section, or who is party to any such payment, is liable for each offence to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, and any money so paid may be recovered at any time within three years by the liquidator in the event of the company being wound up." The Hon. Mr.

FELDWICK moved to strike out the words " unless he was so absent with the leave of the directors," at the end of section 1. The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause." AYES, 17. Swanson Morris Barnicoat Bolt Ormond Tomoana Pinkerton Twomey Gourley Walker, L. Pitt Jennings Walker, W. C. Kelly, T. Reeves Smith, A. L. Louisson NOES, 4. Feldwick Jones Smith, W. C. Harris Majority for, 13. Words retained. New clause 15A .- " (1.) In the case of mining companies the directors shall transmit to every shareholder, at his last known place of abode, a half-yearly statement of the receipts and ex- penditure of the company during the preceding six months, and of the assets and liabilities of the company at the date of the account. "(2.) If default is made in compliance with this section every director of the company shall for each offence be liable to a penalty not ex- ceeding ten pounds." The Hon. Mr. REEVES moved to strike out the word " half " before " yearly." The Committee divided on the question, "That the word be retained." AYES, 15. Smith, W. C. Barnicoat Jones Bolt Kelly, T. Swanson Gourley Tomoana Pinkerton Pitt Twomey Harris Smith, A. L. Jenkinson Walker, W. C. Noxs, 6. Ormond Feldwick Louisson Reeves. Jennings Morris Majority for, 9. Word retained. Bill reported. On the question, That the third reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for to- morrow, The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said,-With all due deference to the Chairman of Committees, I wish to call your attention to the fact that I was prevented moving a clause that is on the Order Paper on the ground that it ought to have appeared in a Mining Bill. Now, Sir, I call your attention to this : that just a few minutes previously this clause was passed :- "In the case of mining companies the directors shall cause to be submitted to every shareholder, at his last known place of abode, a half-yearly statement of the receipts and expenditure of the company during the pre- ceding six months." That is a clause which it was wrong to insert in the Bill if it was wrong to put in mine. My point is that the companies to which I was referring are registered under the Companies Act, and that the Mining Act is completely ignored by them. In that case why not put these things into the Companies Act, and not into an Act which is a dead-letter ? Here is another point, Sir : Clause 36B says,- "' The Companies Act Amendment Act, 1900,' and this Act shall apply to all companies, whether registered under the principal Act or ' The Mining Companies Act, 1894.'" That is in the Bill, and yet I am not allowed to move my clause in the face of these facts. Either these clauses should be struck out or my clause admitted. The Hon. the SPEAKER .- I would suggest that the honourable gentleman should endea- vour to obtain the recommittal of the Bill on the question for the third reading, and I will take a notice of motion from him to that effect. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- Very well, Sir, I will do that. Third reading of the Bill made an order of the day for to-morrow (Friday). The Council adjourned at five minutes past nine o'clock p.m. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Thursday, 12th September, 1901. First Readinga-Defence Report-Egmont County Bill-President Mckinley: Attempted Assas-i- nation-Privilege-Postponement of Questions - Morning Sitings - Financial Statement-Ad- journment. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READINGS. Limitation of Profits and Prevention of Rings and Combines Bill, Mining Bill, Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill.

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DEFENCE REPORT. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) brought up the report on the defences of the colony, and moved, That it do lie on the table and be printed. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- Sir, before that is put I would like to ask the Minister a ques- tion. It has been reported in the papers-but we have not heard it in this House-that the Commandant of the Forces (Colonel Pole Penton) is to go to South Africa at the request of the Government to take charge of the Sixth Con- tingent. At the present time, I understand, a New-Zealander, who got an Imperial commis- sion several years ago, and who has served with credit with the Hyderabad Lancers - Major Andrews -- is in charge of that contingent, and it is said that he is to be superseded by the present Commandant of the Forces in New Zealand. What I want to ask the Premier is, whether it is correct that it is intended to supersede a colonial officer by an Imperial

officer ; and, if so, whether that is done at the instance of the Government or the Defence Minister, or whether it is done at the request of the Imperial authorities ? Of course, if the latter is the case, I have nothing to say, but I think the House ought to know if that is being done by the Government or by the Defence Minister. Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) .- I wish to ask the Minister another question, and that is with reference to a question I asked him last session -namely, whether the position of district adjutants should not be reserved for our returned officers from South Africa. I understand that in more than one case an Imperial officer has been placed in the position of commander of a provincial district, especially in the South #cc-zero Island ; and, under the circumstances, seeing the number of officers who are returning from South Africa, some of the appointments being made are not at all in accordance with the answer I received last session. I trust the re- port is not correct. I recognise that instructors are absolutely necessary in the case of Artillery Volunteer corps. In regard to the position of provincial or district adjutant, surely officers who have seen service in South Africa are the most suitable men to appoint where the Volun- teer corps are principally rifles and mounted infantry. I trust the Premier will reply that we will keep those positions for New Zealand officers who have seen active service in South Africa. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) .- I hope we shall not have too much of this question of colonial versus Imperial officers. We must recognise that we form an integral part of a great Empire, and that the Imperial and the colonial officer are both one, and we must get the best officer possible. It may be, of course, for either political or sentimental reasons that the honourable member for Palmerston has raised this question. First of all, we are to have a commandant who has been a colonial officer. Then, because there has been a change in South Africa, we have a colonel in charge of the Sixth Contingent. It was considered necessary that we should have an officer of that rank to be in charge of that contingent. Owing to other officers being re- requested to take charge of a district in South Africa during the time the Sixth Contingent is there, Major Andrews took charge temporarily of the contingent. It is just a question of whether the officer in charge of a contingent in South Africa should be of a certain rank. My own opinion is that we want an officer of higher rank to have charge of six or seven hundred men. An Hon. MEMBER .- Colonel Penton is an artillery officer. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes, he may be; and, as to Major Andrews, my recollection of that arrangement is that he is at the present time an officer of the Imperial army, but that he is colonial-born. The next thing is, what are we to do? We are advised from time to time to send our colonial men Home in order that they may obtain an Imperial training. There is no doubt that is a proper thing to do, because you cannot get that training in the colony. At all events, the Government think, as Colonel Penton's time is up in October, and as there is this position in South Africa, and seeing he has had so much to do with the equipping and sending away of our contingents, and is an ex- perience officer, if he is willing to take charge of the contingents for a few months-and if the Imperial authorities are willing-we should not bar the way. The present position is this : We have intimated to the War Office the position, and have asked for their approval. We have not had any reply yet. If the War Office says Yes, then, of course, he will go. The present officer is only there temporarily, and he has only had leave from the Imperial authori- ties for a short time. If I can get a colonel as against a major, or a major as against a captain, to take charge of the forces, I shall always take him. Then, the mem. ber for Kaiapoi asked a question with re- ference to the district adjutants. I told the honourable member last session that we in- tended to give these positions to those who were qualified in our own forces, and I intend to do that still. But I told the honourable member last session that we had, some months before, sent for four Imperial officers. That was done in accordance with the recommendations of the military experts. The officer referred to was then in Christchurch, and the next thing we heard was that he was in South Africa on duty. Some months elapsed before the communication reached him. That is an explanation of the delay. I may say that Colonel Robin is to take charge of the Otago District, and Colonel Davies of the Auckland District ; and in doing this I think I am keeping good faith with the House and with the country. I may say, in respect to

another colonial officer now absent from the colony, that on his return -- if he comes back safe and well-he will also be appointed to the command of one of the districts. So that I am keeping good faith with the House. At the same time I do not think it is right to raise this question with the view of making political
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capital out of it. I say that is unpatriotic, and it is not right. It will do no good in military circles at Home, and I do not think it is right that anything should be said to hurt the feelings of officers who are here. There are good officers, and good soldiers, and a comradeship has been established among the men, and we should not do anything that would tend to destroy it, but should endeavour to promote it as far as possible. Later on I shall have a report to lay on the table that will, in all probability, be read with interest. Motion agreed to. EGMONT COUNTY BILL. Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) brought up the report of the Local Bills Committee on the Egmont County Bill, recommending that, as the Standing Orders had not been complied with, the Bill be not allowed to proceed. He moved, That the report lie on the table. Motion agreed to. PRESIDENT MCKINLEY : ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Sir, by 3.0. leave of the House, I desire to move the following resolution: "That this House desires to express its detestation and horror" at the diabolical, wicked, and unprovoked attempt made to take the life of the worthy and revered President of the United States of America, William McKinley, and desires to extend to Mrs. McKinley, the relatives of the President, and the American people, its warm and sincere sympathy, and further shares with all good people sorrow and grief that a man could be found who, without cause or provocation, should attempt to take the life of a good and great man ; that members rejoice and are delighted to hear that the assassin has failed in his attempt, and that the wounds inflicted are not likely to prove fatal, and hope that the sufferer may recover speedily and be restored to health, and that he may for many years to come be of service to his country and the world at large." On Saturday last the civilised world was shocked by the news of the dastardly attempt that had been made on the life of the President of the United States of America. Sir, it came as a great surprise, because it could not be said that there was any justification for such a crime. The crime was entirely unprovoked. It is well known that, personally, President Mckinley is of a most amiable disposition ; that he is a kind and good man ; and, notwithstanding the great powers with which he is endowed, he has ever ruled with moderation, and he has always endeavoured to do that which was for the improvement and the uplifting of humanity and for the good of his country. Sir, all this causes us to wonder why such a dastardly act could be attempted. What can be the moving spirit of those who form and join associations, and select an individual to take the life of his fellow? There was nothing personal-no grievance-and, so far as America is concerned, there is no ground whatever for the dastardly act. Besides that, you have the Mr. Seddon devotion of the President to his country's service, and you have the fact that during the time he has given his service to the country the country has prospered and the condition of the people has improved. Again, I say, we are surprised and shocked at this occurrence. Sir, I have said in this motion that President Mckinley is a great man. That will never be questioned. He has the highest attributes of a statesman, and, although the departure from the Monroe doctrine is only of recent date, when you come to note in respect to diplomatic relations, and, more especially, in respect to China, that the advice of President Mckinley was adopted by the nations that were involved in that difficulty, he has proved himself, when emergency arises, to be one of the foremost statesmen of the world at the present time. What is to us most pleasing is the fact that we as a colony have ever had his good wishes, and he has also further given proof of his friendliness towards Great Britain on several occasions. I may say that the friendly relations which exist between the two nations are only natural, and we trust they will continue and grow closer and closer until, as a matter of evolution, we shall be working together, united as one people and one kindred. Under all these circumstances, we as a people in this colony the more deeply regret what has occurred, and our sympathies naturally go with the statesman who has been stricken down so suddenly. I mentioned just now that there

was friendliness as between the two nations. I say we are one people ; the same blood flows through our veins. We are kindred. Blood will tell. It is no fault of the American nation that a separation took place. That was the fault of the British statesmen of the day. And without desiring to allude to the past, I say any one who calmly and dispassionately reviews what transpired must come to the conclusion that if there had been the same treatment in those days meted out to the Pilgrim Fathers of America as is meted out to the people of Australia and New Zealand. there never would have been two separate nations, but there would have been one great English-speaking nation dominating the world. Another question one would naturally ask is, whether the form of government existing would lead to anything of this kind. There are those who have done these dastardly deeds for the purpose of removing a monarchy : but it appears to me that whether it is oligarchy, monarchy, or democracy, the same thing occurs. What other conclusion, therefore, can you arrive at but that it is not the form of government that is aimed at, but that there are men who are opposed to all law, and who are opposed to all order, and it is these self-willed individuals, those who rebel against society, who adopt these evil ways. They serve no purpose so far as they themselves are concerned, neither can any organization to which they belong promote or improve the condition of the people, but quite the reverse. It must only cause a check, and it must force organized society to take such steps as will prevent a recurrence of these dastardly acts. Sir, freedom

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of speech sometimes becomes license. We learn to fully and truly express the opinion of the now, as far as the news has reached us, that what caused this unfortunate being to commit this dastardly act was some speech delivered by a lady anarchist lecturer in America. I can only wonder that such things should be allowed. An Hon. MEMBER .- Did you say "lady " anarchist ? Mr. SEDDON .- Well, it is said a "lady lecturer " ; you may say a "female lecturer," if you like : at all events, I can only say that if lectures of that kind are delivered it shows that great freedom of speech is allowed, and if freedom of speech is to bring about such deeds it can only mean that there must be a limitation of that freedom of speech, and there may be a limitation probably to the detriment of the people of the country. However, my object in proposing this resolution is to demonstrate, as far as we can demonstrate, to the outside world -first, that we are shocked and horrified at the dastardly act ; secondly, that we sympathize sincerely with the sufferer, and with his good wife and relatives ; and thirdly, that we also sympathize with the American nation, and that we feel for them in this their hour of trial and sorrow. Then, we further desire to show the outside world that dastardly deeds of this kind will not be tolerated, and those aiding and abetting must be dealt with by a strong hand. I say it is impossible for good to be attained by such means, even if tyranny existed. That is one reason why I am asking the House to adopt this course. It may be said that we are only one of the British colonies, but if throughout the world organized society strives by its moral force to check this evil-and the course I am asking the House to take will have a moral effect-I trust it will have some influence in preventing these societies from flourishing, to check their creation, and to let those belonging to them know that we must, as a matter of self-protection, in the best interests of good government, prevent as far as we can anything of this sort taking root. Sir, I feel sure that the resolution will be carried unanimously by the House, and that it will be conveyed to the suffering President and to his wife and family, and that it may cheer them to some extent to know that in far-off New Zealand we sympathize with them in this their hour of tribulation. It will also let the people of the United States feel and know that we sympathize with them. I may say that on my way Home to the Jubilee of 1897, I had the pleasure of a long interview with President McKinley; and when I state that he is a great man, I am not coming to that conclusion simply on what I have read, or on what has appeared in the Press. I am satisfied from the interview I had, and from the matters discussed, that he is a far-seeing and advanced thinker, and that his heart is really with his people; and I can go further and say, Sir, that he has a great liking for New Zealand, and that this colony stands well in his estimation; and I am sure, Sir, that the

passing of the resolution I have moved will people of this colony, as I am sure it does fully express the feelings, the views, and the wishes of the members of this House. I move the resolution. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay). - The occasion undoubtedly is a solemn one, but we may all hope that it will not prove an unhappy one. I feel confident that surgical science is so advanced that the President of the Great American Republic will make a complete and satisfactory recovery. And, if it is so, I would add that to a great extent it is on account of the inherent greatness of the man. Suffering great pain, great mental distress and physical shock, his courage never for an instant has given way. The telegrams from first to last have reported that he is calm and collected, that he is even cheerful, and, as mind dominates matter, I have no doubt that his own courage will greatly help his own recovery. " Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown " is an old adage ; but it is the ruler, whether it be the democratically elected or the autocrat by succession, that we have great cause to pity. For the ruler's life, whether he inherits a crown or is elected by the people, is one long parade before the public, and consequently of great private self-denial. Sir, I maintain that the Presidency of the United States bears with it responsibilities which no autocratic Government places upon the shoulders of any monarch. It is scarcely a figure of speech to say his only diadem may be compared to a "bonnet-rouge," yet it is more weighty than the heaviest crown ever posed upon the brow of an Emperor. I am glad to see by the cablegrams that accomplished lawyers of the United States assert that all persons connected with a conspiracy to murder can be held guilty of the crime committed by one of the conspirators in the same manner as he who commits the deed. I do hope sincerely that that is so. No maudlin sentiment for conspirators who advocate murder, and have not even the brute courage to commit the deed, should animate us-not even if it be for a person unworthy of the name of woman. They who conspire against constituted authority, and endeavour to assassinate the head of the State, should all alike be brought to justice ; and, if needs be, by an alteration of international law, any scoundrelly conspirator who is accessory to murder should himself be responsible and liable to extradition; notwithstanding that the crime is political, he should be made responsible and caused to pay the capital sentence, even though his hand has not struck the blow. It seems to me that those who object to this proposition might just as well say that only the knife with which the murder is committed shall be burned by the public hangman, and that the murderer who used it himself should go scatheless. Let us punish all those who conspire to commit these crimes. If there are certain persons unworthy of the name of women who lend themselves to disseminating doctrines of murder, I say let them suffer also. I join with the Right Hon. the Premier in hoping that this motion of con-

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President may make a good recovery will be pleasing to the family of Mr. William McKinley, and that it may be another proof that the great English-speaking people throughout the world sympathize with them in their tribulation. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton). - Sir, with the leader of the House and the member for Hawke's Bay, I join in the sympathy that has been expressed with the American people and for the President of the United States and his family. I also join with them in abhorrence of the crime of the would-be assassinator. There is, however, one point to which I wish to draw attention, and I think that in these young countries there is one aspect of the matter that we should recognise, and it is this : Anarchy, and these murderous doctrines, so far as the rulers of countries are concerned, only appear to breed and find their natural habitat in countries where colossal wealth exists side by side with the extremest poverty. I do not wish to labour the point, Sir, but I respectfully submit that the anarchist doctrines are, I will not say the natural outcome, but they are the possible result of the enormous and colossal fortunes that are built up in America, more than any other country in the world, and which are, I believe, largely built up at the expense of the rights of the people. So far as concerns the wealth of the Goulds, the Vanderbilts, the Carnegies, and men of that stamp, it is impossible that such huge fortunes could be built up with due respect to the rights of the masses of the people. I believe that in these younger and freer countries

anarchy is unknown, and the reason it is unknown is that here our social economy is placed on a broader basis, and wealth is more generally diffused than in the United States ; and, whilst in these colonies there is no possibility of such vast fortunes being built up as in America, there need be no fear that there will be any footing for anarchist doctrines such as we find elsewhere. I merely wished to point this out, and I trust, as a New- Zealander, that the time will never come when there will be such vast fortunes in this colony as have been built up in the United States ; indeed, such is impossible whilst public sentiment continues as at present ; for I believe, when these huge fortunes do exist, the not un- natural outcome will be social agitation of a violent character, which will tend in the direction of anarchy and its destructive doctrines.

Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) .- Sir, I do not intend to speak in connection with the resolution which has been proposed and seconded by the two leaders of the House. But, Sir, I should not like it to go forth that even in connection with such a motion as this there are any members who have feelings similar to those of the honourable member who has just spoken which would lead them to suggest that anything in connection with the question of labour and capital in the United States could be regarded in any way as a justification in any sense whatever --

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .-- No justification.

Sir J. G. WARD .- Or is a legitimate cause for Captain Russell tries to advocate the most cowardly methods to destroy the life or the lives of rulers or the heads of great countries, who have themselves really nothing to do with the conditions under which the wealth has been obtained by the men whom the honourable gentleman referred to. The social system may be wrong, but it will never be righted by the anarchists' methods of murder and assassination. Who could, for instance, justify the diabolical crime that recently was committed when the King of Italy was sent to his long rest? Who can justify the crime that was committed by these cowardly people when the Empress of Austria was stricken down ? Who can justify the crime when the Czar of Russia was struck at by the brutal assassin ? Who can justify the intended crime of assassination only some months ago levelled at the present King of the Empire to which we belong ? I venture to say that the conditions of life in those countries will never be ameliorated by the efforts of anarchists, or those misguided people who take the view that they can obtain the redress of their grievances by resorting to these indefensible practices. By murdering the heads of countries they excite loathing and opposition from many who would gladly help to improve the social structure for the betterment of the masses. It creates in the mind of every right-thinking person a fearful, loathsome feeling towards any society, or any member of it, that in secret will select men-aye, and even women-for the purpose of their dastardly methods of bringing about by murder, and usually of the most cold-blooded character, a better social condition of affairs or a better political condition of affairs in those countries. I say such methods will never bring them I rose for the purpose of saying success. that, while the great troubles between capital and labour in those countries require redress, as we all realise, and rightly so, yet I should not like it for one moment to be supposed that in this young and fair country of ours any of us believe the method adopted by these violent and misguided men in the attempted assassination of President McKinley. or in any of the other cases to which I have referred, can in the slightest possible degree help them to obtain the condition of affairs they strive for. I think every person in this country will re-echo the sentiments expressed by the Premier and the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, and a feeling of the deepest sympathy with President McKinley and his wife must be in the breast of every person in this country. Like the American nation, we all rejoice to know that in every civilised country the people are animated by feelings in the one direction, condemnatory of the cowardly man who attempted the assassination of the American President ; and I am perfectly certain that that sort of thing will be put down, even if it has to be put down in the way that was indicated by the honourable member for Hawie's Bay. The conspirators who meet behind the scenes, and never come out into the open, are just as guilty, and have as much right to

swing at the gallows for these attempted murderers as their tools, frequently weak-minded men, whom they send forth ticketed in order that they may murder innocent men whose crime is that they have attained to the highest position in the land, and ought not to be struck at all. I rose for the purpose of putting on record these few remarks. I regret exceedingly that one word should have been uttered in connection with a dastardly crime, or with anything in connection with such a question, that might be construed into an impression that any of us think there may be some justification for it in order to solve the great social problems of the older countries, where there has been such a tendency with this object in view to commit crimes of this kind. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccarton) .- I wish to make a personal explanation. I never had the slightest idea of expressing sympathy with the person who committed this crime. My sole object was to point out, as nearly as I could, one of the causes of the disease and the insanity which led to this murderous and cruel act. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- There is only one feeling now prevailing, and that is one of sympathy mingled with one of gladness, now that We President McKinley is likely to recover. are all delighted that such is the case. And the few words that have been said on this matter have made that evident ; although without the explanation just now given by the member for Riccarton, I was myself inclined to take the view of my colleague, that the honourable gentleman meant to suggest that the realisation of these great fortunes in America by multi-millionaires of late years, and the development of their interests, had had something to do with this crime. I do not think so. I do not think it had the slightest thing to do with it. It simply shows there are certain lawless organizations in existence in different parts of the world which organized society must put down with a firm hand, and must, as stated by the leader of the Opposition in pointing out the means now being taken in America to bring the instigators of this crime to book. not merely punish the vicious tool, but all those who instigate and promote and assist : it is they also who should receive the most severe punishment at the hands of organized society. # PRIVILEGE. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa). - I rise 3.30. for the purpose of calling the attention of the House to a question of privilege. In doing so I understand it is my duty to move a motion in respect to this matter, and I shall do so. I move, That a gross breach of the privileges of this House has been committed in connection with the publication of an article in the Manawatu Evening Standard of Monday, the 22nd October. 1900; and I would ask that the article be read. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin). - Sir, I rise to a point of order. I wish to call your attention to a ruling of Mr. Speaker O'Rorke, on page 156 of the "Rulings of the Speakers," with regard to breaches of privilege :- " A breach of privilege must be brought forward at once. If twenty-four hours, or a considerable time, elapses, notice must be given." Sir, my point of order is this: that the publication referred to took place a considerable time ago-I think, nearly-twelve months ago-therefore, before it is brought before this House, notice should be given by the honourable member concerned. ruling. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa). - Speaking to the point of order, might I be permitted to say that we have a precedent for this motion of mine being moved at this stage, and in this way. in connection with the matter of privilege that was disposed of last evening. More than twenty-four hours-much more than twenty-four hours-had elapsed before the breach of privilege was brought before the House, and I say I am entitled to move this resolution to-day without any notice whatsoever. The House itself has created a precedent, and I submit, Sir, you should afford me an opportunity of bringing this motion forward at this stage. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) .- Sir, I think you will recollect that the Chairman of the Gold-fields and Mines Committee brought up the question of privilege that has been referred to on the very first occasion that it was possible for him to do so. It was then delayed with your sanction, because I think a motion dealing with the death of the Hon. Mr. Kerr intervened, and therefore I take it that the cases are not on all-fours. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay). - Sir, I would like to point out a ruling of Mr. Speaker, which says, on page 155,- " In order to entitle a question of privilege to precedence it must relate to some matter which has recently arisen." Now, if my ears caught the words correctly, it was the 21st October, 1900, a period of

nearly twelve months ago, when the alleged breach of privilege occurred. I shall hereafter argue the point, Sir -perhaps I am not in order in doing so at the present moment -- that it is impossible for us to consider the newspaper article a breach of privilege ; and, if we can do so, perhaps it would be right now to argue the point as to whether it is not too late to bring the question forward. The ruling of the Speaker already quoted by my honourable friend the member for Franklin, No. 5, says, - "A breach of privilege must be brought forward at once. If twenty-four hours, or a considerable time, elapses, notice must be given." "A considerable time," certainly, has elapsed. I should think that not by any stretch of imagination could it be taken to mean a period of more than ten months after the committing of the alleged offence ; or, if it was, it would be contrary to the whole spirit of dealing with privilege. I have found no rule that privilege shall be brought on at the first available opportunity. I am not quite sure of a ruling to that effect ; but I am quite sure that the practice of our Parliament has been that a question of privilege must be brought on at the first available opportunity. Now, this article has been

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first written-namely, last October. An Hon. MEMBER .- It has been read in the House already this session. Captain RUSSELL .- I shall argue, then, that the opportunity was lost by the honourable member for Wairarapa, for if he had desired to bring on a question of privilege he should have done so on the first day of the session, and the very earliest opportunity should have been availed of for discussing the question; and, having failed to do so, his right to bring on this as a question of privilege has lapsed ; or if he failed to do so on the first day of the session, then the fact of his not having availed himself of the opportunity when the article was read in the House would in itself constitute & bar. On the same page of rulings-156- ruling 8, by Mr. Speaker O'Rorke, it is laid down,- " If no notice is taken at the time of an alleged breach of order it cannot be raised afterwards as a matter of privilege." An Hon. MEMBER .- That is a question of order. Captain RUSSELL .- Quite so; I have to find arguments which are most apposite to the case which is before the House, and I should say that would be a guide in arriving, Sir, at your decision that, if the opportunity had not been availed of, then the right to raise the question has lapsed. Then, I find on page 158, No. 20, the following :- " Committal of a person for breach of privilege terminates with the prorogation of Parliament." There, again, I may be told that no committal has happened ; but, at any rate, it gives pertinence to the question of time-that it is, in fact, the essence of the business, if I may be allowed to use the term. That is to say, a question of privilege ought not to hang over for an indefinite time, but that the first opportunity which presents itself must be availed of. If, however, it is decided presently that the honourable member has a right to bring the old newspaper article up as a question of privilege, then I shall be in a position to argue-or I shall argue, at any rate -that the article is not in itself a breach of the privileges of this House as provided for by our Standing Orders, or by the proceedings laid down in May. Standing Order No. 138 says, - "Any member may rise to speak ' to order,' or upon a matter of privilege suddenly arising." Sir, I only quote this to show that in every instance the word "suddenly " is involved, and apparently the intention of the Standing Orders and the intention of the rulings of the Speakers has been that the question of privilege must be dealt with at the moment it happens, or as soon after as possible. Under these circumstances, I shall argue that an old newspaper article is not a question of privilege. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I hope members will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the fact that we have had three members, I think, opposite already protesting against this article being read. Captain Russell Mr. SEDDON .- It is easily to be seen that that is the effect of it. Mr. ELL .- Who is raising the question of party now ? Mr. SEDDON .- I am calling attention to the fact- Mr. ELL .- I am well aware of that ; but who is raising the question of party ? Mr. SEDDON .- I am calling attention to the fact that, so far, the exception that has been taken to this matter has come from the honourable gentlemen opposite. Mr. PIRANI .- I rise to a point of order. Is the Premier speaking to the point of order raised by the member for Franklin ? Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - The

Premier must confine his remarks to the question of order. It is only by my indulgence that I am allowing members to speak on the point of order. It is a very grave and important matter, and I feel it is only right to allow leading members of the House to say a few words on the question before I decide. Mr. SEDDON .- I rose for the purpose of leading the House, if I could, in order that it may do that which is correct in respect to this matter. My first contention in respect to the point of order is that the article must be read. We must first of all ascertain from the paper itself whether the offence was committed recently or some time back. Mr. HORNSBY .- It has never been quoted from the paper yet. Mr. SEDDON .- At all events, the first thing the House has to decide is that a breach of privilege has taken place. You have first of all to decide whether there has been a breach of privilege. How is the House to decide whether it constitutes a breach of privilege until the article is read ? The House knows nothing about this matter except the assertion of the member for Wairarapa. The next question is : Supposing after it is read it is proved that a breach of privilege was committed some time ago, are there precedents to show that the House can now at this time of day take the matter into consideration ? I say, Yes. You have only to look at May. page 341, and it is shown there that three years after publication a case came before the Imperial Parliament as a breach of privilege. Then, there is another case. It was the case of Mr. Edward Wakefield, editor of the Timaru Herald. If you look at that case, I think you will find that some time had elapsed before the matter was brought before the House. It was not within a day or two ; it was some little time afterwards. I contend that in this case the first thing should be to read the paragraph complained of, and decide whether it constitutes a breach of privilege or not. At this stage I shall not say anything further as to whether this is a breach of privilege or not. All I say now is that the House must be put in the position to decide whether a breach of privilege has been committed before any further action can be taken, and that is in accordance with the rulings of the Speaker, as

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mentioned by the member for Hawke's Bay. If it is maintained that the question must be raised immediately, then it means that in this case the member who makes the allegation must give notice, and it must come on tomorrow, and take precedence of all other business. All I can say is that if he gives notice of motion to take this question into consideration we will still require to be placed in possession of the facts as to whether there is or is not sufficient ground for declaring it a breach of privilege. Of course, I overheard what occurred last night. The member for Riccarton challenged the member for Wairarapa, and the honourable member said, " Very well, I accept the challenge, and will bring it before the House." And it is now before the House. In a matter of this kind all we want to be guided by is precedent, and to do what is just and proper in the matter. But I say that if it is claimed that it is not a breach of privilege because a certain time has elapsed, I contend that time does not prevent such a matter being dealt with. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- As by inference the Premier has stated just now that the action of the Opposition is for the purpose of protecting me, I would like to tell the Premier this : that members of the Opposition mentioned this matter to me, and when they did so I stated that I did not think there was anything in the point, and that I hoped it would not be raised. As far as I am concerned, I do not care a button for forty Parliaments. If I have committed a breach of privilege I shall be only too pleased to see it raised and dealt with as soon as possible. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) .- Allow me to mention that the case referred to occurred some years ago in 1879. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I have it before me. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- I do not suppose the Premier wished to be incorrect in referring to the case of Mr. Edward Wakefield. That question of privilege was brought before the House as soon as the paper arrived from Timaru -- three days after publication. In regard to the article complained of now by the member for Wairarapa, I think it ought to have been brought under the notice of the House on the first available opportunity after the House met this session. I did intend to bring it before the House myself, but I did not do so for the reason that I intended to use it in my speech on the Libel Bill. The whole question of

this article was brought under the notice of the House on the 1st August last, when I moved the second reading of the Libel Bill, so that the House has had this article in its pos- session from the 1st August till to-day, the 12th September. I was distinctly under the impres- sion that the article ought to have formed the subject of a motion for breach of privilege, but as the House took no notice of my representa- tions on the subject on the 1st August it does seem a little peculiar that we should be now asked to take notice of it on the 12th Sep- tember. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The rulings that my attention has been called to are, to my mind, very clear that these breaches of privi- lege are given precedence to when they are immediately brought before the Chair. It is quite evident that this matter is an alleged breach of privilege ; but it occurred some eleven months ago, and consequently the honourable member, in my judgment, must, on the authority of previous rulings, give notice of motion to bring this matter before the House. His giving notice of motion will not put him in a worse position, except, perhaps, it. may involve a delay of twenty-four hours ; but the motion will be allowed precedence then. Captain RUSSELL .- When should we argue the point of the ruling given by Mr. Speaker O'Rorke in 1890-namely, that if no notice is taken at the time of the alleged breach of privi- lege it cannot be raised afterwards as a breach of privilege ? Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - I can decide that point at once. That ruling, as also the other rulings which the Speakers have given, refers to breaches of order in the House in the course of debate. This is the breach of privilege committed by the publishing of something out- side the House, and a copy of the paper may come before members in a week or a year after- wards. When an alleged breach of the Stand- ing Orders takes place in the House the House is supposed to take cognisance of it immediately ; therefore it must be brought before the Speaker immediately. If that is not done the opportunity passes away. Captain RUSSELL .- The House did become cognisant of this matter long ago and took no notice of it ; therefore I contend the oppor- tunity has lapsed. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I was not aware of that. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) .- Sir, I give notice that to-morrow I will move, That a gross breach of the privileges of this House has been committed by the publication in the Manawatu Evening Standard of the leading article contained in that journal in its issue of the 22nd October, 1900. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- Sir, I wish to give notice that-I may say I want a little time to elapse, namely, a week-I will bring before the House a breach of privilege com- mitted by Mr. J. T. M. Hornsby in the Napier Evening News in the course of an article in which he stated that the member for Palmers- ton North had been bribed by foreign banks in the colony to vote against the Bank of New Zealand. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I call honourable members' attention to the fact that they must uphold the dignity of Parliament. POSTPONEMENT OF QUESTIONS. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved, That the order of questions be postponed, to allow Notice of Motion No. 1 to be brought up-namely, That the resolution of the House of the 10th July last, fixing morning sittings of this House, be rescinded.

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cuss the motion, but what he did object to was the postponement of nearly a dozen pages of questions that had been on the Order Paper for three or four weeks. It was provided in the Standing Orders that questions should be answered on certain days of the week, and to put off the answering of the many questions now on the Order Paper was unfair to those members who had been waiting for weeks to have replies to their questions. He had some questions on the Order Paper himself that were of great importance to people who were actually suffering an injustice at the present time. There were other members in the same position. It was really treating the Standing Orders and the privileges of members almost with con- tempt to allow such a state of things to go on any longer, and he trusted members would not agree to the motion unless there was some more cogent reason advanced by the Premier than the one he had already brought forward. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) hoped the House would not consent to the postponement of the questions. Mr. SEDDON said it might not be the wish of the Government to answer questions. Captain RUSSELL said, If he were the Speaker the Government would

be obliged to answer questions in accordance with the Standing Orders. If he were the Speaker he would undertake to make the Premier "sit up." As matters were now going on the Standing Orders of the House seemed to be a farce. Why was that? Because, on a previous occasion, when the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) upbraided the Opposition for not making the Government do their duty, and said that the Opposition formed the fulcrum, he (Captain Russell) replied that the Opposition was the lever only-the Government supporters the fulcrum-and that the fulcrum was only jelly-fish, and so useless. If members insisted on having questions answered they would be answered; but if there was a majority to follow the Government on every occasion, though they knew they were wrong, the Government would get their own way. He hoped that by degrees members would come to realise that in any setting aside of the Standing Orders members had only themselves to blame. He could not help admiring the Premier's autocratic way. All people wished to be autocratic, and people were only autocratic because there were subservient people who allowed them to be so. On the Opposition side the members were free to act as they liked, but on the Government side there were members who could no longer be said to be in a position to call their souls their own, and who, as an elected body, had not the courage of their convictions. He believed that all the members who were listening to him wished to have the questions replied to that day. The practice of postponing the answering of questions was a wrong one, and was never contemplated under any Standing Order. There was no profession now that it was dangerous to the public safety to answer the questions on the Order Paper. Whether questions should be answered or not was the Premier, who on different occasions merely said he did not choose to reply to them. If members were to allow the control of the House to go into the hands of Ministers, what was the use of attending the House at all? Why should they not stay at home and allow the business to be done by the occupants of the Treasury benches? When he looked across the floor he saw the Hon. the Premier and the Minister for Railways in their places. He admitted that the Minister of Justice was sometimes there, but not so frequently as the Minister for Railways. The question was, were they going to tolerate this refusal any longer? They had lately seen the cloud arising which, though it might be no larger than a man's hand, indicated that there was a storm brewing, and that in the House and in the country the autocracy of the Premier was to be no longer tolerated. When he (Captain Russell) travelled through the country he was constantly asked, "How much longer are you men in Parliament going to allow the Premier to do what he chooses?" He had always answered, that he had done his best to try and get that state of things altered, but that he had not been backed by the Government side of the House as he should have been. Now, here was an opportunity, if members would only vote as they genuinely believed-that questions should be answered before any other business was dealt with-they could insist upon the Premier doing it. The time had come when members, whether they supported the Government or not, should feel it their duty to support the principles of parliamentary government which were embodied in our Standing Orders, and it was there laid down that questions should be answered periodically and regularly. Mr. R. MCKENZIE (Motueka) said it appeared to him that the Opposition were about to adopt their old stonewall tactics. He could see as soon as the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, the ex-leader of the Opposition, commenced to look over the Ministerial benches, and to inquire for the three or four absent Ministers, that he was out on a stonewalling expedition. He wondered he could not realise that he drove them out of the Chamber: for had they remained here he would, as he invariably did, assuredly have sent them to sleep. He was always dull and prosy when engaged on a time-killing speech. He (Mr. McKenzie) could see perfectly clear that there was some mischief brewing. Had the honourable member and his supporters not obstructed the motion would have been passed, the business of the country would have proceeded, and no harm would be done. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) thought he was at liberty to speak on behalf of the veritate. He took a very serious view of this question, and, in fact, he had told the honourable member for Hawke's Bay a few days ago, in quite an informal and

unofficial way, that he ! and others intended to mend their ways in thi

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matter. He was one of those old members who still had some regard for the forms of the House which protected the rights of minori- ties. That was why the Standing Orders existed. But they were no longer a law unto the House. There were now on the Order Paper ten pages of print, containing 141 ques- tions, some of which, it was fair to assume, were of considerable interest to the public. Why should not the people of the country be afforded an opportunity of having placed before them the views of Ministers and of members upon those questions ? One could understand that in the course of the financial debate or other pressure of business- Mr. SEDDON. - Is the financial debate over ? Mr. FISHER asked if he might be allowed to address the right honourable gentleman as "My dear Sir." "My dear Sir," how many weeks have these questions been on the Order Paper ? There were also notices of motion, many of which he knew were unopposed. He was going to say, when interrupted, that he had known cases when the financial debate was in progress, or when there was some pressing matter to be brought under the imme- diate notice of the House, when previous Pre- miers had said they would prefer not to answer questions that day. That was exceptional; but now there was no attempt to conform to the Standing Orders, and what was to be done ? He was known to be a stickler for the forms of the House ; but now the forms of the House were becoming a by-word. He had seen, and heard, the Speaker of the House insist on this particular Standing Order in regard to the order of business being respected and observed. Mr. SEDDON .- Let us get on with some work. Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentle- man was not in such a hurry to dispose of a motion which had been before the House for three days past. They had reached a time when members should not request, but should demand, that questions should be answered, and should assert whatever rights they had under the Standing Orders. Mr. LANG (Waikato) only wished to add his protest against the refusal of the Government to answer questions for such a prolonged period. Of the 141 questions now on the Order Paper, some of them had been left for so long that when the reply did come it was of little or no use. That was apart from the question that in many cases the answers were not satisfactory. Now, for the convenience of Ministers, the questions had been grouped on the Order Paper under the head of the different Ministerial de- partments to which they belonged. Under this rule, however, the Premier always came on top, and those members who were in the unfortu- nate position of having given notice to ask a question of some other Minister had very little chance of getting an answer at all. He would . suggest to the Premier that he should occasion- ally give his colleagues a chance of answering the questions put to them, so that those ques- tions might be answered within a reasonable time. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he wished to be fair. The honourable member for Welling- ton City (Mr. Fisher) was a stickler for the forms of the House, and he (Mr. Seddon) was a stickler for the rights and privileges of the leader of the House. It was strictly in accord- ance with precedent that questions should not be answered during the financial debate, and no one knew that better than the honourable gentleman. During the course of a financial debate questions might be put simply for the purpose of helping the opponents of the Go- vernment in connection with the debate, and it would be crass stupidity on the part of any Ministry to answer questions during the course of the debate. The debate might have been closed last week ; he had been prepared with his reply, and had been led to believe that there were no other speakers on the other side. Mr. MASSEY .- Who said that ? Mr. SEDDON said he had been so in- formed by his Whips, and they must have had, and he had no doubt they had, re- ceived an assurance that such was the case. This, however, was a warning never to be caught again. If he had his way he would not take the slightest notice of the other side, but would just go on with the business. There had been deliberate prevention of his reply and the closing of the debate. Then, who had brought up the question of privilege, over which two days had been wasted ? Was the Govern- ment responsible for that ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Yes. Mr. SEDDON said that was not so ; the Standing Orders were responsible, because

they provided that questions of privilege must be proceeded with. But who had protracted the debate ? Who moved the amendment which had kept it going all the previous day. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher). Then, the leader of the Opposition, instead of helping, said if he were in the Speaker's chair he would make the Premier do as he liked. He need only say that that honourable gentleman had been ruled out of order on three or four occasions upon this very question, and had very nearly committed a breach of the Standing Orders, because he would dispute Mr. Speaker's ruling concerning it. Mr. Speaker had ruled that Ministers need not proceed to answer questions, and that he had no power to make them; and when he had persisted, the honourable gentleman had been told to sit down in such a manner as must have made him feel very small indeed. The honourable gentleman was rather bumptious and bouncible at the present time, when Sir Maurice O'Rorke was not in the chair. Mr. PIRANI .- I rise to a point of order : that is reflecting on the Deputy-Speaker. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I must ask the Premier to withdraw that remark. It is a similar reflection to one to which the Premier objected Mr. SEDDON said he withdrew the remark, but it was not intended as a reflection. What <page:486>

given the ruling, would have remembered it, and have reminded the honourable gentleman of the fact. Captain RUSSELL .- I have the ruling of Major Steward, which is equally as good. Mr. SEDDON said the last ruling was that of Sir Maurice O'Rorke, and that was binding. Then, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay had told them about a conversation in a railway- carriage, and some one asking, " How much longer are you going to allow the Premier to do as he pleases ? " Exactly the same thing had been told them by the honourable member during the session immediately preceding the general election, but what had been the result ? Instead of the country sending members to turn him out, it had sent people to assist him and to keep him in his place, and had given him so much support that the leader of the Opposition sat disgraced. It was all very well to repeat such conversations as that mentioned, but they did not express public opinion ; the expression of public opinion took place at the ballot-box-the people were the judges, not the honourable gentleman. He (Mr. Seddon) wanted the resolution that he was about to propose to be carried, and wished them to proceed with it. He could not give the honourable member the returns, for the same reason that he could not go on with the debate, and in this they were merely following out what had been done for years. If the honourable gentleman would refer to Hansard he would see what had transpired in Mr. Ballance's time, and in Sir Harry Atkinson's time. Sir Harry Atkinson had taken very good care that he would neither give returns nor answer questions, nor do anything else, pending the completion of Supply. Why should different treatment be meted out to the Government now? It would appear that the business of the House, the leading of the House, and the conduct of the business, was to be taken entirely out of the hands of the Government and vested in irresponsible persons ; and not even a party, because those honourable gentlemen got up and protested and declared they had no party. Then he said every private individual-and the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was no more than that, according to his own statement-had a right, as a member of the House, to say, " We will put the Premier and the Minister for Public Works in their place, and they must do what we tell them." The fact of the matter was that he (Mr. Seddon) wanted to go on with this motion. If members would arrange to facilitate the completion of the financial debate he was prepared to do his part. He was told at the last moment there were five more speeches to be delivered. He said it was no fault of his. If he did anything that might end the debate it would be said at once that he was autocratic-that he tried to interfere with the liberty of speech. An Hon. MEMBER .- You tried on Friday night. Mr. SEDDON said he did nothing of the kind. He was led to believe on that occasion Mr. Seddon the other side of the House. He repeated that : and if the information conveyed to him was imperfect that was no fault of his. It was given to him in good faith. He could have done other business, but he did not wish to take up a dictatorial position. If he had risen in his place and merely moved this motion without offering any reasons he would

have been blamed for it ; but because he tried to be courteous, and asked the permission of the House to move a resolution to postpone questions, he was met with this kind of treatment. He was not going to allow himself to be blamed by certain members of the House and not answer them. The Government must give their reason why they were not answering questions to-day. That reason was because of the delay in the completion of the financial debate. He wanted to get the business of the country gone on with. The House divided. AYES, 31. Russell, G. W. Allen, E. G. Lawry Bennet McGowan Seddon Buddo Mckenzie, R. Stevens Thompson, R. McLachlan Carncross McNab Ward Carroll Meredith Willis Collins Witheford. Colvin Millar Mills Field Morrison Tellers. Hall-Jones Fraser, A. L. D. Palmer Hornsby Parata O'Meara. Houston NOES, 18. Rhodes Hogg Atkinson Bollard Russell, W. R. Hutcheson Smith, G. J. Ell Lang Laurenson Fisher Tellers. Allen, J. Monk Graham Pirani Massey. Hardy Haselden PAIRS. For. Against. Herries Duncan Smith, E. M. McGuire. Majority for, 13. Motion agreed to. # MORNING SITTINGS. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he was not going to condemn the morning sittings, although he was now moving to rescind the resolution which enabled the House to sit in the mornings ; but he thought members would admit it was necessary after what had taken place with respect to the Committee-work, and if they were to get through the Committee-work and finish up the session it was impossible for them any longer to have morning sittings this session. Then, there was the question of the estimates. When the House was dealing with the estimates, if the House did not sit after half-past ten, it would be a very long time before they got the estimates through. In fact, he doubted whether they would ever get them through the House under such circumstances.

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4.30. way to the House: The Government desired to get the work through ; they desired to bring the session to an end, at all events, about the first week in October, and he believed that that could be done if members applied their minds to it, and they could give justice to the work as well. At all events, in former sessions he had endeavoured to force the pace, and force work through ; but, for very cogent reasons, he could not stand work as he could at one time, and he had been taking things easy, and he intended to go on doing so. Therefore, if work did not proceed as rapidly as otherwise, members must not blame him if the House sat until the end of November. He thought it would facilitate the business of the country if this motion was carried. He might say at once, in respect to this question, that his strongest reason for moving it was that he knew from the Chairmen of various Committees, and particularly the Petitions Committee, the amount of work before them, and that if these morning sittings continued it would not be possible to do justice to that work. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) was sorry the Premier had deemed it necessary to take away a privilege they had enjoyed so far this session. The Premier should not forget that he had still two nights on which he could continue the business of the country right through the night until daylight ; but it was felt that having two nights in the week during which there was a certainty of being able to go home at half-past ten p.m. was only a kindly, sensible privilege. He would like the Premier to point out how other countries got on. He believed the right honourable gentleman could point to no Parliament in the world where there were such harassing and improper hours as had been maintained by the Premier during last session of this Parliament. And he believed there was a considerable number of members who returned to their homes in a condition of health that was anything but creditable to sensible men in continuing hours that brought them to a palpable degree of physical prostration. He did not think it was at all necessary to sit late hours. Personally, he would rather go to work at half-past eight or nine and keep on until five p.m., and conduct the business of Parliament in these hours, and give the necessary evenings in the week for the management of Committee business, because we would feel there was a certainty of Committees not sitting after half-past ten p.m. The motion that was before the House was a reflection upon the Premier. It was a confession that we were not able to conduct our business as sensible men should conduct it, and as the ordinary business of daily life was practised. We were making laws which

were imposing all sorts of hours and restrictions on private enterprise. Nothing now seemed too trivial or officious to escape our legislative interference ; and yet we could not conduct the business of the State properly-and that confession to come from a gentleman who boasted that we were leading the van of civilisation-called for he must vote against it, feeling that it was his duty to do so. The Premier last session got measures through in the last hours of the last week of the session, when members were exhausted, though the Premier was not, because he would work in watches with his colleagues. How was it that we had so many laws which required amendments in the succeeding session ? Simply because we had not carefully thought them over-because, so to speak, they had been punched through, not upon their merits, but because the Premier was determined to have them on the statute-book. He thought the Premier could not contradict the few remarks he had made on this motion, because the right honourable gentleman knew there was reason for his statements. He would prefer the Premier to withdraw the motion and say, " Well, I will try this session at least to see if it is not possible to do the country's business within reasonable hours." Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) hoped the Right Hon. the Premier, being strong, would also be merciful. He thought what the Premier said now about doing away with morning sittings was only reasonable. He thought the necessity for good Committee-work was evident to everybody, and that the impossibility of doing our Committee-work and having morning sittings was such that the work of the Committees, which he maintained was essential to the proper production of Bills eventually in this House, was impossible under our present conditions. But he thought it would be a good thing if the Right Hon. the Premier would agree to substitute later hours in the evening for the hours we sat in the morning. For instance, on Tuesdays and Fridays, instead of the morning sittings, we could easily substitute the hour of midnight for rising, or half-past twelve, so far as he was concerned, so that we might have a regular hour at which to go home. He believed this would conduce to the rapid passage of business. He was extremely sorry to hear that the Right Hon. the Premier himself felt incapable of doing heavy night-work. It had always been to him a matter of the most profound astonishment that the right honourable gentleman had been able to get through the work he had. But we knew the Right Hon. the Premier, and we knew that when once he had steam up the engine would run on ; and, whether the right honourable gentleman wished to leave off at certain hours or not, he would drive on. He (Captain Russell) did not want to see the boiler burst, and, unless we had a safety-valve by closing the establishment at certain hours we knew the Right Hon. the Premier would keep members sitting all night. He would suggest in all sincerity, and not with any desire to oppose the Premier's wish in the matter, that we should fix a reasonable hour for adjourning on Tuesdays and Fridays-say midnight or half-past twelve-and he did not think that would be a great hardship to anybody. All those who believed in early closing, he thought, ought to join with him in saying that

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agree to a reasonable hour of adjournment, say twelve o'clock. He believed that the late hours, and more especially the bad atmosphere in the House, was injurious to the health of members. Mr. WILLIS (Wanganui) said he was one of those who did not like late hours. He did not think the work of the House could be properly conducted when members were in an exhausted condition, as had been the case from time to time during past sessions. He would support the Premier's motion, because he thought that the necessity had arisen for a certain amount of compulsion being imposed on the House to go on with the business. Since the previous Friday a debate had taken place, of which even schoolboys would not have been proud, with reference to a breach of privilege that could have been disposed of in a short time, but the love of hearing themselves speak had caused members to prolong the discussion to outrageous limits. He might point out that threats had been made that the estimates would be blocked, and he therefore thought that the Premier was taking the proper course in moving this motion, and in thus being able to insist on proper progress being made with the business. Mr. LANG (Waikato) said the

honourable member who has just sat down found fault with the waste of time during the last two or three days. The honourable member was not present; but he would ask him, when the Hansard came out, to see what members were responsible for the waste of time and for the prolonged discussion which had taken place. The honourable member would find that the fault did not lie with the Opposition side of the House. If there was one thing more than another which the electors of the colony disapproved of in connection with the sittings of the House it was the unreasonably late hours they kept. The Premier had only given the House morning sittings when it suited his convenience. Directly any matters of importance were likely to come down, more particularly the estimates, the Premier wished to force them through.

Mr. SEDDON .- Members can always move and carry an adjournment. Mr. LANG said the Premier knew it depended on who moved the adjournment, and whether he gave his followers the tip to vote in the right direction or otherwise. The Premier gave as one of the reasons why they should do away with morning sittings that the Public Petitions Committee could not get on with their work. How absurd ! Members knew perfectly well that the Government took not the slightest notice of the recommendations of these Committees unless it suited their purpose to do so. He (Mr. Lang) maintained that the House ought to conduct its business in the same way that business people outside conducted their business. Mr. SEDDON .- If you have a fixed hour to knock off you must have the closure as well. The two things must go together. Mr. LANG said, If they had fixed hours from the start of the session, and the business of the Captain Russell commencement, instead of waiting until the session was half through before measures were brought before the House, the business would be transacted in a much shorter time, and the work would be better done. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) said he intended to support the Premier in this motion, and in doing so he would like to give his opinion about the early sittings they had tried since the session commenced. No one rejoiced more than he did when it was decided to have morning sittings, and no one regretted more deeply the failure of these sittings. He would, however, point this out : that the Local Government Bill Committee had had its usefulness blocked to a great extent by the morning sittings of the House. Under the recent arrangement it was impossible for Committees to get through their work. He had tried to get the Committee to meet on days the House did not sit, but members would not have it. They struck work and passed a resolution not to meet on non-sitting days. Thus, only on two days a week could they be called together. There were some thirty members on that Committee, yet on Wednesdays and Thursdays when they sat only some nine or ten members would be present, owing to the number of other Committees sitting on these days. That morning they had only a bare quorum of five members present. The member for Waikato was present when the following resolution was passed, and he even voted for it. The resolution was reported to the House, and therefore can be referred to :- "That the Committee recommend that the House should meet on Tuesdays and Fridays at such an hour as will enable the Local Government Committee to sit during the forenoon of these days and complete its labours." Yet the honourable member now condemned the motion of the Premier, which only carried out the recommendation of the Committee he had referred to. In regard to the proposal of the leader of the Opposition, that on the days from which morning sittings were removed the House should sit till half-past twelve, he must remember that would not give as much sitting-time as would be taken away by the resolution. On those days, in order to give the same time, it would be necessary to sit till half - past one. He did not think the average sittings of the House extended in very many cases beyond half-past one, although there were years in which they had averaged up till five or ten minutes to two. He would like to see a way out of the difficulty in regard to late sittings, but not at the expense of the Committee-work, the importance of which was not generally understood by the public. Mr. LANG, as a matter of personal explanation, said that the member for Mataura had misrepresented him. He (Mr. Lang) maintained that there was nothing inconsistent in being in favour of the Local Government Committee sitting in the morning and voting that the House should rise at half-past ten p.m. The two matters were quite distinct.

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Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) said he had felt great pleasure in knowing that for some time past there had been two nights in each week on which members knew they could get home at a reasonable hour ; but he admitted the difficulties in connection with morning sittings, which interfered very considerably with Committee-work. In doing away with morning sittings, however, they should have a quid pro quo, and he would move an amendment to that effect. They were going the right way to break down their health by working to most unreasonable hours - indeed, frequently all night-while, as had been pointed out, they were preventing other people from working too long hours at ordinary employments. He objected to the sort of compulsion that was brought to bear on members by all-night sittings at a time when they ought to have all their energies at command to deal with the estimates and other matters towards the end of the session. He agreed with the last speaker that the work of the Committees was frequently of considerable importance, and he would point out that the work of the House in the last part of the session was of double the importance of that during the earlier period, consequently requiring greater vigilance and attention by members. He would vote for the motion, with an amendment, and would move the addition of the following words : "That this House shall not continue to sit after midnight." Mr. BUDDO (Kaiapoi) supported the 5.0. proposal of the Premier with regard to the afternoon sittings in preference to the morning sittings. He also recognised that Committee-work ought to be done, as it was of great importance to many. On several Committees of which he was a member he found it was impossible to overtake the work ; in fact, much of it would probably have to stand over till another session if the present state of things was allowed to go on. He did not see that there would be any difficulty in getting through the work of Parliament between the hours of half-past two p.m. and midnight, instead of keeping members in the House for fourteen or fifteen hours at times, and sometimes all night. Many members, himself among the number, wished to be in the House all the time it was sitting ; but he could say for himself that he could not keep up the practice if he wished to preserve his health. He did not desire to see a debate strangled by the closure. He admitted that at times it was necessary to continue a debate for a considerable time, but to keep it going into the early hours of the morning was detrimental to one's health and not conducive to good work. He was used to getting his sleep at night, and in session-time he could not get into the habit of taking his sleep in the day-time. He did not think, if the motion of the member for Nelson City was carried, it would prevent the Premier from suspending the particular Standing Order when there was a necessity to do so, and continue the debate if the circumstances warranted it. Personally, he would not be averse to seeing the closure put on many of our debates, but at the same time he was VOL. OXVIII .- 31. doubtful if it was suitable for a New Zealand Parliament, where every representative had a right to be heard. He trusted the Premier would be reasonable, and would try to meet members in this matter. He did not wish to reflect on Ministers, but it was understood that sometimes Ministers got a rest when the Bills before the House did not belong to their departments. That was a state of things that did not apply to individual members, who had to be in the House at all hours if they wished to do the business of the country. With other members of the House, he had been in the habit of doing that, and he wished to continue to do so ; but he would be compelled to give it up unless matters were so arranged that the work could be done without an undue strain on members. He would support the proposed amendment of the member for Nelson City, that the House should rise at midnight, except on the estimates. Surely this was a long enough day's work for members of the House. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) was sorry the Premier had found it necessary to bring forward this resolution. He could congratulate the honourable gentleman on the success of the experiment he had tried this session of holding daylight sittings. He had never seen a House, after two months of work, better able to perform its duties. A Parliament that could afford to have a vigorous debate on a breach-of-privilege question for two solid days and nights was, in his opinion, well able to perform the business of the country. Everybody knew that if good and effective legislation

was to be performed the hours must be reasonable. In the past he had seen most mischievous legislation brought about through the pernicious system that permitted sittings after midnight, when there were often only a few members present, and some of them almost asleep. That was the time when members who wished to carry into effect legislation the reverse of beneficial to the country were able to secure their opportunity. The daylight sittings that members had enjoyed this session, instead of interfering with the work of the Committees, had really had little effect on it. What happened with regard to the Local Government Committee? Had they not risen at twelve o'clock day after day, thus losing a full hour? Yet the work of the Committee was now, he believed, almost at an end. He was himself a member of two or three Committees, and up to the present their work had been easily disposed of. He was inclined to think that it could not be fairly urged that the Committee-work had been interfered with by the daylight sittings. The daylight sittings, he contended, had been a benefit to the members and to the country-to the country, because the reporters for the evening journals were in a position to supply at the earliest moment a good report of the proceedings of the House. Then, in the daylight there were fewer gallery speeches and little talking against time, and, as for unsatisfactory legislation, he was not aware that up to the present anything had been done this session which members or the country would have

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so far, good work had been performed. There was, undoubtedly, a great disadvantage in having an hour fixed for adjournment. It enabled members who wished to obstruct the business to talk against time, so that the business in hand could not be concluded when the House rose. The only remedy for that was to adopt the closure, or to fix no hour for adjournment. If no hour was fixed, it would then be a question of physical endurance, which he did not like. Such a method was not beneficial to the health of members, nor did it tend to good legislation ; but, unfortunately, it was sometimes the only way out of the difficulty. He appealed to members to retain the morning sittings. The experiment should be given a further trial. Up to the present it had been fairly satisfactory, and he would be sorry to see it abandoned. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) wished to say that the motion moved by the Premier met with his full and entire approval, and he would give the honourable gentleman every assistance to carry it into effect. He considered that the morning sittings had been a failure. He was a man of regular habits. He had regular hours of going to bed and regular hours of rising, and these morning sittings did not suit him at all. The old system suited him much better than the new one. His friend the honourable member for Franklin and he were always freshest about three or four o'clock in the morning. Mr. MASSEY .- About four o'clock. Mr. FISHER said it was a case of the survival of the fittest. The most intellectual members remained to that hour to do the intellectual work of the country, the member for Franklin and himself included. He could not see how the business of the country could be carried on effectively if the House adjourned at midnight. He would therefore oppose the motion of the honourable member for Nelson City. It afforded him very great pleasure to announce to the House that he entirely agreed with the action of the leader of the House, who was the best judge as to the most expeditious method of conducting the business. hoped that the House would adopt the Premier's motion. He did not agree with the honourable member for Masterton that morning sittings had been an unexampled success. They had interfered with the business of the House, and he hoped that the motion would be carried, minus the addition proposed by the honourable member for Nelson City. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) expressed surprise at the remarks of the honourable gentleman who had just preceded him. Any one who visited the House about three or four o'clock in the morning towards the end of the session would find not more than a score of members present. Where were the other members ? Some were in other parts of the building, and many of them were in bed. If they were to have good legislation they would not get it at four o'clock in the morning, when members were physically and mentally exhausted. He Mr. Hogg scind the morning sittings, and he would also support the addition, moved by the honourable member for Nelson City, to provide for the

House rising at midnight. There could be no doubt that morning sittings had been a failure. An important part of the business of the House was Committee-work, which had been completely disorganized. The public, when they found all other doors of redress closed to them, appealed by petition through their members to Parliament. They came from the north, the south, the east, and the west, and many of them had to wait in Wellington for weeks before their petitions could be heard. The country was very often put to great expense in connection with witnesses. Just now a petition was before the M to Z Committee referring to an important matter. Witnesses had come from Auckland in connection with it, and heavy expenses were being incurred. He recollected on one occasion of hearing a petition the expenses of witnesses alone being over £200. Those long delays debarred the public from coming to the House with their petitions. As Chairman of the Public Petitions M to Z Committee, he would support the motion of the Premier. He did not agree with the remarks of the honourable member for Masterton, that it was no inconvenience to Committees to have morning sittings. Petitions had accumulated, and members were coming to him asking when petitions presented by them would come before the M to Z Committee, of which he was Chairman. That Committee had so much work on hand that he had to reply that it would probably be three weeks before they could be dealt with. It was absolutely necessary that Committees should be allowed to sit on at least four mornings in the week. Members could not be expected to sit on Saturdays and Mondays: they had their correspondence to attend to, Ministers to interview, Bills to read, and other matters to attend to. Ministers were differently situated; they had their Private Secretaries - some one, and some as many as five. Any member who did his work honestly was engaged not eight hours, but fourteen hours a day. If the House closed at twelve o'clock midnight, honourable members would spend ten hours in both Committees and the work of the House, and he thought they should not be expected to daily breathe a vitiated atmosphere for a longer time than that. As for the honourable member for Masterton, he could on Saturdays get to his home by train in a couple of hours; but that was not so in the case of the Canterbury, Otago, Southland, and Auckland members. It was all very well for that honourable member to urge the continuance of the morning sittings and the late sittings when he could get into the country once a week. He (Mr. Meredith) hoped the House would rise to the occasion by supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson City to rise punctually at midnight. He regretted that the Premier had complained of failing health. Mr. SEDDON.- I did nothing of the kind., <page:491>

Mr. MEREDITH was glad to hear that he had misunderstood the Premier. He was delighted to find that the Premier intended to strike, and he hoped that all honourable members would strike at twelve midnight. If they did so he believed that better work would result, the best interests of the country would be served, and honourable members would preserve their health, which, under the old system, they could not do. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) said he was as anxious to have early sittings as was any other member, but experience had shown that they had not been a success. He had found it almost impossible to get a quorum at Committees, and it was quite a common thing at half-past ten in the morning to see Committee Clerks trying to get quorums for the different Committees. It was impossible to carry on the business of the House in that way. But who was responsible for the late sittings? It was those honourable members who were always talking on every conceivable subject that came up in the House, and who prevented the business of the country from proceeding. The amount of twaddle he had listened to during the last day or two had sickened and disgusted him. As to the suggestion of the honourable member for Kaiapoi, that the closure should be introduced, he (Mr. Thompson) hoped they would always have freedom of debate in that House. He would like very much to see early closing and the House to rise at midnight; but he did not think the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson City should be given effect to. The fact was that members of the House had it in their own hands to say at what time of night the House should rise. If members would make up their minds at a certain hour to say

that the adjournment of the House must be carried, the Premier, of necessity, must fall into line. He admitted that when discussing the estimates it might be absolutely necessary to have late sittings, otherwise it would be in the power of three or four members to prevent the estimates passing at all. He was amused at the speech of the honourable member for Masterton, who was never happy unless his voice was ringing from one end of the Chamber to the other. If that honourable member would take an example from him (Mr. Thompson), and speak less, the business of the House would be facilitated. He intended to support the motion now before the House, but he trusted members would come to some arrangement amongst themselves and decide that the House, except under extraordinary circumstances, as when dealing with the estimates, should rise at any rate not later than one o'clock in the morning. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) admitted that the last speaker had set a good example to the House that session by refraining from unnecessary speaking, and he only wondered what members did not come to Parliament in the the reason was. The reason would probably be forthcoming when the public works estimates first instance for Committee-work, but to fulfil legislative functions. The Premier seemed to come down. Now, he did not think he was under the impression that they came there Premier had given any good and sufficient to grant him supplies of money, and when that reason for the motion before the House. He was not very much in love with morning sittings, as he had never had to work so hard in the early part of any session as he had to do that session, simply because, owing to the House sitting on two mornings of the week, all the Committee-work, correspondence, and business intrusted to members by their constituents had to be jammed into the other mornings. By the motion of the Premier they were given the alternative of either sitting in the morning or else sitting to all hours of the night. He believed the middle and better course was contained in the amendment moved by the member for Nelson City, and which he intended to support. He was able to stand late sittings as well as most people, but he looked forward with dread to going back to the habits of previous sessions, when on many occasions members only got home in time for breakfast, and when Bills were rushed through the House when members were not in a fit state to properly consider them ; and on that account measures had been placed on the statute-book during the last few sessions which had proved to be utterly useless and unworkable, and members at the end of the session had often gone home with their health partly broken down. . One gentleman who had until lately been a member of the House was now very seriously ill, and his friends ascribed his illness to the late hours of the last Parliament of which he was a member. As he believed the work of Parliament could be done very much better and more quickly within reasonable hours and without going into morning sittings, he would support the amendment of the member for Nelson City. Mr. TANNER (Avon) did not think any one could accuse him of unduly taking up the time of the House. No one had been more deeply revolted by what had occurred in the House during the last couple of days ; but fortunately he had been able to keep his tongue bridled. He had no sympathy with the Premier whatever in his motion to abolish morning sittings and revert back to previous usages. When members were sent to Parliament the people who sent them there believed they were sending men possessed of some common-sense ; but, judging by the hours of sitting, they found out afterwards that the bulk of members were deficient in that respect. The chief offender of all was the Premier. Who had not heard the Premier, at two o'clock in the morning, when the estimates were under consideration, and when some member moved that the House should adjourn, say that the night was young, and that he himself felt perfectly fresh, and insisted on going on with the work? All that the Premier wanted was to get his estimates through as quietly as possible and with as little discussion as possible. Now, it seemed to him that an exaggerated importance was attached by some members to Committee-work; but

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them as quickly as possible. It appeared to be overlooked that Committee - work never existed in the early stages of parliamentary history, but was an adjunct which had grown up in connection with the

proceedings of the House. That session twenty-six Committees had been set up, and what real work had they done or were they likely to do? Two or three sessions ago a Committee was set up for the revision of the Standing Orders ; but the Standing Orders had never been revised, and, in his opinion, there was no intention of revising them. What was the use of the hundreds of petitions that came before the two Public Petitions Committees every session ? There were as many as seven hundred and seventy petitions in a single year. They were reported upon, and laid upon the table in sheaves, with recommendations to the Government, and that was the last heard of the vast majority of them. Why did the House sanction such a waste of energy with so little result ? Any member who had any knowledge of what took place on Committees, the multitude of reports brought down and ignored, the futile recommendations made to the Government, and the very meagre manner in which effect was given to those accepted, would easily understand his meaning. It would be invidious to select any particular Committee for special notice, but fully one-half of the Committees could be dispensed with without difficulty and with advantage to the House. In this connection he might repeat to the House, without any breach of trust, a scrap of information which he had received from a member of the House who now occupied the distinguished position of a Minister. Years ago he asked that honourable gentleman what was the use of these Committees, why did the House set up six- or seven-and-twenty Committees at the commencement of a session when it had to man them only a total of seventy-four members, two or three of whom were necessarily non-effective, the Speaker being excluded, and others absent from illness? In reply the honourable gentleman spoke as honestly as probably he had ever spoken in his life-more honestly than he had done some-times since-and said, " I really do not know ; but I believe the Government do it in order to keep honourable members so fully employed that there is no opportunity for intrigu-ing." Why should they be called upon day after day to attend Committees, and to sit from ten and half-past ten in the wretched rooms now used for the purpose ? He wished also to remark, in passing, that since the accommodation had been largely increased in the House the accommodation for Committees was worse than ever. It would sap the health and constitution of any man who put in his time conscientiously at his work under such circumstances. And now it was alleged as a reason for doing away with the morning sittings that members should have an opportunity to attend to this work. The whole system had become so utterly artificial that it was about time the Mr. Tanner and insisted on a return to a more natural state of things. He had noticed at times a feeling of restiveness when the speeches of honourable gentlemen had been quoted in this House by other honourable gentlemen. Let him quote a speech summarising some of last session's methods, and he would give the name of the speaker later on :- "The method of conducting business in the House was susceptible of much further improvement, there being absolutely no sense of proportion in the comparative amounts of time spent on measures of trivial or of primary importance. For instance, six hours were spent in discussing the conduct of Mr. Grat-tan Grey in writing disparaging letters to an American paper, but not one word of discussion on the Aid to Settlement Bill, giving authority to borrow a million of money. An entire afternoon would be passed in asking useless questions, the questioners seldom getting any satisfaction in the answers ; and then large Bills would be urged . through at break-neck speed, one of the largest, the Maori Lands Administration Bill, being even read a second time at the close of the session before any member had seen it in print. No wonder that so many amending Bills were necessary under such a reprehensible system. In discussing the estimates he had noted the sitting-times (irrespective of other subjects dealt with at the same sittings), as eight hours, twelve hours, eleven hours, fourteen hours and a quarter, ten hours and a half, and, finally, twenty-four hours and a half had been occupied in a final sitting in which some thirty Bills had been passed, a long debate on Fiji included. and half a million of money voted. At the close of the twenty-four hours and a half ninety minutes' interval followed, and another sitting of ten hours and a half ended the session." Those words were from his own speech to his constituents in May last. He wanted to call the attention of the

House to the hollowness of the excuse for late sittings which had so often been made in this connection—that was, that there was no time to get through the work of the session unless the Standing Orders were so suspended as to make the Premier practically the master of the situation and able to dictate to the House what hours it should sit, and that was generally to a late period. If thirty-five or forty men on his side of the House would honestly say that they were determined that no sitting should extend beyond a given time the Premier would be instantly converted, and would congratulate the House upon having come to a sensible decision at last. He would always put himself at the head of a movement if possible as soon as he divined the object. That had been the case already this session. Two honourable gentlemen gave notice of motion with regard to curtailing the time of the sittings, or, without curtailing the time, to prevent the unearthly hours of sitting which they had so long and viciously indulged in. The Premier anticipated both by getting the resolution passed on the 10th July which this afternoon he had

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moved to repeal and set aside. He (Mr. Tanner) watched the conduct of their members, for, said, at the time that resolution was passed, whilst complaints were sometimes made that that it would remain on the Standing Orders of constituents were exacting in trifles, they ap- the House just so long as it suited the Premier seemed to overlook larger matters of principle, and no longer. If the House met a little earlier He regretted that physical inability prevented him from pursuing the subject further. In the year, as it ought to do, and as the Premier more than once had promised it should had a very interesting speech on this subject of do, it would be possible to get through their work within reasonable hours and within a reasonable adjourning at an early hour, and also in regard to the date when Parliament should be called reasonable time. But since the honourable gentleman together, from the honourable gentleman, man had been Premier he had run the meeting Circumstances always control the time at which of the House later and later every session, until the meeting of Parliament was to be called, on this occasion, although there was some and there were many things which necessitated excuse for it on account of the Royal visit, the fixing of the date of Parliament at a later they had over-passed the time during which period now than was the case before. There money might be legally spent. In 1893, his was a strong desire on the part of a majority first year, the House was called together on the 22nd June, a much later date than in of country members not to have the meeting former years, for in 1888 the House met on the of Parliament at an earlier period, and every. 10th May, and then there was a reasonable honourable member knew that the Government opportunity to get through the work of the must as far as possible study the convenience of all sections of the House. No Government session during the winter, and get away at a had a desire to postpone the time for the reasonable time. But ever since the honour- meeting of Parliament; and he could assure able gentleman had occupied the position the the honourable member there had been no dates had been the 22nd June, 23rd June, 20th desire on the part of the present Government June, 11th June—there was really a hope that to delay the convening of Parliament at all. the Premier had embarked on the path of re- Now, regarding this proposal of the honourable form then, but it was a forlorn hope; in 1897, member for Nelson City to limit the hour to 23rd September, which was in consequence of midnight, that was the question now before the second session held that year, and since then the 24th June, the 23rd June, and this the House. The last honourable member and, he was sure, those who preceded him were all year the 1st July. If the Premier could do anxious, provided we could carry on business in away with voting the estimates, he believed the a reasonable way, to get back to their homes with- honourable gentleman would suggest to the out unnecessary delay. Now, what did the pro- country the advisability of not calling Parlia- posal of the member for Nelson City mean ? ment together at all. As it was, he was driving If you fixed an arbitrary time for adjournment the meeting of Parliament to the last legal at midnight it would mean prolonging the day on which money could be spent, and the session very materially. There appeared to be honourable gentleman absolutely relied during an idea that the Government wanted to

drive the session on the House going practically "as you please" for the first few weeks-to compress the work into the last few weeks, because no man would libel the House by saying that they ever did any work during the first month. The Premier relied on the fact that as the session drew late, and ran into October that rest- less feeling which possessed members to get away would pervade the House and induce a general feeling of hurry and indifference. Look at the divisions which took place during the last days of the session-thirty members in one and thirty-five in another, more than half the House being absent, and many of them having quitted Wellington entirely. It seemed to him that any man who was not pre- pared to adjust his business to the necessities of the State when a member of the House had no right to receive the pay of the colony. Strong and uncomplimentary expressions were used of men in industrial life who received pay for which they rendered no equivalent, but what were we to say of forty men leaving the House at a time when the bulk of the esti- mates still remained to be passed, when thirty Bills were to be slammed through in a single night, and when an important decision was to be arrived at regarding Fiji and many other matters? He thought it was time the public of New Zealand woke up to the matter, and Sir J. G. WARD (Colonial Secretary) .- We the estimates through Committee at a very rapid rate, and to get them through without much discussion. So far as he was aware, the Government wanted to have the estimates dealt with in the ordinary way. Honourable mem- bers were naturally anxious to have a reasonable time to discuss the estimates. If the hour of adjournment were fixed for midnight, what would occur? Three or four men, if they so desired, could arrange among themselves at eleven o'clock not to allow any further business to be done. That had already been done this session in connection with the half-past ten adjournment. There was a clear understanding, so far as the financial debate was concerned, that honourable members on the Opposition side of the House had finished speaking, and that the Premier would have an opportunity of reply. But, so far, the Premier had not been able to reply, and that was almost unheard- of in the procedure of Parliament. Even assuming that there was no arrangement, would it not be the easiest thing in the world to carry on a debate till past twelve o'clock on any parti- It would be infinitely easier cular occasion ? upon the estimates for any three or four men, after eleven o'clock, to prevent anything further being done in Committee of Supply. Some honourable members were continually making

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statements which looked as if all the common- sense in the country was outside the walls of Parliament. That derogated from the position which honourable members occupied, and was not complimentary to either themselves or their constituents. They had been ten weeks in ses- sion, and this proposal was made to facilitate the course of business by not limiting the hour of rising. He thought if there was no limit most members would apply themselves more vigorously to business ; but if, on the other hand, the hour were limited it would lead to protracted discussions and a more lengthened session of Parliament. He did not think in the House of Commons there was a mandatory rule to stop at midnight. The Ministry were desir- ous of doing what they could to preserve the health and consult the convenience of members, and he believed it to be desirable to get home as early as possible. He felt sure it would be a mistake to make it an inexorable rule to rise at twelve o'clock ; it would be better to leave it to the judgment of members, and if progress was not being made it would be a fair thing to extend the hour of sitting. The suggestion to stop at midnight would not be of much service. The early sittings they had had given them an op- portunity of seeing what could be done ; but, owing to the number of Committees, it had proved very inconvenient. He thought the pro- posal made by the Premier to fix the hour of meeting at half-past two o'clock and without the limitation of midnight would be the best course to adopt. There had been times when the House had sat all night, but those times were generally occasioned by the uncalled-for and lengthy attacks of the Opposition. They usually brought it on themselves, and then, as usual, blamed the Government. Mr. FOWLDS (Auckland City) said it was difficult to make out from the two previous

speakers what was before the House, but he supposed it was the same subject they had been engaged on all afternoon-namely, the hour of adjournment. There were one or two clauses in the Factories Act that the House ought to apply to its hours of closing. Clause 18 of the Act set out what he considered would be suitable hours for the House to adopt. It should not sit, in the words of the Act, for " more than forty-five hours in any one week, or for more than eight hours in any one day, or for more than four hours continuously without an interval of one hour for dinner." The following clause might also be enacted, that overtime should not exceed a certain number of hours, and would be paid for at extra rates. For himself, he might say he sat on a Committee that day from half-past ten o'clock until half-past one; then he was back at half-past two, remaining till half-past five; so that he was rapidly approaching the time when his overtime should commence. It was clear to him that the morning sitting was interfering seriously with the conduct of the Committee-work. But, however that might be, he thought it was desirable that there should be some reasonable hour of adjournment at night, and he would therefore support the Sir J. G. Ward amendment moved by the member for Nelson City. The Speaker should leave the chair at midnight, except when there were special subjects or by resolution of the House. They would then get through their business at a reasonable hour and when they had their about them. Another result, he senses thought, would be that there would be fewer troubles in the House - fewer scenes that simply wasted time and did no good to any one. Mr. J. W. THOMSON (Clutha) 8.0. thought that what was wanted was to increase the quorum. The House consisted of seventy-four members, and the quorum was only twenty. In other words, the work of the House would be carried on, and very often was carried on, by only twenty members. The quorum of the local bodies was one-half the number of members when the number was even, and a majority when the number was odd. He did not see why that provision should not be applied to Parliament. The quorum should be one-half the number of members-that was, thirty-seven. Very often there were only twenty members present, and this was particularly the case towards the close of the session. With a House of seventy-four members twenty was too small a quorum. If what he suggested were done they would not sit the very long hours they did at present, because you could not find thirty-seven members who would be able and willing to stand the strain. Those honourable members that did the work of the country towards the close of the session were men who had come to work, and they were to be found at the post of duty almost at all times ; but it was not fair to throw the burden of late hours upon a small number of willing members. He would again repeat that he believed the real remedy for the present state of things was to increase the quorum from twenty to one-half their number -that was, thirty-seven. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said, In proposing the motion the Premier informed the House that there was trouble ahead in regard to the estimates. Mr. SEDDON .- And the Committees. Mr. PIRANI did not believe that the Premier cared a button about the Committees. He desired to know why that honourable gentleman wanted to anticipate trouble over the estimates. Surely he had trouble enough already without anticipating more. Why did he not wait till they got trouble on the estimates before he took action to rescind the very good rule that had been in force with regard to morning sittings? He thought honourable members would agree with him that on every day the House had sat in the morning good business was done when the Government wished it to be done. But that business had probably been done too rapidly for the Government. On one day when they had a morning sitting they put through six or seven Bills. An Hon. MEMBER. - Twenty were put through in one night last session. Mr. PIRANI said that was in the daytime for it was done about five o'clock in the morn-

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ing. He thought it would be time enough to repeal the very good rule when it was found to be abused. So far the only instance that they had had of its abuse was when the Premier could not reply on the financial debate on Friday night ; but surely a small affair like that- Mr. SEDDON .- He has not replied yet. Mr. PIRANI thought the Premier had himself to blame for that. He could have replied this afternoon instead

of moving the motion now under discussion, or he could have commenced his reply on Friday night, and he would have had as good a show as the member for Bruce, Mr. J. Allen, was given. It was all very well for him to throw the blame on the honourable member for Selwyn, who spoke on Friday night. The galleries had been filled to hear the reply of the Premier, and it was not likely that when a temptation like that was put upon a new and modest member, especially when it was thrown in his way by the Premier himself, that that member should refuse to take advantage of it. If some important measure or the estimates had been blocked by the half past-ten rule he could have understood the Government endeavouring to rescind the resolution, but up to the present there was nothing to warrant it. As to the statement of the honourable member for Mataura that the average hour of rising last session was half-past one a.m., he (Mr. Pirani) had looked up the records, and he found that the average time for leaving off business was four minutes past two o'clock, the average daily sitting being nine hours and four minutes. Then, it must be remembered that on several days the House-on the occasion of motions of condolence on the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, the death of a member, and so on- adjourned at four o'clock in the afternoon, and that would reduce the average considerably. Last year they sat on the estimates until five o'clock in the morning when what was called by a local newspaper "the #40 steal " was discussed. After that they had something like thirty local Bills rushed through after five o'clock in the morning. The result of this was that over and over again they were called upon to amend the measures of previous sessions. There was one Act passed last session in which the word "not" in one case and the word "no " in another case were actually omitted, with the result that the reverse of what was intended was placed on the statute-book. No doubt there were many other instances of legislation being rushed through in an imperfect state, due to the excessively late sittings. He did not believe that anybody could give proper attention to legislation in the House if that legislation was brought down at three, four, or five o'clock in the morning. He really thought the Premier loved these hours for work, because he knew that members of the House were not so critical in the late hours of the morning. He thought there ought to be some rule about twelve o'clock sittings, and if there was obstruction he did not see any objection to a rule being made to prevent that obstruction. But when members knew that the Premier was the principal offender in wasting time, how could they be blamed generally ? If the Premier was allowed four times the amount of time occupied by other members, and the other seventy-two members each occupied one-fourth of the time taken up by the Premier, it would be found that the debates would be considerably longer than they were at present. Besides that, it was mainly owing to provocation given by the Premier that debates were lengthened. They had listened to a homily on speechifying from the member for Marsden. It was an extraordinary thing that that member had only taken part in one discussion, the discussion of the Ser-vants' Half-holiday Bill. Why did not the member for Marsden join in the discussions of the House? Last session he had been told by a member that he was voting with the Government because he wanted "some estimates." He did not know what was meant by that ; but it had been said that the honourable member for Marsden, who could speak forcibly and fluently, who was well able to denounce abuses when he saw fit to do so, did not speak until the Public Works Statement was down. That honourable member, like the rest of them, desired to see his district get fair play in the apportionment of money available for expenditure, and valued discretion as the better part of valour. The rest of the members of the House chose to be valorous, and to tell the Ministry what they thought; but the member for Marsden was discreetness itself, and therefore it was only natural that his constituents should come off better than the constituents of some members who were not so discreet. At the same time, he should remember that, while he might be of opinion himself that the best course to follow was to be discreet, it was not to be expected that other members of the House should stand in the position he did so frequently or so successfully. He thought it was an unfair thing for the Government to propose to rescind a motion which had worked so well this session. And, in

regard to Committee- work, he could quite understand why the honourable member for Mataura objected to morning sittings, because the member for Mataura was the Chairman of a very important Committee, with a very important Bill before it, and naturally he wanted to see a successful end to his labours. But he would ask the honourable member for Mataura, what about this morning's sitting of the Committee when there was no sitting of the House? He (Mr. Pirani) was in there for a few moments, and out of thirty-seven members of that Committee there were three present, exclusive of the Chairman, and he (Mr. Pirani) made the fifth. He only looked in to see how matters were progressing. and, as he found the Premier was absent, things were pretty safe, and so he left. But there was an instance of the sort of sitting of a Committee they were going to get after they had abolished the morning sittings of the House. As a matter of fact, there were too many Committees in connection with the business of the House. There were so many

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several could not possibly attend to the duties they were asked to do. Members, like himself, who were only on one Committee, of course, could carry out their duties. But some members were on fourteen Committees, and it was impossible for them to attend the sittings of each Committee, even if there were twenty days in the week instead of four sitting-days as they had at present. He did not object so much to the motion if the amendment were added, because that would prevent sittings after twelve o'clock. He knew very many members of the House who were not as strong as he was himself physically who suffered very much from late sittings of the House. But at the end of the session any member who looked round the House and saw the washed-out appearance of members would think that, instead of being under the electric light, they had been bleaching under the sun and the wind by day and night for months. He hoped the late sittings of last session would not be countenanced by members, and even if they had to sit a month longer it would be better to do so than to attempt to rush through the business as they had been doing in the past. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka) wished to make a personal explanation. He thought the honourable member for Palmerston was wrong in saying there was not a quorum at the meeting of the Counties Committee this morning. Mr. PIRANI .- I said there were only three members present and the Chairman. Mr. BENNET said Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Herries, Mr. Lang, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. J. W. Thomson were present when he left. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) hoped the House would not agree to this amendment. If the House wanted the business of the country to proceed it would negative this amendment. Experience had taught him-and he had felt it with #cc-zero regret-that repeatedly, when they had a fixed hour at which the business must be closed, a very few members, who perhaps had been beaten in debate or for some other reason sometimes not apparent to other members, would talk to that time and stop business going on, so that the House practically did nothing. Now, this so often occurred that, leaving out of sight what happened on Friday night last, unless they had some way of dealing with the business which would prevent any three or four members blocking the business of the country the same thing would happen again and again. His experience had taught him this, and they had examples of it every session. They had it now with respect to new business after twelve o'clock. In his opinion, if that rule was not in the Standing Orders private members would get more of their Bills through. As it was, members talked to one Bill, and stopped it going on ; and yet it was not apparent to the public at all what was going on, because the blocking occurred on some of the preceding Bills. He said, if this time-limit was agreed to it would have the same effect. He would be frank with honourable members. Say the estimates were under consideration next Tuesday night and Mr. Pirani first item through : members would talk till twelve o'clock, and that was all they would do for that night. The next night something would be said in respect to an item of the estimates, a discussion would ensue and continue till midnight, and that would be all they would get that night. He said, if members wanted to get the business of the country done-and he did not think the country expected members to be here for four or five months in the year -

members must give reasonable consideration. But at present it rested in the hands of a small minority to block business. The remedy for the whole thing was for the large majority of members, who really did the business of the country, to say, "After we have done a fair amount of business we will close up and go to bed." Now, as things had been, there were a few members who, as a rule, did not stop during the late hours, but they were always here when the galleries were full, and had a lot to say between these hours, but after midnight their names would not be found in the division-list, while the workers were kept here with a few others. There had been a good deal said about the incident of Friday night, but he clearly and properly abstained from giving that as his reason for this motion. What he said this afternoon was that he wanted the resolution rescinded because morning sittings interfered with the Committee-work that had to be done, and a great deal of which was now held in abeyance. Unless Committees got a chance to deal with their business, which was equally as important as the ordinary legislation, a great many people who were interested in these petitions would be dissatisfied, because the House would not be able to attend to their business. He had not said anything about blocking the Supply debate on Friday night, as mentioned by the member for Palmerston, and he gave a reason for the honourable member for Selwyn obstructing in the debate. He had been advised that arrangements had been made that he was to reply on Friday night, and he had made arrangements accordingly. This was what he believed caused the member for Selwyn to make that speech :- "Selwyn Electorate. " To the Editor. "SIR,-Can you tell us, the electors of Selwyn, what has become of Mr. C. A. C. Hardy. M.H.R., as we are getting very little for our money ? " Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) would like to ask whether the Premier was in order in introducing matters which had nothing at all to do with the business before the House. The honourable member was reading from a letter in a newspaper commenting on a member of the House. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said he did not think he could stop the honourable member, because the question had been raised as to what occurred on Friday night, and as to whether it stopped the reply on the debate. An Hon. MEMBER. - Can you read a news-

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the House? Mr. DEPUTY - SPEAKER. - You can read a newspaper extract, but not commenting on the proceedings of the House. Mr. SEDDON wished to call the attention of members on the Government side of the House to the example of how honourable members opposite supported each other. It was a lesson to members on the Government side. The letter read as follows :- "SIR,-Can you tell us, the electors of Selwyn, what has become of Mr. C. A. C. Hardy, M.H.R., as we are getting very little for our money ? " No deeds, nor no words. I do not see of his having taken any part in the talk of the House, and as we overlooked his being a new-chum last session we cannot do so again. The electors want something for their £280, if only words. Perhaps Mr. Hardy is not in Wellington, but staying at sleepy Rakaia." An Hon. MEMBER. - Signed "Edwards, organizing secretary." Mr. SEDDON said the letter was signed "A Selwyn Elector," and it appeared in the Lyttelton Times. If he had read the letter on Friday he would not have felt so disappointed as he did, because he would have seen that the honourable member really wanted to show that he was able to speak, and he wanted to give the electors something for their money. The member for Nelson City, no doubt in his desire to further the business of the House, had proposed an amendment. Of course, the honourable member had not had very long experience in the House. He was one of those who did not take kindly to burning the midnight oil. It would appear to him as if the honourable member did not care very much whether the business proceeded or not. If he did, he felt sure that the honourable member would wish to help the Government in getting on with the business of the country, and would have supported this motion. It could not be said of the honourable member for 8.30. Ashley that he was not one who did his work, or that he did not stop late at night. But the fact remained-and members opposite would admit it-that if an hour was fixed for adjournment it was putting a temptation in the way of members, and sometimes, though they regretted it themselves, they

would talk up to the time, and so block the business. Ten minutes afterwards they might regret it, but, of course, it could not be helped, for the day had gone. The motion before the House he had moved at four o'clock. An Hon. MEMBER said they should now come to a vote on it. Mr. SEDDON said, although he was taking up time himself, he hoped he was submitting good reasons why members should not support the amendment proposed by the member for Nelson City. The member for Nelson City himself would know that time after time the business of the House had been blocked by the fact that an hour had been fixed for adjournment in the interests of his own health and in the interests of the health of the Premier. Mr. SEDDON admitted he was not so young as he used to be. Time was doing its work, and it was certainly not conducive to his health, or to the health of any other member, to sit in the House at all hours of the night. It was not expected by the country that they should do so. At the same time, the country expected them to get the work through. Any member was very much mistaken who thought he (Mr. Seddon) was so much in love with the work of the House that he would stop there night after night and force the work through simply for the sake of getting something done and to get members away to their homes in a reasonable time. He would like members to remember that, as far as the work of Ministers was concerned, they were not free when the House arose in the afternoon. Many a time they had to receive deputations. It must be borne in mind, too, that on Saturdays they also had their time occupied. He did not keep members in the House for the love of it, but with the view of trying to get the business done. It was not his desire to keep the House for long hours, and if members would only do a fair day's work and then say, "Mr. Premier, we have done a good day's work ; let us go home now," he would not be against it. An Hon. MEMBER asked, How many times has that been said ? Mr. SEDDON said that might be so; but the fact remained that work had not been done. This week, for instance, they had done nothing, and it was the fault of the gentlemen opposite. When he did make a proposal to further the work it was not his side of the House that took up time discussing it. He would give the House an assurance that he would do his best to get them away at reasonable hours for the rest of the session. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) said the Premier was right in saying his duties were manifold; but when the honourable gentleman had got the members of the House into a state of exhaustion at the end of a session he and the Minister for Railways took watch and watch about, and on one occasion, at the end of last session, while they did that the jaded members had to sit from eleven on Friday morning for twenty-four hours and a half-not legislating, but simply enduring. He did not think the morning sittings had been productive of the amount of good that had been wished. They had interfered with Committee-work. But there was one Committee of which he had been a member which was considered an important one, and the work of that Committee was an object of ridicule. Last session after that Committee had, after three months' work, licked into shape the consolidation of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, immediately they produced it a supplementary Order Paper appeared traversing the whole of the essential provisions of the Bill, moved by the Premier, who was himself a member of the Committee : and what was the result ? This year an amend-

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ing Bill was necessary to rectify the bad effects of that supplementary Order Paper. Bills that were carefully digested and assimilated by the Labour Bills Committee last year had again been brought back containing all that the Committee had cut out as bad. He said it was not consistent with the dignity or the intelligence of a member of a Committee to be treated so cavalierly as that ; and, so far as he himself was concerned, it would not cause him any regret if Committees were not gone on with, for the work of Committees was now settled by supplementary Order Papers. The Premier had said that if the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson City were carried the necessary corollary to it would be the closure. In his opinion, that was what the right honourable gentleman wanted. He desired to muzzle honourable members. He would like to clap the muzzle over the mouths of every independent

member of the House. If he could he would set up one of his unreasoning followers to move that, say, the honourable member for Palmerston be not now heard. Mr. PIRANI .- He did that last session. Mr. HUTCHESON said there was no question about that. If the House decided that midnight should be the hour of adjournment, he did not believe for one moment that honourable members would play with their duties, as had been suggested by the Premier. They would not for any lengthened period, nor would they frequently attempt to, sacrifice the interests of their constituents and the country generally in order merely to tantalize the right honourable gentleman. The Premier had often accused members of moving frivolous objections in order to stonewall a Bill. He would advise honourable members to carry their minds back to certain occasions last session when the Premier was most vehement in this assertion, and to ask themselves if there were any grounds for his action. His colleague Mr. Atkinson had pointed out several material defects in the Public Contracts Act of last year. Notwithstanding that, the Premier, rather than seem to give way by accepting what was an honest and a necessary amendment suggested by a member on this side of the House, put in all sorts of redundant words rather than accept the suggested amendment, which was concise and scientific. On many other such occasions honourable members were belaboured and castigated ad nauseam, and termed wilful obstructors of Government business. The honourable gentleman had invoked the very highest machinery of State in order to adjust omissions that had occurred through his perversity in not allowing proper amendments to be accepted.

Mr. SEDDON. - You ought both to be in the Legislative Council. That is the revising Chamber. Mr. HUTCHESON said that, unfortunately, the Legislative Council was no longer a revising Chamber. It was now an initiative Chamber ; and, although it was not representative of the popular will, it was found submitting to the House for their kindly approval important labour measures like the Shops and Offices Bill. Mr. Hutcheson That was rather an unfortunate reference of the right honourable gentleman, and he (Mr. Hutcheson) had only been led to anticipate what he had intended to lay stress upon later on. It was unconstitutional that measures such as the one just mentioned should be introduced in a Chamber of nominees who, with the exception of a very small minority, were there at the pleasure of the right honourable gentleman. It was simply a recording-machine, if he might be allowed to say so. However, he would say no further upon that question than that it was in the highest degree unconstitutional that measures specially dealing with social questions should be introduced in a Chamber which was supposed to be a cool and deliberate revising Chamber. Now, as to the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson City, if the supporters of the Government were free to express their wish as he had heard them express it outside the Chamber, this amendment would certainly be carried. Honourable members would remember that there was a gentleman in that House at one time who earned the sobriquet of "Twelve-o'clock Brown." He called him Brown, as he did not wish to give that gentleman's real name to the House. That gentleman declared that when a motion for adjourning the House was moved at twelve o'clock he would support it on every occasion, irrespective of party ties ; but the very first time, and on every subsequent occasion when the Premier desired it, he voted against the adjournment of the House. Now, if he could inspire members on his side of the House with his views they would walk out in a body at twelve o'clock if the Premier refused to adjourn, and leave the whole onus of the legislation on the Premier and his friends. The brake would then be taken off the machine, and the right honourable gentleman would go down the hill to ruin with a vengeance. The Opposition, few in numbers and influence in that House, had been the means of saving the honourable gentleman from himself scores of times, and had they been actuated by a desire to see him go to his ruin, they need only have left him alone to accomplish it. As to the right honourable gentleman's followers, if anything was shown to be defective in the legislation passed by that House, they satisfied themselves and their constituents, he was sorry to say, by saying. " You returned me to follow a certain leader of a certain party. It was his will that this should be done, and why should I question it? The Premier proposed it ; blame him, and not me." He

regretted to say that in many instances that explanation had been held as satisfactory. He believed that every member in the House at some moment or another had agreed that there should be a cessation of these mind and body exhausting continuous sittings, which often lead to heated and perhaps acrimonious debate, a thing that exhausted both body and mind simultaneously. If they wished to see that, and neglected this opportunity to say that it should cease, then, of course, the responsibility would rest with them ; they could no longer

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appeal to their constituents and say they had been compelled to do so, because now an opportunity was granted them in a free vote to say that it had continued long enough. Of course, it would be contended that as he was a resident of Wellington it was easy for him to argue in this way. He was not unmindful of the interests of those who came from a distance, and he felt their position was very hard indeed ; but, nevertheless, he believed that this would have an effect quite contrary to that assumed by the Premier, and that it would expedite the business if they kept reasonable hours, and approached the matter with a desire to have the business done. He would certainly support the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson City. Probably, if relief were not granted, and if they were compelled either to neglect their duties or to remain for twenty- four hours at a time in the Chamber, they would adopt the practice of the honourable gentleman and husband their strength by standing by for these occasions. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) thought the last honourable gentleman who had spoken should have stuck more closely to the matter they had been discussing, and not have wandered away to deal with other subjects. He did not, however, propose to deal with the honourable gentleman's speech, but to refer to some remarks made by the honourable member for Palmerston. That honourable gentleman was usually so accurate that one felt a pleasure on finding three or four statements made, one after the other, by that honourable gentleman each of which was inaccurate. The honourable member had said that when he was at a meeting of a Committee that morning there were only three members present besides himself and the Chairman. Subsequently it was pointed out that there were five members besides himself; but he said there were three members present, and that three formed a quorum. When the honourable gentleman was present there had also been present Messrs. Lang, Bennet, Stevens, Herries, and McNab, and it took five to form a quorum, and not three as the honourable gentleman had stated. Then, with regard to the late hours of sitting, he had brought his Hansard proof-the honourable member might just give him his attention for a moment. Mr. PIRANI .- Oh, I know what is going on. Mr. McNAB said if that was the courtesy the honourable member extended to other members when addressing him there were other matters he (Mr. McNab) would find it more profitable to refer to. The Minister for Railways referred to some very important matters in connection with the procedure of the House, and, as he knew the honourable gentleman was very much interested in the question of saving time in the House, he thought he had got a very good opportunity of introducing some very important reforms in the procedure of the House. He had himself heard the honourable member refer to a new system of members recording their votes in the House in divisions, whereby, through a system of electric communication with the Chair, each member would be able to record his vote from his place in the House without going to the trouble of going out of the Chamber and then coming in again, by which process so much time was wasted. In looking through the divisions of the House from 1896 to 1900, he found there were no less than 1,245 divisions in the House, and, judging from his experience, he should say they lost five minutes in each of these divisions. The result was there were thirteen working days during that time that were absolutely wasted owing to their system of taking the divisions. He therefore hoped the honourable gentleman would push on with and introduce to the House the improved system to which he had referred. Although the honourable member prided himself upon being in the forefront in regard to telegraphic matters in this House, yet in other Chambers he knew that in the various parts of the lobbies and libraries and other

places it was possible without going into the Chamber itself to find out who at the moment was speaking, and the honourable gentleman might very readily arrange for similar conveniences to be afforded to members in this building. It would save a good deal of time, and contribute largely to the proper working of the House. In regard to this question of fixing a time at which the House should rise, no matter what business was on, he thought that would be a fatal mistake. So long as they had a fixed time at which they must rise, no matter what business was on, it was the simplest thing in the world to stonewall the clock, and two or three members could keep a debate rolling on until the time was reached for the House to adjourn. Then, there was another question not referred to by honourable members, and that was that very often when a debate was interrupted by this fixed hour for rising, if it were allowed to go on for ten minutes longer it would come to its conclusion. The financial debate on Friday night was a case in point. If it had been allowed to go on for an hour or three-quarters of an hour longer it would have ended then, because every person knew that the debate was just on the eve of closing, and it was only because they were compelled to rise at half-past ten that some members of the House kept the ball rolling until they knew the House was to rise. The result was that a great many other members now wanted to speak, and if the debate started at half-past ten this evening it would be impossible to conclude it before midnight. That was one of the many evils in connection with the system of fixing a time at which the House must rise. Then, the short time at the disposal of Committees had been referred to by many members, and he would only point out how unfair it was to the clerks of their Committees. At the present time all the Committees had to meet on two days of the week. The result was that every one of these Committees was hard-pushed during that time, and the clerks of the 9.0. Committees were equally hard-pushed, while for the remaining days of the week they had very little for them to do. While, as he said, he hailed with pleasure the motion when

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would bring about a new era in connection with the work of the House, still, he was satisfied the system had been a failure, and that some other system would have to be adopted for economizing time than the one proposed. He sincerely hoped the resolution proposed to-night would be carried, and that the honourable member would not add to that resolution the clause fixing the hour of rising at midnight or even as late as half-past twelve. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) wished to make a personal explanation. He felt sure the honourable member did not wish to misrepresent him when the honourable gentleman stated that instead of the three persons he (Mr. Pirani) said were present at the Committee besides himself and the Chairman there were five, and the honourable gentleman mentioned one of the five to the House-Mr. Herries-who was not present at all at the time he was there. Therefore the honourable gentleman was one out, so they would cry quits. The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added." AYES, 26. Allen, J. Rhodes Heke Hutcheson Russell, G. W. Atkinson Bollard Russell, W. R. Lang Collins Lethbridge Smith, G. J. Fowlds Tanner Massey Thomson, J. W. McLachlan Fraser, W. Gilfedder Meredith Tellers. Monk Buddo Hanan Haselden Pirani Graham. NOES, 32. Houston Allen, E. G. Palmer Kaihau Arnold Parata Laurensen Seddon Barclay Carroll Steward Lawry Colvin McGowan Symes Field Thompson, R. Mckenzie, R. Fisher McNab Ward Fraser, A. L. D. Millar Willis. Hall Mills Tellers. Hall-Jones Napier Carncross Hornsby O'Meara Stevens. PAIRS. For. Against. Hardy Flatman Herries Duncan Smith, E. M. McGuire. Majority against, 6. Amendment negatived. The House divided on the question, " That the motion be agreed to." AYES, 35. Allen, E. G. Mckenzie, R. Fisher Arnold Fraser, A. L. D. McLachlan Barclay Hall McNab Bennet Hall-Jones Meredith Mills Buddo Hornsby Carroll Houston Napier Collins Kaihau O'Meara Colvin Palmer Lawry Field McGowan Parata Mr. McNab Smith, G. J. Ward Carncross Willis Stevens. Steward NOES, 24. Hogg Allen, J. Rhodes Hutcheson Russell, G. W. Atkinson Bollard Russell, W. R. Lang Fraser, W. Lethbridge Tanner Thomson, J. W. Gilfedder Massey Millar Graham Tellers. Hanan Monk Laurensen Haselden Pirani Symes. Heke PAIRS.

For. Against. Duncan Herries Flatman Hardy Smith, E. M. McGuire. Majority for, 11. Motion agreed to. FINANCIAL STATEMENT. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. R. THOMPSON (Marsden) .- Sir, in rising to resume the financial debate I must confess that it is with some diffidence I do so, having suffered for the last two days under a debate on a question of privilege, which was, I think, sufficient to cloud any man's mind on the question of finance. I regret very much that on Friday night last the Premier was not allowed to reply. I intended to speak on that evening, but finding that the Premier wished to reply I decided not to speak in the debate at all ; but, as that arrangement fell through, I must now claim my right to speak, and it is the duty, I hold, of every member in this House to place his views before the country and before his constituents on a question of this kind. Sir, in addressing myself to the question to- night, I will say at once that I do not agree with those members who have been condemning other members for expressing their opinions on the finances of the country in an indepen- dent manner. There is no member of this House who believes more in the freedom and independence of debate in this House than I do, and I am not going to join with those mem- bers who have been castigating others for their independence of thought on this question. But, Sir, I cannot help remarking that some of those members who have been very severe in criticizing the financial proposals of the Go- vernment were in the earlier part of the session very hard on the Government for not having been very extravagant in their expenditure. I will first of all refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Riccarton, for whom I have the greatest regard. He is always very candid, and if it were not for a few members of his kind in the House the debates would become very dull. The honourable gentleman in the early part of the session took the Go- vernment to task for not having spent large sums of money under the Land for Settle- ments Act. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I must remind

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a previous debate of this session, or quote what has been said in it. Mr. R. THOMPSON. - No, Sir, I am not going to refer to anything that has occurred this session. The honourable gentleman, in the strongest language, condemned the Go- vernment for their extravagant proposals in the Budget. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Not in connection with land settlement. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- You made no distinc- tion. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. - Yes, I did. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- I think it would be well if in future Budgets the Treasurer would separate from the ordinary debt of the colony those sums borrowed under the Land for Settle- ments Act, and for the purpose of lending it to local bodies, and for loans under the Advances to Settlers Act. Those sums, although appa- rently increasing the national debt, do not really cost the taxpayer one farthing, as those who borrow the money pay the interest on it. I throw the suggestion out to the Colonial Trea- surer that in future years a separate table be prepared showing the whole of the sums raised for those special purposes. I hold it to be absurd to blame the Government for running up the national debt when we find that some £2,380,000 has been borrowed to be lent to settlers. Although nominally part of the national debt, that sum pays its own way, and does not cost the country one farthing. Then, Sir, under the Land for Settlements Act we have £2,122,000 borrowed for the purchase of land for settlements. The tenants occupy- ing those estates pay for that money, and it therefore throws no extra burden on the tax- payer of the colony. In this connection I desire to say that I think it is a great mistake for honourable members to try to force the hands of the Government with the view of having lands purchased more hurriedly under the land - for - settlement system. Speaking generally, I think the top value has been reached for land in New Zealand, and, if any change takes place at all, values will have a downward tendency. I think, therefore, that the Government, instead of being forced to purchase land, should be advised to act slowly and cautiously. If they purchased large es- tates when values are at their highest high rents will have to be paid by the tenants, and if a slump comes in the price of land or pro- duce those tenants may not be able to pay their rents. If that happens they will be found coming to this House asking for a revaluation of their land and for a reduction of rent. think, therefore, that it would be as

well for the Government to be careful as to how they proceed with the purchase of land. As to the money borrowed to lend to local bodies, I think the Government is perfectly safe in doing this, as no better security could be provided than the security of the local bodies. There is no fear that the Government will lose one penny in that way, or that the taxpayer will be called upon to find any of the money. I should like have been finding fault with the Government if they are prepared to suggest the stoppage of the purchasing of land for settlement. I venture to suggest that the honourable member for Riccarton is not prepared to do so. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Certainly not. Mr. R. THOMPSON. - The honourable member says, "Certainly not "; and I am satisfied that no other honourable member is prepared to advocate the stopping of land-purchase. I believe that if land-purchase is carried on carefully no harm will accrue to the farmer ; in fact, I think a great deal of good will be done. I will throw out another suggestion to the Premier. I think he has been giving too much of his attention to Canterbury under this Act. I think it is time the Government left Canterbury alone for a while. Come up to the North Island and do something for Hawke's Bay. I could not help noticing, when looking over the census returns, that the Province of Hawke's Bay has shown no increase of population. The land there is held in large areas, and the result is that stagnation exists in that part of the colony so far as increase of population is concerned. I hope the Government will see the necessity of giving Canterbury a rest. They have done enough for Canterbury, and I hope they will turn their attention for some time to Hawke's Bay ; and let me add that I hope, whatever they do in the way of purchasing land in Hawke's Bay, they will go for the big estates and leave the widows alone. I do not believe in taking over small estates while there are large ones. I hope the Government will bear that in mind. So far as the question of borrowing for railways is concerned, I am one of those who believe that we cannot make any mistake in borrowing money for the construction of railways if those railways will pay 3 per cent. on the cost of construction, and any railway that does not give a fair prospect of doing that should be held over for some future time. My own opinion, and, I believe, the general opinion in the country, is that we are not constructing our railways fast enough. I, for one, am prepared to support any reasonable proposal for the borrowing of money for the construction of railways. Now, I think the time has arrived when we might reasonably ask the Government to give us some information as to the result of the construction of railways under the co-operative system. I think they might bring down a return or statement showing us the cost to the State of the construction of our railways per mile under that system, and let us know whether that system is a success or not. I say, unless we can construct our railways as cheaply under the co-operative system as we can under the tender system we should not adhere strictly to that system. I admit it is advisable for one or two railways to be carried on under that system, so as to enable work to be provided for the weaker class of men, who would not be employed by the contractor ; but I have no hesitation in saying, if it is found, after careful

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now constructing our railways is more expensive than the contract system, then I think it is quite time for the Government to reconsider the whole question. I am not opposed to the system of co-operation, but I think we are carrying it too far. I am afraid the system as now carried out is to a large extent educating our men, both young and old, to look to the State for employment. If the system continues to be carried on wholesale I am afraid the result will be that the self-reliance of our people will to a large extent be destroyed, and I do not think that is a good thing for any country. However, Sir, I hope the Government will as soon as possible bring down a carefully prepared estimate showing the cost of the construction of our railways per mile under the co-operative system. Mr. HALL-JONES. - You have it already. Mr. R. THOMPSON .- I have not seen it, nor have I heard anything of it. I should very much like to have some further information from the Government. I am not condemning the system if it can be shown that the cost is not greater, but if the system is more expensive than the tender system the whole thing should be inquired into. Sir, I might ask 9.30. some of those who have been very severe on the financial proposals

of the Government, do they suggest that we should cease to open up our Crown lands, and to road them ? Do they suggest that settlement should be stopped ? No, Sir, I do not think there is one member of this House who would suggest it, and I think it would be a most unfortunate thing to happen to this colony. If we want the colony to progress, if we want to make room for settlers, and to encourage people to go upon the lands, we must provide money to road the lands, and give the people every inducement we can to settle on our waste land. There is no doubt whatever that the tendency of the people at the present time is for the young people to congregate too much about the towns. We see the population of our large towns rapidly increasing, although the population of the colony is increasing very slowly. I should like to point out that it is a very serious thing indeed to see the whole life-blood of the country districts gradually drifting into the towns, and I do not think that it is a healthy state of things. Then, Sir, I would like just to say one or two words in reference to some complaints that have been made against the Government in connection with the sending of the contingents to South Africa. Does any member of this House imagine that it was possible to send large bodies of men without incurring heavy expenditure? The thing was impossible, and I believe that nothing the Government has ever done since they came on those benches met with more popular approval than the sending of those men to South Africa. And, as I have said, that could not be done without heavy expenditure. We must therefore be prepared to meet the expense. To my mind, that is the only thing we can do, and unless we were prepared to do it we should have held our tongues, Mr. R. Thompson when the history of this colony comes to be written it will be found that there is nothing the Premier has done since he took a seat on the Treasury benches for which he will get greater credit than for his action in connection with the war in South Africa. Then, Sir, some members have even growled - have complained - of the money expended in giving a suitable reception to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Sir, it was impossible to extend the usual courtesies due to those distinguished visitors without the expenditure of money. It is true the sum total may be heavy, but I fail to see why we should now cry over it. It was done ; we all approved of it, and now that it is all over I do not think it is good form for us to turn round and blame the Government for having spent money for this purpose. Sir, some reference has been made to the unrest that exists amongst the people throughout the country districts of the colony at the present time. I admit that there is considerable unrest and considerable uneasiness, but there are causes for that which, I think, can be very easily explained. First amongst those causes, I believe, is the low price of wool ruling for the last year. Our small sheep - farmers have received little or nothing, while those amongst them who were depending upon the clips have been left almost without the means of living; their expected income has disappeared altogether. And then, Sir, another cause of the agitation and unrest that at present exists amongst the country people has been brought about by the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act. There is no doubt whatever that that has to a large extent caused a feeling of unrest. Farmers all over the colony have been advised by their legal advisers that they cannot insure against casual labour - that if any accident happens to any one casually employed they may be let in for damages which may be ruinous. Now, Sir, if that is the law, the sooner we amend it the better. It is true the Premier has stated from his place in the House that he does not think that is the law. I have no doubt that he intended, when the Bill went through last session, that that should be so, but I am told on the very best legal authority that that is the meaning of the present Act. Mr. SEDDON .- We negatived the proposal to include agricultural labourers on division. Mr. R. THOMPSON. - That is all right. I quite admit that the honourable gentleman is under the impression that he is right, but at the same time I know for a fact that the best legal advice that can be obtained in the colony has been obtained, and that advice is that casual labour could not be covered by the insurance. If that is the case, the sooner we get the Act amended the better. For instance, some member of the House might get a boy or a man to take his portmanteau from his place to the steamer, and that boy or man might get run over and injured at the wharf, and the person for whom he

carried the portmanteau would be liable. The thing is absurd, and I say again.

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session steps should be taken to amend it. Then, Sir, there is another cause for that unrest amongst the farmers, and that has been brought about by the abnormal values that have been placed on their land for taxation purposes during the last year. From one end of the colony to the other I find there has been a deliberate attempt by the Valuation Department to place abnormal values on the land of the colony for taxation purposes. It may be said by the department that there have been good sales of small pieces of land sold here and there, and that that has warranted this valuation. But I venture to say that the lending departments of the State are not game to make advances to the farmers on their own valuations. I venture to say that the Advances to Settlers Department will not accept one of the valuations made by the Valuation Department as the basis on which to lend their money, which shows that the object is simply to put an abnormal value on land for the sake of grinding more taxation out of the people. There is a right and a wrong way of doing everything. I hold if the State requires revenue they have a right to get it, but let them get it in an honest way ; and to value a man's farm beyond what it is worth for the sake of grinding taxation out of him I say is a dishonest way of doing it. I come from a country where the land question for generations has been a very burning question, and in that part of the world at one time there was a very easy method adopted of dealing with a rack-renting land agent and the perjured witnesses he took into Court. They had a very easy method of dealing with them, and it got rid of them very quickly, and I hope it will never come to that in this country. Let me tell the Premier-and I speak from some experience in the northern part of this Island-if this system is carried on very much longer it may not be so far off as some of us may think, because people will submit to fair taxation, but they will not submit to being plundered. There is no doubt that that is one of the reasons why this feeling of unrest exists all over the colony. Then, Sir, I would also like to call the attention of the Premier to the working of the Conciliation Boards. Sir, when Parliament passed the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act we all expected great things from it. I think, Sir, the time has arrived when we should examine into the working of this Act and satisfy ourselves whether it has answered the purpose for which it was created. I am afraid there is far too much agitation going on, and a great deal of this agitation is kept up by interested parties for the purpose of providing employment for themselves. At least, that is the impression ; and, if that is so, I think some amendment in the Act should be brought about so as, at least, to take away from these gentlemen the guinea a day which they earn so very easily now. I believe if the Court fees were not so liberal we would have much less conciliation in this country : At the present time every morning one takes up one's paper one finds column after column taken up with condition in that way than they are in Australia, or in the other colonies where they have no labour laws at all. Therefore, Sir, I hope some steps will be taken to try, if possible, to bring about some amendment that will conduce to a better state of feeling amongst employers and employes. Now, Sir, speaking of this unrest amongst the country districts, a good deal has been said about the formation of the Farmers' Union. I happen to represent a district composed mostly of small farmers. I belong to no union myself; I like to have a free hand and to go alone in everything. But I say that the farmers, so far as I can gather from correspondence, have made up their minds to combine. The farmers are beginning to realise that they have not been having a fair share of the good things going. They are beginning to realise that too much time in this House has been taken up in legislating for one section of the community, and they are now beginning to come to the conclusion they must also combine ; and I think they are very sensible in doing so. So far as I am concerned, I should like to see every farmer in New Zealand belonging to the union. Then they would have a fair issue to place before the country as to how the incidence of taxation should be levied as affecting the different classes. Sir, I do not believe in class legislation of any kind, but I say there is no section of the people in this colony more deserving of consideration and attention from this House than the farmers of New

Zealand. Sir, if a slump takes place in New Zealand, who is going to take the colony out of that slump? I say the whole burden will fall on the farmers of this colony. Those who are very quick now at getting up agitations when dull times come will be found crossing over to the other colonies ; but the farmer and his family cannot go, because the farmer cannot take his farm with him. He must remain in the colony, and become the beast of burden in the shape of paying taxation until the colony recovers itself. Therefore I say the more we can do for the farmers of this country the more it will be in the best interests of the colony to do so. Now, Sir, I wish to say another word or two about the mortgage-tax, and I am not going to say much about it. Various speakers have referred to it. I look upon the mortgage-tax as one of the most unfair taxes in existence at this moment. There can be nothing more unfair than it, and I am very sorry indeed that the Premier has not been able to keep his promise of last session. I hope that even yet before the session closes he will find some means of keeping good faith with the people in that respect. There is no more unjust tax ; and I would point out this to the Premier: that if he can bring about an alteration in no other way, let him reduce the tax to the amount of the unimproved value of the property on which the money is lent. Why should people when they borrow money on their improvements, which are not taxable under the Land- and Income tax Act, have to pay a mortgage-tax on money borrowed on their

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looking into, and I hope the Premier will do justice so far as he can to these people who are now suffering, and suffering severely, even if he has to put the tax on something else. I hold these people should be dealt with fairly. I do not care what it is put on, but we should do justice where an injustice is being done. Now, Sir, I should like to say a word or two in reference to the working of the Old-age Pensions Act. We must not overlook the fact that during the short time this Act has been in operation the claims under it have risen from an estimated cost of £90,000 a year up to the enormous sum of £215,000, and the figures are still increasing ; and I venture to say that in another year or two the claims will amount to at least a quarter of a million. I remember, when the Bill was going through the House some years ago, I predicted they would reach a quarter of a million before the Act was long in operation, and unless the Premier finds some better means of checking the fraud which is now being carried on the sum will still continue growing. I have no desire to suggest that any person who is entitled to a pension should be deprived of that pension, but I know for a fact that large numbers of people whom it was never intended should receive pensions from the State are by a system of fraud receiving pensions. An Hon. MEMBER .- Is that in your district ? Mr. R. THOMPSON. - No ; the people in my district compare favourably with those in any other district in the colony. There is no more honest or independent class of people in the colony than the people of the Marsden district. But it is absolutely necessary, if the Act is to be kept in existence, to put some check on the system of fraud which is now going on. I would like to draw the attention of the House back to the fact of how this Old-age Pensions Act works so far as the Natives are concerned. I do not wish to convey any impression that I desire to do anything different to the Natives than I would to the European settler; but the position is this : that the ordinary settler is deprived of a pension if he is the owner of property ; and if he is the owner of property - let it be small or great-he has to pay taxation to the State and also the local rates. The Natives, under our Native-land laws, may be possessed of a large estate under tribal custom and yet be eligible for an old-age pension. I say the thing is unfair. I hold that if the Native claims a pension and receives it, and it is afterwards found that he has been possessed of plenty of land and property, the whole of the money he has received under the Old-age Pensions Act should be made a charge against his property; and I would apply the same principle to the European. Wherever a pension is secured by misrepresentation or fraud it should be made a lien against whatever property that person may leave behind. That is only fair. I say the present system is unfair. I remember when the Bill first came up for discussion the Native members in this House at that time objected to Natives being included under the Act lest it might ultimately become Mr. R.

Thompson changed their mind; but I say the present system should be altered if we wish to do justice to all parties. In many districts Natives are possessed of large tracts of very valuable land, which contribute nothing to the taxation of the colony - either local or otherwise. I say that now that we have extended every right to the Natives in this colony they should have no objection whatever to be placed on an equal footing with the other settlers. I see no reason why there should be any distinction of race. We should all be treated alike. This is a very serious question in many parts of the colony. Large areas of land are held by Natives which contribute nothing to the maintenance of roads. The European settlers have to find all the money for the roads, yet under the Old-age Pensions Act the Natives receive pensions just the same as Europeans do. Now, I would like to say a word or two about the Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Act passed last session. The working-out of that Act has been extraordinary. We find that in Canterbury, Wellington, Otago, and Southland large sums of money are being handed back to the Crown tenants who pay their rent promptly, but in the Provinces of Auckland and Taranaki nothing has been handed back. Why is this? An Hon. MEMBER.- They did not apply. Mr. THOMPSON.- Yes, they did apply; and they have properly complained to me that they did not get anything. I want to know why this Act is administered so differently in the various parts of the colony. There is something wrong, and I claim that the farmers of Auckland have a right to a rebate when they paid their rents promptly during the last twelve months. I trust that justice will be done to these settlers. There is no place in the colony where the Crown tenants have such a struggle for existence as in the Auckland Province. The land is poor, and the roads bad, and why should they be penalised in this way? I do not know who is responsible, but, of course, the whole responsibility must come back on the Government, and I hope steps will be taken to put this matter right. In Canterbury £890 has been given back to 474 tenants; in Otago \$347 has been given to 790 tenants; in Southland £101 has been handed back to 106 tenants; and in Wellington \$879 has been handed back to 1,480 tenants; while in Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and Auckland not one shilling was handed back. I cannot understand why this should be so. Now, Sir, I come to a proposal which is shadowed forth in the Budget, in the Government's proposal to make concessions to bush settlers, and I thank the Government for at last coming round to the views that have been advocated by some members in this House for several years. Mr. MONK.- That clause belongs to the Farmers' Union. Mr. R. THOMPSON.- It had been advocated here long before we had the Farmers' Union. I say that the whole of our bush lands in the North Island are poor. The country is broken,

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and it has heavy timber, and the difficulty is to get settlers to go back to these lands at all. For some years after they take up the land they have no income from it, and unless they have means it is impossible for them to get a living and pay rent. I hope, therefore, that before this session closes an amending Land Act will be introduced, and that those settlers who have taken up the poor lands of the colony will be exempt, both from rates and rents, for at least the first four years, but that they will be placed under strict settlement conditions. I do not desire to suggest any proposal that will encourage men to take up land merely for speculative purposes and to sell it again. It must be under conditions that they must spend a certain amount on the land, and then at the end of four years they should be called upon to pay rent and taxes the same as any other settler. Let me point out to the Premier that in the Hokianga and Mongonui Counties, and Bay of Islands, there are large tracts of Crown lands which were surveyed into sections twenty-five years ago. Owing to the high values placed on those lands, and the small sections into which they were cut up, no one would take them up. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands, through his efforts for a number of years, has been enabled to get money from the Government to run roads through that country. There are large areas that are now well roaded, with every convenience for settlers to go and take up those lands. If an amending Act as I suggest is passed I believe that in a short time large areas of second- and third-class bush land in those counties will be taken up and settled. But un-

there are concessions of this kind to tempt them to go there I am afraid it will lie idle for another twenty years. I am pleased the Government have promised to bring down a reform, and I can assure the Premier if he does so a great impetus will be given to the settlers in the poorer bush lands in the extreme north. I should like to say a word or two in connection with the settlement of the lands in the King-country. The Government have 100,000 acres of land there. I cannot say it is ready for settlement, because it is not roaded yet ; but if there is one district more than another where the Government should make an effort to road and open up the country, I think it is this large block of land in the King-country. Large areas would be taken up immediately, and it would not only supply a want in the Province of Auckland in enabling young men to get homes for themselves, but would give employment to large numbers of working-men who would have to be employed to get the land under grass. I trust provision will be made for roading it and throwing it open as soon as possible. I am sorry it is allowed to lie idle so long. I am aware that, until the last year or two, there has been some difficulty in completing the title; but I understand the title is now completed, and the only thing to stop settlement is the want of roads, and I trust the Government will see their way to provide sufficient money for roading and put it on the market as soon as possible. To show you how keen VOL. CXVIII .- 32. the desire for land is in the Province of Auckland-although a great deal of it is poor land-last year in the province of Auckland 182,236 acres were selected by 472 settlers. This shows the demand for land there is greater than the supply ; and I have no doubt if this land could be roaded and opened for selection the whole would be taken up by a thriving class of settlers. In speaking of the question of land, I congratulate the Government on their purchase of Hoffman's farm, near Auckland. I believe they have made a good purchase, and I believe if it is properly cut up and placed on the market for working-men, it will do a great deal of good and be a great success. Everything, of course, depends on the administration. In the City of Auckland you have one of the best class of working-men in any town in the colony ; they are all steady, plodding men, as a general rule, and men who desire to secure homes for themselves, and who do not care to concentrate themselves in towns, but have a strong desire to become owners of their own cottage and section ; and no doubt if it is cut up there will be keen competition for it, and it will be a great boon to the working-men of that city. I hope it will be put on the market as soon as possible. I wish to refer to a remark made by the honourable member for Franklin when speaking a few days ago. The honourable member complained that the Province of Auckland is not fairly represented in the Cabinet ; that may be from his point of view ; but I am an old member of this House, having been here for fourteen years without a break, and I have no complaint to make as to the absence of Auckland Ministers on the Cabinet. I do not wish to raise the question of provincialism. The honourable member for Thames fills his position well in the House and in the Cabinet. I have never heard a word against him since he took office, and, so far as I am concerned, as representing an electorate in the far North, I have no reason whatever to complain of the present constitution of the Cabinet, neither do I know of any one instance where the district I represent has ever been benefited by the presence of Auckland members in the Cabinet. I would go further, and say that I believe that at the present time the Ministry are doing as much, or more, or are showing a greater desire to do justice to the Province of Auckland than any Ministry we have had for years on those benches. Looking at the whole question, so far as the Ministry is concerned, there is no reason why any Auckland member should grumble because there are not more Auckland members in the Cabinet. At the present time the Ministry are doing everything they can to push on the construction of the Central Railway-line. They are doing everything they can to go on with railway works in other parts of the colony ; and yet it is asked. Who is it that delayed the construction of the Central Railway-line to Auckland ? Was it the Government ? No; it was the people of Auckland City themselves. An Hon. MEMBER .- The Auckland members?

Mr. R. THOMPSON .- No; I do not say it was the Auckland members. It was the people in the City of Auckland. They are responsible for the whole of the delay that has taken place in the construction of that railway to Auckland ; and I challenge any city member here to say that what I am stating is not correct. Sir, for fifteen years, owing to the squabbling there has been in the City of Auckland over the route of the railway, the whole thing was hung up and nothing was done. As a consequence, not only has the Province of Auckland and the Central Railway suffered, but other railway lines have also suffered ; and if Auckland now finds itself behind other portions of the colony in the matter of the construction of railways, I say that the whole blame rests on the people of Auckland City and not on the Government. An Hon. MEMBER .- On the Auckland Ministers ? Mr. R. THOMPSON .- Well, I do not wish to go that far ; but I say that at the present time, so far as I know the Ministry, they are as desirous as any previous Ministry to do justice to the province of Auckland in regard to the construction of railways. I hope that the Government will not relax their efforts in the construction of the main trunk line between Auckland and Wellington until it is completed ; and that, as far as possible, they will make up for the lost time that has been brought about through the unfortunate differences of opinion that existed for some time among the people of the City of Auckland. Sir, I congratulate the people of Auckland upon at last having come to their senses. After having been fourteen years in this House, I now find petitions being sent from the City of Auckland praying for the construction of the railway-lines north of Auckland. Sir, for years I have advocated the construction of railways in that unfortunate part of the colony, and have sometimes been almost sneered at by honourable members for doing so. The people of Auckland are now coming to their senses, and they are beginning to realise that the country north of Auckland is of some value to that city. Day after day, large numbers of petitions are being presented to this House praying for the speedy construction of that railway. I hope that attention will be given to the Helensville Railway, and that it will be pushed on as speedily as the finances of the colony will permit. No railway has a fairer prospect of paying a fair rate of interest on the cost of construction than that one has. It is one of the best lines in the colony, and when it has been extended farther north, it will still continue to be one of the best lines. I trust that no efforts will be wanting on the part of the Government to push it on as fast as possible. I now come, Sir, to a local railway. I hope that provision will be made for the completion of the line between Grahamstown and Kawakawa. I am sorry to say that the settlers in that part of the colony which I have had the honour to represent for so many years are suffering under a cruel monopoly- a monopoly that has been grinding the settlers there for years, in the shape of a shipping, timber, and coal monopoly. The position is that, owing to there being no deep-water wharf at Whangarei, the whole of the shipping-trade is centred in one company. The settlers have to travel in third- and fourth-rate steamers, packed more like sheep than human beings. I have seen them lying on the decks without either pillow or mattress, and packed like sardines in a box ; although they are charged the highest rates for their passages, they are treated no better than Chinamen. Something must be done to break up this cruel monopoly. Sixteen years ago the Stout-Vogel Government had plans prepared for the extension of this railway a distance of two miles, that being the distance from the present terminus to the harbour. That Government had surveys made and estimates prepared for the extension, when the manager of the Northern Steamship Company wrote to the then Minister for Public Works, suggesting that instead of making the railway extension, some dredging should be done. If honourable members will refer to the files of the department they will find that they prove what I have been saying. The suggestion caused delay, which was all that they desired. The work was suspended, and for the last sixteen years that company has had a monopoly of the whole of the trade of that district. When this Government decided on the extension of the railway the same ring commenced work again. It was only a few weeks ago that a joint letter was sent to the Minister for Public Works, signed by the representatives of this ring, protesting against the work. If honourable members doubt what I am saying I would refer them to the files of the department. I am

pleased to see one Auckland member (Mr. Fowlds) present to hear what I am saying. One of the gentlemen who signed that joint letter is now figuring as the president of the Auckland Railway League. Notwithstanding this, he secretly and surreptitiously signed a joint letter asking the Government not to go on with that work. An Hon. MEMBER .- Who is he ? Mr. R. THOMPSON .- You must know who the president of that League is, for you are getting circulars every day. You can get the information by applying to the department. I repeat that a few weeks ago a joint letter was sent by the representatives of those rings that have been grinding the life's blood out of the settlers of that district protesting against the Government doing justice to the people in that part of the colony. Is that the way to help to push on the progress of the Province of Auckland? Is that the way to assist and to encourage the Government to develop the resources of that district? Sir, the whole thing is a public scandal, and I take this opportunity of placing it upon record. A more infamous thing in connection with railway construction I have never known to be done in New Zealand. You will not find another instance where more intrigue and more scheming has been carried on by monopolists than has been carried on by those who

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have been grinding the life-blood out of the | no matter what pressure, may be brought people in those parts. And yet the people who do this profess to be anxious to push on the construction of railways in the Province of Auckland. Then, not satisfied with sending that joint letter secretly to the Minister for Public Works, the representatives of the timber company have joined together and have sent hired men around the country for weeks collecting signatures to petitions to send down here to try and influence the Government to stop that work. Now, how many of those signatures are from settlers? I have taken the trouble to go through a number of the petitions, and I could not recognise a dozen names of settlers. Most of them were bush hands. And those who are helping to prop up these monopolies, these rings and trusts, are trying to block the progress of the whole district so that they may continue to make money out of the people. The whole thing is a public scandal, and I hope the Government will do their Sir, there is no duty in the matter. other district in the colony that I know of where the settlers are being more cruelly used than they have been in that part of the colony. There is no place in the colony where the settlers are being placed so hopelessly at the mercy of the shipping and timber rings as they are in that part of the colony. They are unable to help themselves. The whole thing is run by trusts; and now these people, who have been crushing the life-blood out of the people of the district for the last twenty-five years, are afraid that the settlers will be enabled to get their produce to market -they are frightened to see the port of Whangarei thrown open so that there will be competition. I have never known anything so cruel in the whole history of the colony. Unless something is done to develop the resources and assist the settlers in that part of the country, the settlers may as well pack up and go, and then, when the forests are worked out, you will have a perfect waste, and no settlers will be there. And all this is happening in spite of the fact that the railway-line there is one of the best paying in the colony. There is not another railway in the colony giving the same returns as the Whangarei-Kawakawa Railway is giving. I say, in the interests of the whole colony, and of the North of Auckland in particular, it is absolutely necessary that that connection between Grahamstown and Kawakawa shall be completed as soon as possible. The whole prosperity of that part of the colony depends upon it ; and I regret to find that any section of people, no matter how small they may be, would dare to come to this House and endeavour to influence the Minister, or try to influence the Minister, against doing his duty in that part of the colony. Sir, I have very little more to say about this matter. I regret having had to refer to this at all, but it is so serious a matter that it means life or death to the settlers of Marsden. It is a matter which means prosperity or the reverse to the whole of that part of the colony, and I trust the Government will do its duty, and, no matter what influences, to bear upon Ministers, that they will see the necessity of connecting those two districts at as early a date as possible. Sir, I am not selfish in this matter; I do not ask for any favour for my own

electorate. I say, " Connect the two ports and give us free access to the markets of the world." Unless you do that, I say, it will involve the ruin of the settlers in that part of the district. There is no place north of Auckland, or in the Province of Auckland, that is making more rapid progress than Whangarei, but unless you give access to the markets, unless you will relieve the settlers from this ring that is grinding the life out of them, it is impossible for them to prosper. I hope the Government will see that no ring, that no system of plotting and scheming, that no trust or combination shall prevent them from assisting that part of the colony. I am pleased to say that we are able to see a ray of hope for that. I am pleased to see that the City of Auckland has at last recognised that the trade of that part of the colony is of some value to that city, and I appeal to the city members, as men having the interests of the whole province, and not only of the province but of the whole colony, at heart, to do everything they can to see that not only is the Central line completed, but that the Helensville line is pushed forward, and that the connection is made between Grahamstown and Kawakawa. I wish to see these works progress, because I hold it is impossible for this colony to prosper if we crush out these back districts-the country must sink or swim together. And when we have the timber ring and the shipping ring approaching surreptitiously the Minister, and endeavouring by petition or letter to endeavour to get the Government to shunt anything that would tend to the development of its resources, in order that they may get every penny they can out of the people -- An Hon. MEMBER .- Who are " they "? Mr. R. THOMPSON .- I say the timber and the shipping rings. I say the representatives of those rings addressed a joint letter to the Minister; and if the honourable gentleman likes he can apply to the Minister for Public Works for particulars. Nothing more disgraceful than that has occurred, and yet the ring-leader of these men openly professes to wish to see the development of the resources north of Auckland. He professes that openly, whilst secretly he has done everything he can to block the progress of the district. Mr. KAIHAU (Western Maori) .- Sir, I desire to make 'a few remarks upon the Financial Statement now before the House. The debate upon this question, I think, has now been before the House for somewhere about three weeks, and a great many different opinions have been advanced by honourable members who up to the present have spoken upon it. However, I recognise that this is a question which particularly necessitates the careful attention and consideration of members. Sir, I look upon the Financial Statement of the

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the colony, and as that from which one has to judge as to whether it is progressing or otherwise. Sir, I noticed when the Right Hon. the Premier was reading that Financial Statement he gave the credit balance of the colony as being \$532,564. Well, it is now publicly known to all members of this House that this is the surplus shown in the present Financial Statement. Now, the remark that I have to make in regard to the surplus is this : that within my knowledge, during all the years that I have been in this House, we have had each successive session a Financial Statement showing a surplus of somewhere about the same amount. To my mind, that does not argue a more flourishing condition of things than hitherto under the administration of the present Government. And, Sir, I form that opinion by asking myself this question : Supposing that £530,000 odd of surplus were devoted to the purpose of paying off part of our national debt, probably we would not have a surplus at all next year. Sir, that, to my mind, would be a test which should satisfy members of this House as to whether there is any object in arguing about the financial position of the colony. I would suggest to the House this : that we should earmark and put on one side the surplus which now exists of \$532,564. Do not let it be tampered or interfered with until the Financial Statement of next year is brought down, and we see what surplus we have then over and above this money. Now, what I want to know, and what I am not satisfied about, is this: If we have this £530,000 odd of money regularly remaining to our credit year after year, where, then, is the necessity that we should be continually borrowing more money to carry on with ? Sir, I am afraid that if we go on as we have been doing we will be continually increasing our national debt, which will have to be borne by the land and the

people of the colony, and the end will be that we shall find it utterly impossible ever to get rid of it. And I must say that I look with very very grave suspicion upon this continual building-up of the national debt. I desire to impress upon members that, though I am a Maori, I know a very great deal of the ins and outs of these financial matters. It seems to me that it is my duty to guard against and to prevent any portion of this debt being saddled upon the Maori lands. Now, Sir, I am advised that the national debt of New Zealand at the present time totals somewhere about \$50,000,000, and I suppose if that money were divided out on a population basis it would come to about \$50 or \$60 per head of the men, women, and children of the colony. I think it will be a very sad thing if this continues, and the Government are prevented from doing any more good for the colony. The Maori inhabitants of New Zealand are called upon to suffer many and grievous disabilities, and have been called upon to suffer many more during the years I have been in this House. I will endeavour to explain what these grievances are. The lands of the Maori in charge for subdivisional surveys on the land. inhabitants are being purchased by the Government. Mr. Kaihau think, Sir, I am not beyond the mark in saying that within my own district upwards of two millions of acres have been purchased in that manner. Therefore I cannot say I am satisfied that the welfare of the Maori people is progressing; but I must say that their burdens and troubles have been greatly increased during the years I have been in the House. Sir, I hoped and believed when I was first returned to this House that it was the desire of the Government to relieve the Maoris of some of the burdens that then oppressed them. I thought, after certain interviews between the Premier and representatives of the Maori people, that measures would be introduced to alleviate their grievances. Now, Sir, a very serious misfortune has befallen the Maori people through the passing of "The Maori Lands Administration Act, 1900," and the trouble in connection with that Act is this: The Maori people are turning round in every direction to find out what is going to be done, and they have come to the conclusion that it is going to do them a very serious injury. The origin of that Act was this: The Maori people desired to be given a Council to administer their lands and decide how they should deal with them, and they submitted their proposals to this House in the form of a Bill, which did not pass this House, but which they understood was the foundation upon which the Act of last year was framed. But when the Maori Lands Administration Act of last year was passed and circulated amongst them the Maoris were surprised to find that it did not contain any one of the matters for which they had stipulated. They were given no power to act as they desired, and they were bitterly disappointed. They found that it was a much more grievous burden than they have hitherto had to bear. There is no benefit derivable by them under the Act. The money that is required to be expended is so large that no benefit is left to the owners of the land. I will endeavour to illustrate it in this way: On the day the Maori Councils are constituted the expenses will probably amount to about 1s. per acre over the whole of the land to be dealt with by the Council. Then, there is this further question to be contemplated: The Maoris have no means of estimating how many years the lands will be under lease before they come back to them. Under the Act lands may be leased for twenty-one years, and there is a provision in the Act which renders it competent for the lessee to renew for a further term of twenty-one years. When the lease comes to be renewed the improvements will be charged as an extra burden on the land. Then, there is the other trouble in connection with the renewal of the leases, as I have explained. Then, we have to contemplate the cost of survey, which has also to be borne by the land. When we have got beyond that stage we have still another difficulty to contemplate: when the land is subdivided that means a further. Then, after the subdivisional surveys have been

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made the lands have to be roaded, in order to put them in such a position that Europeans will care to take them up. This is a very grave and serious injury that has befallen the Maori people. But, Sir, these are not all the misfortunes that have befallen us under this measure. Add to all this that when a man has improved his land the original value of his improvements is required to be reduced. And now, Sir, the

interest on the money that the Councils will require to borrow for the purpose of surveying, subdividing, and roading these blocks will have to be paid, and I do not suppose it will be obtainable under somewhere about 5 per cent. This matter requires very careful consideration, and I do most strenuously urge upon honourable members the necessity of amending during this present session the Act of last year, in order to remedy to a certain extent these evils. A great sorrow, Sir, has been felt by, and a great cry has gone up from, the Maori people because their wishes have not been met by this Act. During many years past the principal hapus and tribes of the Maori people and their principal men have recognised and believed that this House was the place to which they should bring, and before whom they should lay, their grievances, their desires, and their views in connection with matters in which they thought they might be advantaged. Here is another matter about which we have been in trouble : The district divisions into which the northern end of this Island is divided under that Act are six in number. Some of the hapus that did not attend here in Wellington last year when the Bill was under consideration are now taking part in the laying-down of the boundaries, and we find petitions coming here now objecting to the boundaries as laid down under the Act of last year. I say, in my opinion, the solution of the difficulty is this : Hand over to the Maori residents of the various parts of the Island affected by the Act the laying down of the boundaries of the various districts to be constituted under it. If it should happen that an amending Bill should be brought down this session, it will be a matter of very extreme difficulty, for this reason : There are many evils in the Act, and many misfortunes which under the Act the Maoris are called upon to bear. I heard the Native Minister say that the Maori people were greatly pleased and satisfied with the Act passed last session. Perhaps so-the people with whom he has conversed ; but I desire to point out to the House that there are other Maoris in other districts. The people in the Western Maori electorate, I know, are greatly dissatisfied with that Act, and will not under any circumstances accept its operation over them. I will point out to the House a matter with which the people whom I represent are extremely dissatisfied-the question of The people in my district confiscated lands. have been suffering under this misfortune from the time of the confiscation up to the present. And, I ask, where have the Government considered the grievances of these people ? I must admit that previous Governments did show consideration, and that consideration commenced with the late Sir Donald McLean, who decided to give back certain lands to the Maori inhabitants of Waikato, all of whose lands were confiscated. Subsequent to that other Governments showed similar consideration. The Grey Government decided to give back to the Maoris certain lands, and subsequent to that again succeeding Governments promised to give back certain lands to the people who had been the heavier sufferers under the confiscation. And why should they not have some land reserved to them? I cannot see where the justification of the confiscation of their lands comes in, for this reason : As far as I can ascertain, the Act under which their lands were confiscated at the time of the war was created at that time for a special purpose. I cannot see why the lands of the Waikato Natives should have been confiscated as a result of the war, when we remember previous to that war the lands had been handed over to the keeping of Her Majesty the Queen under the Treaty of Waitangi. The treaty was made in 1840 and the Waikato war did not take place until 1863. Why, then, should the hand of the Government intervene and take the land away from these people, when previous to that war they had handed over the lands for safe keeping to the Queen of England ? Mr. CARROLL .- What Government was it that confiscated the land ? Mr. KAIHAU .- I must ask the Minister to put that question to previous Governments. Mr. MASSEY .- What Government gave back the Maori lands at Mangere ? Mr. KAIHAU .- The land at Mangere was returned to the people now in occupation by the Mitchelson Government. I myself took part in that transaction. Now, I ask the House this : If the Government is really doing what it professes to be doing-administering for the welfare of the colony at large and for the Maori people-why do they not hand these people back the land to which they are entitled, or why do they not give effect to the suggestions and promises made by previous Governments ?

Sir, I am hoping and still waiting to see the Premier carry out his promise made some time ago, to this effect : that he would probably be able to see his way to give lands back to the landless Natives in Waikato. If that is done I may be able to say, " Yes, I am beginning to believe that something will eventually be done for the benefit of the Maori people of this colony." I desire to impress upon the Premier and the Native Minister the urgent necessity for their doing right by the Maori people during this present session of Parliament. And, Sir, I feel that, if those honourable gentlemen do not carry out the suggestions and promises made by them when they visited the Maori people at the various places at which they interviewed them through the Island, I do not think they will long remain at the head of affairs in the government of this colony. The Maoris feel very deeply and very keenly the evils and troubles that they are called upon to bear. Under the injuries they are suffering owing to the Acts that are pressing mercilessly

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upon them they feel like people who have been burnt by fire. Honourable members may laugh at my form of expression, but I know what I mean, and I am entirely right. Sir, I say this: that if a man, whoever he may be, does not act in the right direction he will not long remain in a responsible position. Now, Sir, I will point out another grievance under which the Maori people are at present labouring. At the present time a certain description of land-purchase is going on throughout my district, and it has been continually worrying the Maori people year after year. I think I am correct in estimating the balance of land owned by Maoris in this Island at something between three and four million acres. Yet the purchase of these remaining lands is still persisted in and is continued by the Government, and the end must be utter disaster to the Maori race. Now, the position might be better if the lands were paid for at anything like the price equivalent to their value; but, as it is, the Government acquire those lands by purchase at 5s. or 6s. an acre, and then sell them for £2 or £3 an acre. They make a profit of three or four times the amount of their outlay out of the transaction. Mr. CARROLL. - How much have they sold ? Mr. KAIHAU. - Practically speaking, the land is all sold. Mr. CARROLL. - How much has the Government sold ? Mr. KAIHAU. - All I can say is this : that the lands that were purchased for the small sums per acre I have mentioned are worth from \$2 to \$3 an acre now. I should say that some of the best land in that district is now worth from £3 to £5 an acre. Is that a proceeding upon which the Government have any cause to congratulate themselves? I consider that I am justified in looking upon the Government's procedure in that direction with a considerable amount of suspicion. I believe I am justified in taking up the position I do and reminding the Government that I have been their consistent supporter for four years, and during that four years I have continually urged upon them what I consider they ought to do for the welfare of the Maori people. I consider I am justified in saying this : They are my own people ; I am speaking on their behalf, and the lands are ours. And I say to the Government, in all seriousness now, cease to act in that manner. I believed when I listened to the professions of the Government that they were serious in what they said. They told me that if a man was sunk right down in the mud it was in their power to raise him up out of it. Where, Sir, I ask, is there a single action of theirs which they can point to as giving effect to that profession. At the present moment my heart is filled with two emotions-caution and hope. I hope to see the Government do some of the things they have professed their willingness to do. But I have not as yet enumerated all the troubles under which we suffer, and I am going to give the House some more. I will illustrate what I mean in this way : Say there is within my district Mr. Kaihau a large block of land unsurveyed, and the owners of that land, the people resident in that district, are not willing to survey the land, simply because they have not the means to pay for the survey. The Minister for the Maoris comes in, 11.30. and upon his authority the surveyors enter the land and they survey these blocks irrespective of what the objections of the majority of the Maori owners may be. And no matter how the Maori owners may protest, or what arguments they may make use of in protest, absolutely no notice whatsoever is taken.

And why, Sir? Because the Govern- ment are anxious to get their hands on the land ; they want to get the cost of the survey made a charge upon the land, so that they can get their hands on it as speedily as possible. Mr. CARROLL .- What block of land are you speaking of ? Mr. KAIHAU .- There are numbers of blocks of land in that position. I can mention a block now. The Rangitoto Tuhua Block was surveyed some time ago, and I received letter after letter and telegram after telegram from the owners asking me to communicate with the Native Minister on their behalf, and to re- monstrate with him, and to endeavour to have the survey put a stop to, as they did not wish it to proceed. And I did so communicate with both the Premier and Native Minister, and urged that the survey be put a stop to. I think, perhaps, the Native Minister will be satisfied that my reply is a sufficient answer to his question. What I say should be done is this : The surveyors should be taken away at once, and no one should have any right to enter upon any Natives' land except at the desire and with the consent of the owners. Now, passing from that subject, I will go to another matter that it seems to me will be a cause of further expense and trouble. Under the Act under which Councils can be consti- tuted there is to be a re-election of members of the Councils every three years. Sir, I ask mem- bers of this House to very very carefully take into consideration all these various evils in the Act which I have endeavoured to point out, and, if any amending measure comes down, that they will endeavour to the very best of their ability to amend the law in such a direction as will enable the Maoris to be put upon the same footing as Europeans. Now I shall devote a few remarks to the Royal visit that took place some time ago, when we were honoured with a visit from the late Queen's grandson. The Maoris, Sir, were exceedingly glad to be honoured by that visit. Sir, I do not believe we should make any remarks deprecating the amount of money that was spent over the visit, when their Royal Highnesses came here to honour both races in this country through that visit. But what I will say is this : that the way in which the arrangements were made with re- gard to affording opportunities for their Royal Highnesses to interview their Maori subjects in this country were not made or carried out as they should have been. And in making that remark I speak on behalf of the residents of the district known as Waikato, a thickly popu-

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there the principal man of the Maori people resides - the man whom they have decided occupies a position of supremacy which en- titles him to be called by the name by which Europeans designate their head. They there- fore call him the "king." Now, the Hon. the Native Minister and the Right Hon. the Pre- mier both knew the position that he occupied and the reverence in which he was held by his people ; and he should not have been treated in the way he was in connection with the Royal visit. Sir, my belief is this: that the reason why the Hon. the Ministers treated him in this way was because they thought to themselves this man is a man whose mana is nothing-a man who has become a mere cypher ; his people have had all their land taken from them, and they have no right to be considered as having any mana. Now, I say that the Right Hon. the Premier and the Hon. the Native Minister had no right to treat that section of the Maori people in this manner; and I say that what the Ministers should have done was this: When they saw how intense was the wish of these Maori people to meet the Royal visitors in the manner they desired, and represented by the man who has always been their acknowledged head, their wishes should have been met, and the opportunity should have been afforded them of carrying out their reception of the Royal visitors in the way in which they desired. Sir, I myself explained the position to the Right Hon. the Premier and the Hon. the Native Minister. I explained to them it was a matter of impossibility that the Waikato tribes should go to Rotorua. Mr. CARROLL .- Why ? Mr. KAIHAU .- For a Maori reason. And it is within my power, because I know all about it, to explain to the House what the Maori custom is. The first resident of the country being visited by a visitor, the first person whom such visitor will meet along his line of journey must be the person to receive that visitor in his own place at his own time, and to sorrow with him over the loss we have all sustained in the death of our late lamented

Queen. The position is this : Suppose an army goes to battle, and we come face to face with the enemy : I am not going to advance towards my enemy and before I reach where he is turn round and come back. No, Sir ; having set out with the intention of attacking, I must go and attack, even if killed in endeavouring to accomplish my object. The present position is something similar. If I am at home and see visitors approaching, and I, after looking to see who they are, then turn my face away from them, I am guilty of insulting my visitors, and misfortune is bound to follow as the direct result, and I should have no right after that to claim to be looked upon as a man of any consequence. Having turned away my face from my visitors, and let other people entertain them first, I would be guilty of something of which no true Maori would ever be guilty, and I therefore say Ministerial arrangements in connection with their Royal Highnesses' visit were not carried £1,000,000 in hard cash had been offered to be paid to myself and Mahuta to go to Rotorua we would have refused to go, for the reason that we would not depart from our principles. And we intend to stand up for our rights and hold fast to our principles come what may. We claim we are the people who can flatter ourselves we are doing that honestly and wholeheartedly. We represent people who have certain rights which are protected by the King, and we are not going to surrender what we believe to be right to please anybody. Sir, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not blaming in the slightest degree the Maori people who did go to Rotorua, and if it had been the Maori people who had arranged that the reception be held there, and had it been they who had asked us, we would have gone ; but we would not go at the request of the Government. Maori custom, Sir, is very hard and fast in that connection, and it is universal and well known. It must be for the people of a place to extend an invitation before a visitor would have the temerity to go and visit them. If a man comes and knocks at a door and the door is not opened by those inside he cannot get in ; nor would he even knock unless he had first received an invitation. As I am sorry to see my time is drawing to a close, I would just like, in conclusion, to say a few words with regard to the remarks which have fallen from certain honourable members in connection with the old-age pensions. Sir, certain honourable members have expressed as their opinion that they did not think Maoris should be granted old age pensions. Why not ? Who, then, should ? Should the Europeans ? What right have the Europeans to the benefit of this pension ? The Island was ours, and it was the land which produced the money which now forms the wealth of the colony. The Europeans came to this country with nothing, and they have made their money here. Yet you come now and say that we are mere nobodies. To those honourable members who have spoken objecting to Maoris receiving old-age pensions, I say they are absolutely wrong. I know certain Europeans who have come to this country for no other reason than to find a means of livelihood, and have been successful in building up fortunes for themselves out of Maori land. Under the law, Europeans must have resided twenty years in the colony before they are entitled to receive old-age pensions. That cannot apply to the Maoris, because we have been here for thousands of years. Where did the wealth of this country come from ? It was not brought in by the Europeans. It was in the land itself, and we must look to the land to repay the money which we borrow from England. The member for Marsden said that, in his opinion, Maoris should not be allowed to receive old-age pensions; and one of his reasons, he said, was because they did not pay land-tax. I would point out that Maoris do pay land-tax, and if the honourable member will look at the statute-book he will find that the Maoris are compelled to pay taxes. Mr.

DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Time is up.

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my intention to have taken any part in this debate, and, owing to a slight difficulty in my utterance, I hope honourable members will bear with me in the few remarks I intend to make if I am not able to raise my voice sufficiently to make myself heard throughout the Chamber. I would like to congratulate the honourable member who last spoke upon the able speech which he made from his standpoint. There is one point, however, upon which I beg to differ from him. He blamed the Premier and the Native Minister

for not allowing Mahuta to come down to Auckland to meet the Royal visitors. I say, if the Premier or Native Minister had consented to such a course as that they would have been unworthy of the position which they occupy in this colony. There is a trust imposed on the Native Minister on behalf of the Natives of New Zealand, and if Mahuta had been allowed to act as suggested it would have been casting an insult upon all the rest of the Natives in New Zealand. The first Natives who asked this to be granted were the loyal Natives of the Bay of Islands, who asked that the first meeting of the Duke with the Natives should be at the historic place where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. That was refused, and the Natives felt very much aggrieved ; but at the same time they were willing to fall in with whatever arrangements the Government might make for receiving the Royal visitors. I am sorry to say that I saw in the paper in Auckland an attempt to make an attack on the Government for political purposes out of this. An Hon. MEMBER .- Nothing of the kind. Mr. HOUSTON .- I will give the names. I am not ashamed to make this statement. They were Mr. Mitchelson, Mr. Hobbs, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Sinclair. These are the men who got up an agitation against the Government for #cc-zero political purposes, and I say the Government would have been failing in their duty to have allowed this to take place. Mahuta is called the Maori King. Had he been the King of the Maoris it would have been a different thing ; but he is not the King of the Maoris, but he is the Maori King, representing only a small section of the Maori people. Another reason why I have got up is to say a few words with reference to some remarks made by my honourable friend the member for Marsden. I indorse a great deal of what that honour- able member said in the first part of his speech. I think that the people of Auckland have been to blame to a certain extent for the delay in connection with the railway from Wellington to Auckland. I congratulate them on having been awakened to a sense of their duty, as is evidenced by the numerous petitions that are now being daily presented to this House praying for the completion of the railway. I am prepared to say, without fear of contradic- tion, that it is the North of Auckland that has made the City of Auckland, and, had it not been for the North of Auckland, Auckland City would only have taken third place to-day in the cities of the colony. We have a poor country there, but that poor country has contributed other part, no matter what area, and it is now that they are awakening to a sense of their duty and are measuring out a small mede of jus- tice to the northern part of the colony. Now I come, Sir, to the concluding remarks of the honourable gentleman, and these I cannot alto- gether agree with. I quite agree with him that the connection between Whangarei and Kawa- kawa should be completed. Honourable mem- bers have seen that he and I, representing adjoining constituencies, have been presenting counter petitions to this House. There must be some reason for it. In 1891, when the subject was first spoken of by himself and myself to the then Minister for Public Works, the now Premier, it was agreed that the extension of this line should be made. The Minister for Public Works then said that if Auckland would forego the loop line to Penrose this line would be extended from Kamo to Hikurangi. When it became known to my constituents they objected to the railway being extended to Hikurangi, and said that they should commence at Kamo at the one end and at Kawakawa at the other. and make three miles both ways, and that then the Government would be more than ever inclined to continue the connection. The Minister re- fused. I then wired to my constituents to call a public meeting. That was done, and they unanimously agreed to allow the extension to go on from Kamo to Hikurangi. I informed the Minister of the result of that meeting. and I said that on one condition would I agree to it, and that was that the connection should be completed to Kawakawa before any work was undertaken south of Whangarei. He promised me he would do so. I asked him to give it me in writing. He asked me if I doubted his word. I said I had no reason to doubt it, but I wanted to be able to show my constituents what the arrangement was when I went back. He asked me if I would be satis- fied if he put it in the Public Works Statement. I said, "Perfectly." I will read from that Statement of 1891 :-- "In reference to the construction of the line from Kamo to Kawakawa, the Government thinks that the time has come to take action in this matter. We therefore propose to pro- vide this year for the extension of the line from

Kamo to Hikurangi, and to devote to this purpose the money at present allocated to the doubling of the Auckland-Penrose line. We do not, however, propose to extend the line from Whangarei to Grahamstown. Any further extension of the railway that may be decided upon in the future should be in the direction of Kawakawa, with the view of connecting the Kamo and Kawakawa Railways, and so communicating with deep water at Opua." This was uttered by Mr. Seddon, then Minister for Public Works. I have faith in the Premier now-then Minister for Public Works -that he will carry out this promise. He has never yet shaken my faith in him up to the present time, and I hope, though I may not be long in the House, I shall not have to leave the House saying that the Premier had

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matter, it is a very serious one for my district -the extension of this line to Grahamstown before the connection is completed, in accordance with this promise made in the Public Works Statement of 1891. I have no objection to extend the line to Grahamstown, but, I say, carry out this promise first. What benefit would this extension to Grahamstown be to the northern part of the district ? There would be the break between the present terminus at Hukerenui and Kawakawa. The extension to Grahamstown might benefit a few people at Whangarei, but it would be of no benefit to those in the North. With regard to this monopoly of the Northern Steamship Company, I cannot understand why the honourable gentleman calls it a monopoly. I have no interests in this company, but I have this to say of it : It is the only company which has rendered steam communication possible between the North and Auckland, and it has been at all times willing to assist the settlers in regard to freight and passages. The rates are still high, but it is open to any other company to come and run steamers there; and the manager of the company has always been willing to meet the settlers and endeavour to assist them in regard to freight and passages. I am sorry to have to say one word which the honourable member for Marsden may consider to be against him and his district. I know Whangarei very well. I have good cause to remember it, because it was there I met my better half, and it is a place I can never forget ; and I should be wanting in my duty if I did not do all I could to help them in getting any assistance in regard to railway communication, and it would be unfair on my part to do anything to injure the people of Whangarei. But I consider that I should be wanting in my duty, not only to Whangarei, but to my own district, if I consented to have this extension to Grahamstown completed before the connection is made with Kawakawa. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Eight miles of that work are now in hand. Mr. HOUSTON .- Yes ; but the same amount of money it would take to make the connection to Grahamstown would almost complete the line to Kawakawa. There is the large bridge over the river, which will cost a very large sum, and which must be completed ere the line can be taken to the other side of the river. A mistake was made by the department in taking the line on the present side of the river ; it would have been much better if it had been taken on the other side, and would not have cost so much as this extension to Grahamstown. 12.0. With regard to the timber-men-I may say I do not know them, but I have heard of them-it is strange that one of the reasons given for extending the line to Grahamstown is that these same men might get their timber down to deep water easily ; yet these men are considered monopolists who are doing all they can to injure the district. Sir, knowing Whangarei as I do, I say that if the line is extended to Grahamstown it will mean that the death-would go to Grahamstown, and the traffic now stopping at Whangarei would go right through to the North, which would, of course, act injuriously to Whangarei. I believe that those who are opposed to the extension of the line to Grahamstown are only opposed to it on account of the break between Hukerenui and Kawakawa not being completed. They wish to see the break in the line completed, so that people might have access to Auckland by rail, instead of having to make the longer journey by sea from Russell. My voice is so bad to-night that I really must express my regret to the House that I have spoken so long ; but there are one or two other points I would like to refer to. I may say at once I do not want to refer to the finances of the colony. When we have such budding Colonial Treasurers like the member for Nelson City,

the member for Ashley, and the member for Riccarton, it would be presumptuous on my part to attempt to go at any length into the question of our finances. I may say, however, that I quite agree with the statement the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer makes in the Budget with reference to the curtailment of expenditure on public buildings. I cannot agree, however, with one honourable gentleman when he refers to the public works expenditure, and says that that expenditure benefits the landowners alone, and not the workers. Sir, what if we stop all public works ? We would soon see what the effect would be on the workers. The landowners could do without it, but the workers certainly could not. I say, Sir, the workers are benefited perhaps more than the landowners. Now, on the question of railways, I have to compliment the Minister on the concessions he has granted. No doubt they have been very beneficial to the farming population in many parts of the colony ; but I am sorry to say he has not extended the same concessions to all parts of the colony. I look on our railways as a system, and I hold there should be no difference made between one line that may not be paying and other lines which are paying. I do not see why a heavy tariff should be put on the line that is not paying its way. Railway concessions have been granted to the amount of #165,000, which, I think, must be of great benefit to the people. But who benefits by the concessions? It is those persons through whose property the railways pass. Now, we in the North have all along assisted to pay the interest on the money that has been borrowed for our railways and other works, and we are so far getting very little benefit. I would like to say-and I am sorry to have to make this remark about the Minister for Railways-that only a short time ago I asked the question about the rates on a short line between Opuia and Kawakawa, a distance of seven miles, where 10s. d. is the rate charged for a distance over which in other parts of the colony the rate would only be 3s. 5d. We in the North have to pay our share of the interest on the borrowed money got to construct the other lines, and yet we are taxed because the small line there does not yield a larger

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is very unfair that that part of the colony should be so treated. Mr. HORNSBY .- What is the name of the line ? Mr. HOUSTON .- The Opuia-Kawakawa. It goes from Kawakawa to deep water at Opuia. The Minister says, when asked by me to lower the rates on this line,- "In view of the fact that the gross earnings on the Kawakawa Section for the year ending 31st March last amounted to less than the cost of working the line, I cannot see my way to make any alterations in the existing rates on that section." Sir, it is these heavy tariffs that cause the line not to pay. The large bulk of the traffic that formerly went over that line now goes to the Kirikiri landing, where it is taken away by boats to be put on board larger vessels. In this way the railways lose traffic, and the result is that high rates are charged to those who are forced to use the lines. Those settlers who are in a position to do so take their cargo in a different direction altogether, and this is owing to the heavy tariff imposed. With regard to the Post and Telegraph Department, I wish to compliment the Postmaster-General upon the successful state of things disclosed in the report. This and the railways are two great departments of Government, and I am glad to notice that under the management of the honourable gentleman they have been successful during the past year. I hope, however, that he will not make the mistake that the Commissioners made when they had control of the railways by trying to make them paying concerns. I hold that they should not be made to pay more than the interest on the cost of construction, because they belong to the people. Any profit arising out of them, I contend, should be expended in extending those privileges to other parts of the colony. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- £20,000 a year is lost on the Auckland Section. Mr. HOUSTON .- What is the loss on all the railways of the colony taken together? It is the system I am dealing with, and not any particular line. I say that the lines of the colony should be worked in the interests of the people. If one line pays while another does not, those using the non-paying lines should not have these additional charges imposed upon them. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- There is not a single line paying in the colony except the one at Westport. Mr. HOUSTON .- Oh, yes ; the West Coast pays everything, and gets everything. As to the education system,

I contend that at present we have not got a system that can be called national, for the reason that we have not got uniform school-books throughout the colony, and until there is uniformity in this respect the system cannot be called national. A child attending school at the North Cape should use the same books as one at the Bluff; and, further, he should occupy the same position in the school at the Bluff as he would if he were attending at the North Cape. At the present Mr. Houston his district without having to get a new set of books. These books are being continually changed, and until we have a national system of school-books our education system will never be perfect. On more than one occasion I have called attention to this matter. I come now to refer to the Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Bill of last session. As the honourable member for Marsden dealt fully with that question, I shall not spend much time over it. I hope the advice he gave the Government will have good effect, and I wish to point out that this matter has been brought under the attention of the Government in years past. Now, in the year 1899 -it is not often I trouble the House, but on that occasion I was induced to say a few words on the Budget, and this was one of the points that caused me to speak on that occasion. The statement made by the Premier in that Budget was almost similar to what we have here before us this year. When I heard the remarks of the Premier in 1899 I felt that something would surely be done for these settlers ; but, though I have been waiting patiently ever since, nothing has been done in regard to the unfortunate people who occupy sections away back from settlement and civilisation, and who suffer very great hardships indeed. The Premier, in 1899, said,- "The privations and difficulties the settlers have to encounter are heartrending to endure. Having personally made myself acquainted with the true condition of affairs, I feel this standing reproach should be removed, and every expedition exercised in making roads next summer to the back-block settlements." That was in 1899, and yet nothing has been done since. I have brought this matter under the attention of the Government by petition and by letter every session, and almost every week of the session. I will guarantee that in the different offices of the Minister of Lands you will find letters from me on this subject almost every week. Now, on that occasion I made some remarks in reference to that statement by the Premier which will be equally applicable at the present time. Last year I said,- " Now, one would imagine from this that the Premier had been over the roads in winter. I say this tax of 5s. an acre for roading is a most iniquitous impost on these settlers in the back blocks." I still say so. Those settlers have been there for years, and they have been paying interest at the rate of 4s. and 5s. ever since. I have presented petition after petition to the Government in reference to the high value placed upon the land :- "Under the present valuation at which blocks of land are put up the value of the sections, I say, is entirely wrong. I do not know whether it is the Commissioners of Crown Lands who prepare the reports, but, at any rate, they accept the valuation of the property. I say that is a great mistake. I say that in every case where a block of land is to be opened for selection, before it is advertised for

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and a correct valuation should be arrived at with regard to the prices at which the sections should be offered for settlement." That was in 1899. Now, Sir, these were my remarks on the Financial Statement of 1899, and I was induced to make them by the extracts I have read from the previous speech in that Budget. The Premier reiterates almost the same thing this time. Respecting the Crown Tenants Act of last year he says,- "Last session the Rebate of Crown Tenants Act was passed. Its working has not been satisfactory, or equitable in its incidence. An amendment of the Act is necessary, and at this juncture it is well to speak plainly, for from facts which have come within my own knowledge it is quite clear that a person taking up bush land, and having little or no capital, cannot pay rent until the land yields a return. There are practically no returns for two years. By that time two years' rent are in arrear, and the yield is not sufficient to maintain the settler and his family. Another two years pass over, and still find him behind in payment of his rent, or, if he has paid the rent, he has probably had to borrow the money for that

purpose. Under these circumstances it is much better that the State should insist upon the improvement conditions being strictly complied with, and allow the tenant to sit rent-free for the first four or five years. After that time the tenant would be in a position to pay the rent, and the anxiety and worry caused under the conditions now existing would be avoided. There is also another point worthy of being taken into consideration - namely, that, although there is a large area of Crown land available for settlement, most of it is inaccessible, and situated a long way from the centres of population, and is not of extra good quality ; therefore some inducement is necessary, which, if given, will tend to promote settlement of the people on our Crown lands, and relieve the existing congestion among those who prefer to go upon the lands acquired under the Land for Settlements Act, thus avoiding the hardships which fall to the lot of the pioneer or back-blocks settler." He says also that there is another point worthy of consideration. He is speaking of the large areas of Crown lands not fit for settlement. There are many parts of my district where there are large areas of land not fit for settlement, and a person will not take them up at the minimum price fixed by the Land Board. When the Land Act was going through I had many conversations with Sir John McKenzie, and I told him that there were hundreds of thousands of acres not worth a shilling nor a penny an acre, and that if he tried to cut them up into small sections the effect would be ruinous. He said that land that was not worth 1s. an acre was not worth taking up. I contend there is a large amount of land in my district where four or five thousand acres might be taken up at a nominal rent and it would pay. It would be better to have it settled in that way than to small farmers who could take it and run a few head of cattle or sheep on it, while at present it is useless. It would be far better to deal with it in that way than to allow it to remain as it is. I hope the Government will bring in an amendment of the Land Act, because the Act requires amendment. It seems to me absurd for any one who is a Liberal to say, " Do not touch our Land Act." That is Toryism of the worst kind to say that the Land Act should remain as it is for ever. I say that, as circumstances alter, so we must alter our land-laws, the same as we alter other laws. I do not wish to refer to any honourable gentleman who has preceded me. I have some notes on several matters that have been touched upon. I am sorry to hear the single-tax business brought on the floor of this House. I cannot understand a man who is possessed of sound intelligence upon other things being possessed of such foolish ideas regarding the question of the land as to say that it is a crime for any man to possess more land than he can occupy. He might as well say no man should go into the cemetery and get a section 6 ft. by 2 ft. for himself and his family. The thing is the same. It is absurd to take up time discussing such questions. There was also a question raised which I am sorry to hear, though in warning tones, by a member - the cry of town versus country. I think it is a mistake to raise this cry, for really the time is coming when this cry will be made a great deal of. It has been town all along. Legislation for a considerable time past has been altogether in the interest of the town, and I think it almost time this was stopped. I believe, myself, that the country is going to assert itself and will not put up with this any longer ; it will not agree that everything should go to the towns. I say that what benefits the country must benefit the town, but the reverse does not hold good. What benefits the town does not always benefit the country.

An Hon. MEMBER. - Yes, it does sometimes. Mr. HOUSTON. - But not altogether. Many things that benefit the towns to a great extent confer no benefit at all on the country. We are told that " Man made the town and God made the country," and that is quite true. Now, with regard to some of the legislation that appears on the Order Paper at the present time, I hope the Government will see their way to rub out a great deal of the legislation proposed there. I think it will not be to the interests of the country to pass some of the legislation that figures on that Order Paper. For my part, as a country member, I am determined to oppose a great deal of the legislation proposed by the Government as it appears on the Order Paper if it is not wiped out. I do not say that as being hostile to the Government, but simply because I think it is against the best interests of the country; and, as a country member, I cannot support any legislation which I think will be detrimental to the true interests of the country. I hope the

Government will take warning from what I

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and will wipe some of this proposed legislation off the Order Paper, and not waste the time of the House in discussing it. # ADJOURNMENT. Mr. HEKE (Northern Maori District) moved the adjournment of the debate till half-past two p.m. to-morrow. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) wished to enter his protest against the evident intention not to have the questions on the Order Paper answered. Questions had not been answered now for a fortnight or three weeks, and now they were going to start with the orders of the House supposed, day at half-past two to-morrow. therefore, the first business to-morrow would be for the member for the Northern Maori District to continue the debate on the Financial Statement, and the Premier would follow : and then after that debate was over they would have the estimates to deal with, when there would be no chance of answering questions. He maintained that members should insist on getting their questions answered. They had not had any answered this week, nor the week before, nor , had they had any unopposed motions granted them. He thought an amendment should be moved that the debate should be adjourned until He could not half-past seven p.m. to-morrow. move that himself, because he had already spoken. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said the honourable member apparently did not know what the usual procedure was. He ought to know that no notice of motion or other question could come before the question of privilege that was set down on the Order Paper. It took precedence of everything. Besides, he had always understood that during the course of the debate on the Financial Statement questions were never answered. The financial debate must, after privilege, be out of the way. He would be very glad to please the honourable gentlemen, but he was sure, after he had had a good night's rest, he would be very glad indeed that they had fixed the business in the way they had done. Debate adjourned. The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past twelve o'clock p.m.