

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Friday, 13th September, 1901. Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards-Companies Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. HOSPITAL AND CHARITABLE AID BOARDS. On the motion of the Hon. Mr. JENKINSON, it was ordered, That the petition (No. 98) of the | night that I was of opinion that the clause pro- Mr. Houston that provision be made for the direct election by the electors of the colony of members of Hos- pital and Charitable Aid Boards, be referred to the Government for consideration. # COMPANIES BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I beg to move the third reading of this Bill. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- Sir, I move, That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of iuser :- ing a new clause. I explained, Sir, last night my reason for taking this course, and, as it is a delicate matter, I think honourable gentlemen will not expect me to say much on the subject. It is, indeed, with great regret that I should ever question any ruling of the Chair, but I am under the impression that in this matter a mis- take has been made ; and, as "to err is human." I do not think any honourable gentleman ought to think it infra dig. to make a mistake. I wished to insert two clauses in the Bill dealing with mining, and I was told that clauses dealing with mining could not be put into a Companies Bill. Now, the reason I thought this was wrong was this : Here is a clause which we had passed a few minutes before that, and which reads as follows :- " 15A. (1.) In the case of mining companies the directors shall cause to be transmitted to every shareholder, at his last known place of abode, a half-yearly statement of the receipts and expenditure of the company during the preceding six months, and of the assets and liabilities of the company at the date of the account." It is not necessary for me to read any more of it. You will see, Sir, that it deals specially with mining. Now, again, there was not only that, but two clauses, 36A and 36B, which are as follow :- "The Fourth Schedule to ' The Mining Com- panies Act, 1894,' is hereby amended by the addition of the following words under the head- ing ' Debts,' at the end of the said Schedule : ' The amount of debts owing by the com- pany.' " The Companies Act Amendment Act. 1900,' and this Act shall apply to all companies, whe- ther registered

under the principal Act or 'The Mining Companies Act, 1894.' " Thus, you will see, Sir, that the Mining Acts are incorporated practically with this. And there is another reason why I thought that my amendment, if adopted by the Council, should be incorporated in a Companies Act, and it is this: that all these mining companies are registered. I believe, with scarcely an exception, under the Companies Act, and that the Mining Companies Act is almost a dead-letter with them. I think that it is in the Act which is in active operation that this should appear, instead of in an Act which is practically a dead-letter. I move that the Bill be recommitted with the view of getting your ruling on the point as to whether it was proper that I should not have been allowed to move the clauses I have referred to. The Hon. Captain BAILLIE .- I ruled last

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posed by the Hon. Mr. Twomey was at first sight more properly placeable in a Mining Companies Act. The Companies Bill, which we were considering, was more with respect to the audit and control of companies; but the clause my honourable friend wished to introduce went much further, and dealt with the regulation of goldfields by Wardens. At first sight I thought that that barred the introduction of the clause into this Bill. We are all aware that the Governor is barred from giving his assent to Bills dealing with two subjects. I looked upon this proposal as dealing with a different subject, and I thought the honourable member should have an opportunity of testing the feeling of the Council by moving the motion he has now proposed, and thus to let the Council settle the question. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- Before we went into Committee it was pointed out, I think by the Hon. Colonel Pitt, that it would be a very great advantage if we provided, by an amendment of the Mining Acts, for a number of things which the Council, during the debate on the second reading of this Bill, indicated that it was in favour of. I may point out that we have put amendments in this Bill which are entirely out of place, and which will make this Bill as a Companies Act in many respects not nearly so workable a measure as it would have been otherwise. It is too late, I suppose, now to alter it, but I intend to vote against the third reading of the Bill, because I think that in the form in which it is now it is undesirable, and in many respects it is not an improvement on the present Companies Act. The Hon. Colonel PITT .- I understand that the Hon. Mr. Twomey has moved this motion with the view of getting your ruling, Sir, as to whether the Chairman was right last night in rejecting the proposed clause which the Hon. Mr. Twomey wished inserted in the Bill. That ruling, I hope, we shall have from you. It will not help matters if we recommit the Bill and the honourable gentleman tenders the clause again to the Chairman of Committees, who, from what he has just said, may rule in the same way he did last night, and that ruling is only to be appealed against by reporting the matter to you, Sir. I can well understand that in the buzz practically of so many speakers last night, and at first sight, there may have been room for doubt in the mind of the Chairman of Committees whether this clause is relevant to the Bill or not. He stated it was one which should have been introduced into a Mining Companies Act; but I would point out to the Council - and I say it with the utmost respect -- that the ruling of the Chairman of Committees was wrong, because this is a Companies Bill, and, however objectionable the proposed clause might be as a provision in itself, still I think it is germane to

the Bill before the Council. If a Mining Bill were before the Council, and it were proposed to introduce into that Bill a provision that no company should be registered under it, there, I submit, it would be manifest that it was irrelevant to the purpose and object of the Bill, and would be properly rejected in such a Bill as that. Here is a clause relating to companies. It says that no mining company shall hereafter be registered, et cetera; and, as I pointed out the other day, mining companies take advantage very largely of the Companies Act, and many of the most influential and the wealthiest mining companies in New Zealand are registered under the Companies Act. Therefore I submit, with the utmost respect to the ruling of the Chair- man of Committees, that the Hon. Mr. Twomey was in order in submitting that clause for the consideration of the Committee. As to the merits of the clause itself, of course that is another matter. If we can get your ruling now on the subject, I submit that would be the most convenient mode of dealing with it, and then honourable members will be able to vote as they think best as to whether the Bill should be recommitted or not. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY .- There is another reason why I think the Chairman of Commit- tees was in error in refusing the Hon. Mr. Twomey's amendment, and it is this : This Bill deals with the Companies Act and the Mining Act as well, because, as has been mentioned by other speakers, a large number of mining companies are registered under the Companies Act of 1882. This Bill deals with that Act and with Mining Acts as well. Previously to the ruling referred to three clauses distinctly affecting mining companies were accepted by the Chairman and incorporated in the Bill, but, when it came to a similar clause moved by the Hon. Mr. Twomey, that was rejected be- cause it dealt with mining companies. There- fore I think all those clauses were in the same category. If the Hon. Mr. Twomey's clauses ought not to have been submitted to the Com- mittee, then the other clauses I have men- tioned ought not to have been submitted. I think it is very desirable that we should have a definite ruling on the subject. The Hon. Mr. W. C. SMITH .- I think it is a pity that the usual course was not carried out in this matter -namely, that progress was not reported on the Bill, and your opinion, Mr. Speaker, taken on the subject. That is the usual course in another place, and I think it is the course we should adopt in this Council, because, Mr. Speaker, if you do not give your ruling now any member who wishes to move an amendment that is rejected by the Chair- man in Committee will be put in a very awk- ward position. He has, of course, to move for the recommitment of the Bill, which does not give him anything like such a good position as if the Bill was still in Committee. I think the honourable gentleman should have the op- portunity of moving the clause in Committee if it is a proper one. We know that in many cases members will not vote for the recom- mittal of a measure; but in this case I trust it will be allowed. I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will see your way to give your decision at once, and that the honourable gentleman will be put in the same position as he was in last night- that is, that he will be allowed to move his clause in Committee. I will not comment on

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present. The Hon. the SPEAKER .- If it is the desire of the Council, I have no objection to giving my ruling now. Hon. MEMBERS .- Hear, hear. The Hon. the SPEAKER. - Section 249 of " The Companies Act, 1882," gives power for mining companies to be registered under that Act. It therefore would seem that a clause giving power to make regulations for the regis- tration of mining companies can hardly be called foreign to this Act. That is my opinion. Of course, what I have said has nothing to do with the merits of the clause. It seems to me the whole thing is in a nutshell. Mining com- panies can be registered under the Companies Act of 1882, and therefore this clause cannot be called foreign to the Act. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON .- Sir, I would ask that you add to the question that we should vote on the recommitment of the Bill for the con- sideration of either of the two proposed clauses. For myself, I do not feel inclined to vote for the recommitment of the Bill for the consideration of clause A, but I think the Council might take up clause B. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, I think it is only right that the Council should not prevent the recommitment of the Bill. I think we desire to see the honourable gentle- man put in the same position as he

was in last night. Honourable members, I am pleased to say, have not expressed any opinion on the two clauses. For myself, I am prepared to agree to the recommitment of the Bill to put the honourable gentleman in the same favourable position he occupied last night. Amendment agreed to. Bill recommitted, and reported. On the question, That the Bill be read the third time, The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY said, - Before the motion is put I would like to say a few words. I will not keep honourable gentlemen long. regret to say that I was handled needlessly roughly by certain members because I tried to do my best to improve the law so as to prevent the frauds which have been going on. I was told that I had squealed, and that if I lost a little money I could not do so without squealing. Honourable members see me in the lobby, and I do not think they see much squealing about me. But here is the whole country being absolutely robbed. The evidence before the Committee shows the most villainous scoundrelism that the mind of man can conceive, and am I to sit here and do nothing to protect the people at large from a few scoundrels who are fattening on their ill-gotten gains ? I have evidence and proof that there is a parcel of conspirators in this country combining together, both in a legal and in an illegal way, to pick the pockets of the people, and many people have been ruined through it from end to end of the colony. This is why I am taking an interest in this matter. I have not lost much, and I will survive it ; but there are people who have lost thousands of pounds to my hundreds, and I Hon. Mr. W. C. Smith protect people from these swindlers. Now, we are told that this is a gamble, just like the totalisator. What an absurdity to compare this with the totalisator! I go on the race-course, and I put my pound on-which I never do. Hon. MEMBERS .- Oh ! The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I do not do so, but I might put my money on the totalisator and either win or lose. I am sure I would lose if I put it there, and consequently I do not invest at all. On the other hand, a man comes to one with a glowing prospectus, showing what magnificent results have been found by boring and testing a claim, and on the strength of his statements one invests his money. Men who are supposed to be honourable men give the information, and then, when a company has been formed, the first thing that is done is to test the claim, as false reports have been given out about it. Parliament ought to discover some means of putting that down, and that is why I am taking an interest in the matter. So far as I am concerned, it does not matter to me. I have lost what I have lost. It is gone, and I will take care I lose no more. I am not making the matter a personal one at all, although I have perhaps unwisely, in order to convince the Council, introduced some of my own private affairs into the debate. I did not do so because I was squealing. I was simply giving the Council my experience in the hope that they would prove equal to the occasion and find a remedy for the evil that exists. I have no hope now that much will be gained by the Bill, and I really do not care whether it passes or not. I do not think it will work much good. And we are told it will have still less effect when it passes another place. Sir, the evil of the whole thing is this : The shareholders are powerless ; they are spread all over the colony ; and what is every one's business is no one's business in the end, and the swindling directors escape and carry on their nefarious traffic with immunity. Why should I go to Dunedin, or to the West Coast, or to Auckland, or to anywhere else because I have a few shares in a company when no one else will do it? Of course, I am not going to do it. and nobody else will, and consequently these men carry on their villainy in immunity from legal consequences. There ought to be a public officer to prosecute in cases of the kind. and some of the suggestions I have made would help to stop the evil. However, the Council has seen fit to reject almost all my suggestions. I do not complain of this ; I bow to the wisdom of the Council. Probably they have done the right thing ; probably my suggestions were in a crude form ; but what I do blame honourable gentlemen for is that they made no attempt to improve my suggestions. They made no attempt at all in the direction I was pointing out. If attempts had been made to do something to get at the evil and stamp it out ! would have been satisfied. Sir, in the past I think I have not shown any vain-gloriousness in asking questions or moving motions in the

Council. Indeed, this is the first occasion on which I have moved on my own motion, and consequently honourable gentlemen cannot accuse me of doing what I have done for vain-glory. I have done it honestly, and I have been intensely in earnest, in the hope that something good might result. Honourable gentlemen may have been right in throwing out my suggestions. Possibly they think my suggestions would hamper industries in the colony. I do not say they are not right; but, however that may be, I have the feeling that I did not get any assistance from them. I have, however, every right to think that honourable gentlemen always treat me very kindly. The Hon. Mr. JONES. - Sir, before the third reading of the Bill is taken I would have liked to see an amended Bill placed before us, so that we could see what kind of work we have done. At present I cannot call to mind what has been accomplished in regard to the amendment of the Bill. We have made many amendments, and I do not know but that, in consequence of what we have done, a number of incongruities may appear in the measure. I would not like the Bill to appear in another place in a form that would be discreditable to the Council. My opinion is, however, without looking at the amended Bill, that it will not be worth the trouble we have taken over it. Every safeguard we have tried to put in it against the swindles which have been exposed, and to prevent the robbery of the public by designing men, has been touched with a trembling hand. We have not done anything with that vigour which would be admired if we were doing anything else but legislating. A man fights in a battlefield, a boy plays in a football game - vigour is admired in both. Here we have simply tried all we knew to save, not the public, but the men who have been in the habit of fleecing the public - not intentionally, of course, but we have accomplished that purpose as effectually as though we had set our minds to do it. Now, I will read clause 29 and others to the Council to show that there are incongruities in the measure, and I think the honourable gentleman in charge of it will deem it well to make some investigation into what I am going to point out, and to ascertain whether something should not be done in regard to it. Section 29 says, - "(1.) The Official Liquidator and each Supervisor shall be entitled to such remuneration out of the assets of the company as is fixed by the Court. "(2.) Such remuneration shall be a first charge on the assets of the company, and, in the case of the Official Assignee, shall be paid into the Public Account and form part of the Consolidated Fund." That is, the remuneration is to be paid out of the assets of the company, and is to be a first charge on the assets. Then, Sir, 31A is a new clause, which has evidently been put in without taking cognisance of the clause I have just read, for it says, - " On the application of the Official Liquidator, the Court may, in the course of the winding-up of a company, appoint the Deputy Assignee or other fit person to act in lieu of the Official Liquidator, under the style of the 'Deputy Official Liquidator'; and in such case, and for the purposes of such winding-up, the person so appointed shall have all the powers and functions of the Official Liquidator." And 32 reads, - " In every case where the Official Liquidator acts in the winding-up of a company he shall be entitled to receive, out of moneys to be appropriated by Parliament, such remuneration as the Governor directs, in no case exceeding the amount paid into the Public Account in respect of the Official Liquidator's remuneration for such winding-up." So much for that. Now with regard to the Hon. Mr. Twomey's complaints that honourable gentlemen did not help him in his endeavour to make this Bill a Bill which would be a terror to evil-doers. I would have been very glad to see asserted the principles which were involved in the two clauses which the honourable gentleman proposed, but I could not go all the way with the honourable gentleman; and I felt it was utterly impossible, in the present temper of the Council, to make any attempt to amend the honourable gentleman's proposals. I could not certainly altogether agree to the proposal made by the honourable gentleman in clause A, for instance, which reads as follows :- " A. No mining company shall hereafter be registered if the ground intended to be worked is a dredging area or claim unless the Warden exercising jurisdiction in the district where such claim or area is situated shall certify under his hand and seal that such claim or area has been thoroughly tested, and there is, according to the evidence submitted, a reasonable prospect of such claim or area being pay-

able." I would point out to the honourable gentleman that that simply places all the responsibility on the Warden, and one could not, of course, agree to that. To include a clause like that in the Bill would only defeat the ends which we have in view. The clause could not pass in another place, and it might cause the rejection of the Bill. Then, the other clause was open to very much the same objection. It was faulty in its construction, and that is why I could not support the honourable gentleman. If the honourable gentleman had only consulted some of his friends before he brought forward these clauses, and if they had only discussed and gone into the matter carefully, I dare say some provisions would have been evolved which might have been acceptable to some few of the Council ; but I have no hope that the Council would have asserted the principles in any case, however well the provisions had been worded. As has happened before, and, I suppose, will happen again in this Council, we have not done our best with regard to this Bill. A great fuss has been made about the roguery which has taken place in regard to the flotation and working of dredging companies down south, and the Government is supposed to have introduced

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honourable gentlemen are supposed to have tried to make it better than it was when the Government introduced it ; but, after all the trouble and time that have been expended on it, I do not think it is worth the paper it is printed on. The Hon. Mr. LOUISSON .- Sir, I shall support the third reading of this Bill. I hope and trust that the wholesale charges of swindling, and so on, made by my honourable friend Mr. Twomey are rather exaggerated. I think it will be a very bad advertisement for New Zealand if his description of what has taken place is altogether correct. We must all admit that in mining matters, as in other matters, a certain amount of swindling goes on ; but I would point out that that generally takes place at a time of excitement, when what is commonly termed a boom is on. In the history of mining all over the world occasions arise where some very rich discoveries are made in some particular locality. Well, that always gives an impetus to mining in general and to the formation of companies, and, as a matter of course, a lot of companies are formed which really have no prospect of any success. That is always the case, and, I think, always will be. Any one who has had any experience of mining matters, particularly in the colonies for the last twenty or thirty years, will have experienced several of these periods. It is a sort of mining epidemic which takes place at certain periods. and the result of that is that a lot of improper companies are put upon the market, and people lose their money. But I am quite sure that there will not be many honourable gentlemen who will go so far as the Hon. Mr. Twomey has in his wholesale denunciation of what takes place. I think he has exaggerated it-at least, I hope so. Now, Sir, with regard to the Bill itself, I admit that it is almost impossible to put down swindling and #cc-zero swindling companies by Act of Parliament. It is no more possible to do this than it is possible to make people honest and righteous in any particular direction by Act of Parliament. But, Sir, I think in this Bill an honest attempt has been made to introduce certain safeguards for the public. We must remember we cannot safeguard the public altogether from investing their money in unremunerative speculations. The public have to exercise a certain amount of caution themselves ; and there is a great deal of care and attention being given to various things in this Bill in the direction of safeguarding the public, and particularly in regard to directors. It is generally understood that most of the irregularities in mining companies have come from the improper behaviour of directors, and from improper directors being appointed to these companies. Now, there are a great many clauses in this Bill which will put a director in a very different position in regard to the public and in regard to the company to that which he occupied before; and the Bill enacts that a director must not only hold a reasonable number of shares, but that he must pay for these shares, and must pay his calls, and so on, just the same as the public have to do, and in many Hon. Mr. Jones very much better basis than it was before. In many other directions I think the Bill will be an improvement upon the present law, and will, at any rate, put a greater brake upon the professional company-monger.

But, Sir, while certain honourable members, with the very best intentions I admit, wish to make a most drastic law in regard to mining, we have got to remember the mining industry itself. We have to remember that to a certain extent, and we must be careful not to go too far in the opposite direction. I say, if we surround mining laws with barbed-wire fences in every direction, and impose drastic enactments, we will absolutely crush out the mining industry. We must have a little latitude in these as in other matters, and if we make our law as strict as some honourable members would wish to make it, why, we would have no companies formed or registered at all. It would be so surrounded with legal difficulties and technicalities that we would put the mining industry, which is one of the most important industries in this colony, back for years, because the formation and registration and carrying-on of companies would be hedged in with such enormous legal difficulties that it would be absolutely impossible to work under them. The Hon. Mr. Twomey seems to feel that he has been treated in a rather severe manner in the discussion which has taken place on this measure. As far as I am concerned, I can assure my honourable friend that I did not intend to say anything disrespectful to him, or anything which reflected on his knowledge or ability in any way. I simply discussed the various clauses of the Act according to my light, and it appeared that I did not agree with the ideas of my honourable friend. I did not intend to reflect on my honourable friend's knowledge of the subject in any way. But I will say, in conclusion, that, although this Bill may not be perfect-I do not suppose it is- still, I think it will go a long way in improving the present law in connection with mining companies. I know there are several honourable gentlemen here who have a great deal of knowledge of mining matters, and they have devoted a large amount of time and attention to make this Bill as workable as possible, and I hope it will answer expectations to that extent -- that it will put some sort of check upon the mining scandals we have heard so much about. The Hon. Mr. BOLT.- I have very few more words to say on this measure. There has been a great deal of discussion upon it: but, as we are now concluding the debate on the Bill, I wish to enter my protest against the general tone of the debate in reference to the directors of companies. Throughout the whole of this discussion its general tone has been that the directors of companies-without any attempt to distinguish or any one being singled out - were generally a crowd of rascals and scoundrels. There has been no attempt to discriminate. It would appear when a man became a director of a dredging company he lost all claim to respectability. There are I do not know how many

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of those companies are most highly respected citizens, and this is the first occasion on which their characters have been so publicly attacked. I say it is wrong that there should have been such general and sweeping statements made in reference to the character of the directors of these dredging companies, and no attempt made to discriminate between who are scoundrels and who are not. There has been a general attempt made in this Bill, so it is said, to protect the public. What is it the public want to be protected from? It is quite true that we have dealt with the management of directors, and we have put certain restrictions in the Bill to insure more careful management in the future. I have no objection to that. But what the discussion was about lately was prospecting, and it was stated that we should get a Government Inspector to make a statement before a Magistrate to the effect that the land in question was auriferous. The Hon. Mr. Jones pointed out that the ground could be bored and the statement referred to made before the Magistrate. I should like to call attention to the fact that you cannot bore rivers or prospect rivers, and very frequently it was found that we may have a highly auriferous piece of ground on one section of a river, and on the adjoining sections you may not get any gold, or very little gold. There is no possibility of legislating against such disappointment. There is one way in which the public, I think, could be protected against disappointment, but that lies with the shareholders themselves. It is quite true that they buy a property, but they buy a property in regard to which the seller may have been quite mistaken as to its value. He may have made a certain examination of the ground, and he may

have come to certain conclusions ; but those conclusions may be quite wrong, although honestly formed. On those conclusions, however, a company is formed, and they accept the statements of the vendor. Now, what will protect the share- holders more than anything else is something that we cannot provide for, but they can do so themselves. Every company, before it enters on any contract, should expend from £50 to £100 in testing the ground before any further capital is called up, and so check the vendor's statements. That is a precaution which is abso- lutely necessary, owing to the hazardous charac- ter of the industry. Many months ago the Otago Daily Times advocated that all com- panies floated should do that ; and that is the only way by which shareholders can be pro- tected. They can then employ any expert they like to ascertain what is in the ground before entering on any contract; but they must do that themselves. We cannot legislate for that. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH .- I have spoken at such great length upon this Bill that I do not propose to trouble the Council more on the sub- ject, except to make a few remarks on what has fallen from the honourable gentleman behind me. I quite agree with him that to a certain extent little has been achieved by this Bill ; but I think we have achieved something, and we VOL. OXVIII .- 33. any means we can make it more difficult for these men, whoever they may be, who have promoted companies upon improper lines to do so, I think that will be a good thing ; but to say that this Bill is altogether worthless is to say too much. The Hon. Mr. Bolt says that very much depends upon the people themselves as to how they invest their money. I agree with that; but at the same time I think it is the duty of the Legislature to provide such machinery as will prevent as far as possible the repetition of some very improper transactions which have taken place in the last few months. The idea that it is possible to keep altogether clear of such transactions is ridiculous. All we can do is to minimise them. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I will not admit that this Bill has been passed in such a form as to render it a useless Bill, or an imper- fect or ill-considered Bill. The Bill was brought down very largely in order to bring our company law up to the level of the English standard, and that, I contend, has been effected. At all events, it is a very great improvement on our present law. Then, we have added to the Bill certain amendments which our experience clearly shows to us to be necessary. I think the amendments we have added to the Bill are improvements on the present law and improvements on the Bill ; but I do not think it is any reflection on the Council to say we have steadily refused to be moved by a sense of panic. Any legislation that would be instigated simply by that sort of feel- ing would be bound to be very unsound in its nature indeed ; and therefore I think it is very much to the credit of the Council that they have refused to take that view of the situation, and they have only endeavoured to put the- companies law on a sound and safe basis, and with such restrictions as experience shows ought. fairly to be added to the existing law. I deny that there is anything peculiar about the present position, except that a new crop of fools has- cropped up. As long as the world will go on there will always be these, and those who burn their fingers ; and no matter what legislation we pass, even with a Government expert to test the ground, there would be some means of floating the companies. Why? Only ask any honourable gentleman of experience. In a time of excitement people would not wait for the approval of a Government expert. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- They would be right into it. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- If they did not get right into it they would think they were badly treated. Really, one cannot help it. Human nature is human nature, and there is an end of it. I am sorry my friend opposite thinks the Bill is contradictory. I think I will be able to show, however, that the instance he gives as to the conflict of sections 29 and 31A and 32 is not right. It is simply that the honourable gentleman does not understand the clause. Section 29A provides : "The Official Liquidator and each Supervisor shall be entitled to such remuneration out of the assets of the company as is fixed by the Court." Of course,

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They are paid for the work they do, and pocket their fees. The Official Liquidator, being an officer of the Government, his remuneration, it is provided, "shall be a first charge on the assets of the company, and,

in the case of the Official Assignee, shall be paid into the Public Account and form part of the Consolidated Fund." It does not go into his pocket, but into the Consolidated Fund. Then, in the second clauses referred to-31A and 32-we come to a Deputy Liquidator, who is paid not by salary, but by fee, and therefore in his case it is necessary the Court shall say that the Governor shall direct how much of this money shall go to him for the work he does as a fee. That is the difference. There is no conflict. It is absolutely solving a problem that has to be solved in every case where Deputy Liquidators or Assignees come in. The honourable gentleman will probably agree with me that that is always done where a Deputy Assignee comes in. Sir, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill. Bill read the third time. The Council adjourned at a quarter past four o'clock p.m. # HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Friday, 13th September, 1901. First Readings - Privilege- Financial Statement- Supply. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READINGS. Borough of Matura Loan Validation Bill, Companies Bill. PRIVILEGE. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) moved, "That a breach of the privileges of this House has been committed by the publication in the Manawatu Standard, of date 22nd October, 1900, of a leading article reflecting upon the conduct of the members of this House." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved as an amend- ment, "That the House regrets the uncalled- for attack made upon the honour of this House and the members thereof, as contained in the article complained of ; but, seeing the great length of time that has elapsed since the article was published, and inasmuch as reference thereto was made to a portion of the said article by a member of the House at an earlier period of the session, and no action having been taken thereon, the House does not see its way to pass the motion proposed, and resolves that the reference thereto in Hansard and the Journals of the House other than the original motion and this resolution be omitted." Amendment agreed to. Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. HEKE (Northern Maori) .- Sir, I desire to apply my remarks to a few of the statements made by the honourable member for Marsden last evening. It appears to me that the honour- able member has not been able to grasp the true position by which members of the Maori race obtain pensions under the Old-age Pensions Act. He said there were a large number of Maoris who were receiving pensions and who were at the same time large landed proprietors. Sir, I consider such a statement as that, coming from a member of this House, only goes to show that honourable member's ignorance of the provisions of the Old-age Pensions Act. All claims to a pension are fully safeguarded by the rules and regulations under that Act. Full inquiry is made as to whether the Native pos- sesses landed property or otherwise. And in the Act of last year there were still more strin- gent regulations made for the purpose of safe- guarding the granting of pensions to Natives. Apart from all this, I would ask the honourable gentleman, Have not the members of the Maori race the same right as the Europeans of the colony to receive pensions? Of course they have. Now, the honourable gentleman con- tended that Maoris received pensions although they were the owners of property. Mr. R. THOMPSON. -- Under tribal cus- toms. Mr. HEKE .-- Under our laws there are no Native owners of tribal property. I say our regulations now are quite clear enough to find out how much land a Native possesses. or whether he possesses any property at all which would bar him from receiving a pension. Then. the honourable gentleman contended that the Maoris should not be granted pensions because they were not ratepayers, and because they con- tributed nothing in the way of taxation to the State. There he is absolutely wrong. Sir, from the very earliest stages of colonisation in this country, all land sold by Natives to Europeans or to the Crown have paid their full share of taxation to the colony- more than what is paid by Europeans on transactions of the same kind. When a Maori conveys land to a European. Elo out of every €100 on the capitalised value of the land is demanded and paid by way of taxation. whereas a European on conveying land to a European pays only 15s. in every \$100. It was only last year that the Maori Land Administra- tion Act was passed, when the Premier and the Native Minister considered that the time had arrived when this heavy duty paid on land transactions should be removed, and that the same duty as paid by Europeans in connection with land transactions should apply

to the disposal of land by Maoris, thus giving effect to what I have urged for years. When discussing that question of taxation, I simply state that members of this House who were not acquainted with the peculiarities of the Native land laws cannot realise the heavy taxation the Maoris have paid to the State. As an instance of my contention I would point out that there are Native land-sales by Maoris to the Crown, and

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of timber, et cetera. We have an instance in the Waimarino Block, which contains one of the best totara forests we have in the colony. The value of the totara alone is considered to be far and away above the value of the land when purchased by the Crown. This goes to show that the Maoris, in the disposal of their interests to the Crown, are restricted by the peculiarity of our law, which prevents the Maoris from selling to anybody but the Crown, and by this the State calls upon the Maoris to pay direct taxation to the colony. Who receives the benefit of that? The State does, of course. The Maori only receives the restricted value he gets for the land, and that is next to nothing at all. There are cases all over the colony of this nature, and, apart from this, there is the 10 per cent. for stamp duty. In all the sales that take place the Maoris are paying heavy taxation to the colony. An Hon. MEMBER. - What about road rates? Mr. HEKE. - It is the same with road rates. Maori lands at the present time are liable. They do not escape the payment of rates whether they are individualised or not. The Rating Act has been so amended that the local body can call upon the owner of property to pay the rates. They are paid in some cases, and there is the remedy in others. Now, the member for the Western Maori District made a very long speech on the provisions of the Maori Lands Administration Act of last year, and he gave the House to understand that the tribes throughout the colony were dissatisfied with the provisions of the Act. I desire to state that there is no such feeling existing amongst the Maoris, and when I say this I speak of the tribes as a whole. I admit that there are individuals and very small sections of people who have objected to the Act, but that is nothing at all. The people as a whole are perfectly satisfied. An Hon. MEMBER. - Why is it not brought into operation? Mr. HEKE. - It is not for the Natives to bring the Act into operation, but it is the wish of the Natives that the Act should come into operation as early as possible. The remarks of the member for the Western Maori District only apply to dissatisfaction which is created by the people of the Waikato District. They do not apply to the Western Maori District at all, and only apply to a very small section of the southern part of the Western District-that is to the Ngatiraukawa, the people round about Otaki. The reason for the dissatisfaction is not for anything contained in the provisions of the Act. It is because they are disappointed. These are disaffected people, and the reason for their disaffection is that they contended for and fought against the desires of the proper landed proprietors of that particular locality-I mean the members of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, the tribe of whom Rewi, Taonui, and Wahanui were the heads. The Waikato proper, who are followers of the alleged Maori king, Mahuta, are, practically speaking, landless. When I say they are landless, I mean that they are not large landed proprietors; they have small come under the administration of this Act. The sole wish and desire of the section for whom the member for the Western Maori District spoke of-that is, the Mahuta party-their sole desire is to have the right of control over the lands belonging to Maniapoto within their district; and, if that was done at all, the result would be that the proper owners of the land themselves would not have any representation on the Maori Land Board, but instead of that they would see all the landless followers of the alleged Maori king the administrators of their land, and they the sufferers by means of having no representation on the Council. Therefore, it has been the desire of the Maniapoto people that their interests should be cut off from the influence of the followers of the alleged Maori king, and because of this they come into this House through their representative and declare that the Maoris, as a whole, are dissatisfied with the Act of last year. There is no dissatisfaction amongst the Maori people throughout the colony. There are only dissatisfied individuals, and a small section, and they are dissatisfied because of personal reasons.

Now, take the whole Northern Maori District, the majority of the tribes who are located there are perfectly satisfied with the Act of last year, and are waiting for the setting-up of the Maori Land Council, and to see the administration of that Council go on. The same thing applies to the landed proprietors of the Western Maori District I spoke of, the King-country. This is not Waikato territory. The land there belongs to a tribe who professed allegiance to the Maori King, Tawhaio, in the early days ; but during the last few years they severed their allegiance, seeing that their own interests were likely to suffer ; and, notwithstanding the statements made by the member for the Western Maori District, they have sent their representatives-J. Ormsby and Eketone Pepene - here for the purpose of bringing the views of their people before the Minister in respect to certain amendments. The same applies to the people in the Eastern Maori electorate. Up the East Coast, north of Gisborne, you find a great area of land there that is owned by the Ngatiporou people- members of the late Major Ropata's tribe. There is a large tract of land there held by the Natives, and it is the Natives' desire that the Act of last year should be set in motion as soon as possible. Coming further south into Hawke's Bay, and right down to the Wairarapa here, there is no immediate necessity for the Act to the Maori people owning lands here, because the majority of their lands at the present time are let on long leases to Europeans. But there are small blocks here and there, and the Maori owners wish to vest the same in the Maori Land Council as soon as it is set up. To apply my remarks to the Act itself, I said last year when the Bill was before the House that all the provisions of the Bill were not what I required, nor what I was satisfied with. There are defects. However, there are many of the provisions of the Act now that are beneficial to

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the Natives, which meet the desires of the | The wish that I have is to try to enable these The main wish always contended for Natives. by the Maori people of the colony from early years was that they should have the retention of their lands. They were far-seeing people, for they saw that a large number of the members of their tribes were disposing of their interests, not considering the future of their people. But the older people said-and have always said in the meetings which they held-that it was the duty of themselves as a people to look after the future welfare of their race. The only means for the purpose of preserving them is to retain all the surplus land they hold now, because they have realised that large portions of their land have passed away into the hands of the Europeans, and also into the hands of the Crown. Sir, whatever areas of land we may have now cannot be considered - a sufficiency for the balance of the Maori people. I say that it is not only the duty of the Maoris themselves, it is not only the duty of the Europeans and also this Parliament, but I say it is the duty of all to see that the balance of the Maori land should be retained for the entire support of the Maori people in the future. We find that this long-sought-for desire by the Maoris has been carried out by the Act of last year-not in its full entirety, but, at any rate, almost so -it has prevented the continual purchases made by the Crown itself of Native land. Now, that is a step which was made by the Government realising themselves that the time had arrived when this should be done ; and the Maoris themselves desire to express, and have expressed over and over again since the passing of the Act of last year, their appreciation of the action of the Government. Now, the small defects of the Act of last year, to my mind, are only a few. One is that the number of members on the Council is too many. I have been looking at it from a monetary standpoint. It is rather too expensive. I have always contended, ever since 1899 up till last year, that seven members constituting this Council was too many. It is not a working number. A working number would be three; and it is not only that, but it reduces the expense which would be created by the Board in administering its work. I look forward to the future that these particular phases of the Act of last year will be remedied and amended in this direction. I desire that the Act should be set up now and set in motion, and by its own operation we might be able to find out the different errors that time alone will show, and the Government, no doubt, prompted by the Maoris, will have these defects remedied. Now, to my mind, another defect in

the Act which I leave to the future to decide is this : the mingling together or joining together of two distinct functions : that is, the mingling of the judicial with the administrative functions. I have always contended that these two features ought to be set aside for the administration of distinct bodies. It would not only simplify the working of each, but it would be far more beneficial were the two things made distinct, and I hope time will show that this course will have to be taken. Mr. Heke bodies to get on with their work without being hampered by the particular complications which will come in, not only through their administrative capacity, but also through their judicial capacity. Now, there is also this that I desire to convey to the members of the House : It has never been the wish of the Maoris to prevent the opening up of their lands. In every large meeting held by themselves there has always been a wish expressed to this effect : that the laws ought to be changed so that they should be able, if they did not desire to apply their own industry to the land, that this land could be cut up and set aside for the purposes of settlement. There is that great wish among the Maoris of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, who have large tracts of Maori land which they cannot entirely work for their own advantage. These people desire that this land should be immediately cut up and settled by Europeans. And the same wish was expressed by the large Maori landowners up and about Wanganui. The same wish is also expressed by the Maoris North of Auckland, who have fairly large areas of land. There is no desire to block the growth of the country, but the whole wish is to pass some legislation by which we can gain benefit, and also by which we can let our lands be laid open to European industry so that we may reap the benefit of it. Now, I also desire to make a few remarks, Sir, on the Maori Councils Act of last year. The Maori Councils Act introduced last year was one that was passed by this House to enable the Maoris to exercise some control in reference to the sanitary condition of their settlements. Now, it has been found necessary by our people, and there is also a wish expressed by the Maoris as a whole, that the provisions under this Act should be set in motion ; but we also realise, after the consideration of many of its provisions, that there are small defects in it, and I hope that the Native Minister will come down with a Bill to amend some of the provisions of the Act of last year. I might cite a few. In section 6 of the Act, it provides that power should be given for the purpose of subdividing the districts into ridings. Now, the intention of this House was to enable the people of each riding to nominate a member of their own riding to represent themselves directly on the Council. But, unfortunately, in the Act of last year there was a defect which was not found out until later: that is, there was no power given to the Returning Officer to enable him to set up or elect Deputy Returning Officers. For that reason a good many complications have occurred where large portions of a district are not directly represented by a member nominated in their own particular locality. I hope this defect will be remedied. Then there is also this : In section 16 of the Act it gives the Maori Council the right to deal with certain matters. We find now the proper course is that the Maori Councils should be given power to form regulations to deal with minor offences-minor offences entirely originating from Maori customs. We shall have &

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subsections (1) and (2) of section 15 of the Act of last year, where it enables the Council to deal with offences where the Maoris desire to bring in their own custom of obtaining payment for some wrong, or little offence. I think it advisable that the Councils should be given some judicial power to deal with minor offences of this kind. And there is also this : I think we shall find it difficult to start the operation of these Councils because of insufficiency of funds ; and it would be just as well for the Government to take this matter into consideration and let the Councils have some little advance. I would ask the Native Minister to have this matter considered, and set aside a little money on the supplementary estimates for this purpose. In reference to the dog-tax provision contained in the Act of last year, it appears to me there will be conflict under the Act. It constitutes the Maori Council the local authority. Now, under the Dog Registration Act Amendment Act of 1882, and the amending Acts, the local bodies are constituted the

local authority, and it appears to me each of these local bodies can levy a tax on Native or European dogs, and such persons can play between the two, and avoid being fined for not paying the tax. To avoid this, some provision ought to be brought down to specify that the Maori Council, in dealing with this power, should deal entirely with dogs owned by Maoris, and the local authorities should deal with dogs owned by Europeans. I think I have said enough on the two Acts of last session. It is not my intention to go into the different phases of the Maori land question, as I will no doubt have another opportunity of doing so. I do not intend to follow up the remarks made by the honourable member for Napier, Mr. Fraser. Unfortunately he did not have time to express his strong views on the Native land question, but I can realise what those views are. They would no doubt be a denunciation of the Act of last year, supported by old matter raked up from the Government departments. Since I first entered this House I have always condemned the old system of Government land purchase, but I am glad to say that I am not now so strong on that question, for, as I have already said, provision has now been made for the retention by the Maoris of their lands for the benefit of themselves and for the future generation. I hope that that provision will not be interfered with for a long time to come. The member for the Western Maori District, Mr. Kaihau, waxed rather eloquent last night in reference to the conduct of the Government in connection with the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. The anger of the honourable gentleman was not only directed against the Government, but it was also directed against the Maori people of the colony other than his own. Now, I was waiting for that all the evening. I was under the impression that the honourable member would refer to that particular subject, as it is one he feels particularly sore over. The honourable gentleman nearest to the place that visitors first pass to have the right to receive them first. If that contention is good, then the only tribe that had that particular right, and has, therefore, a complaint, is the tribe I represent—that is, the Ngapuhi Tribe. The Royal party came right round the North Cape, and, according to the contention of the honourable member, Russell should have been their first port of call. Russell was the first seat of Government. Immediately after the rising of the House last year, I convened a representative gathering of my people at Waitangi to discuss this question of the arrival of the Royal party in New Zealand waters. We passed a resolution to the effect that we should inform the Government that the first port of call for the Royal party should be Waitangi, Bay of Islands. And our reason for doing that was because it was the first seat of Government and because the Treaty of Waitangi, binding the two nations together, was made at that particular locality. But, unfortunately, I got a reply from the Native Minister intimating to me the reply of the Governor in respect to our invitation, that it could not be entertained on account of the insufficiency of time. I believe the Ngapuhi people made the first petition of invitation in that connection for the purpose of the Royal party visiting Waitangi. We had very good reason for complaint; but we did not complain. I realised then that, no doubt, the time was limited, and that the arrangements for the ports of call had been already made. I therefore laid it down and explained it before a meeting of our people, and although a large number of the elders of the tribe felt annoyed, I convinced them in the end that our object was to show to the son of our present King and to Her Royal Highness that the Maoris in that part of the island are loyal to the British Crown. In this they all agreed, and they also agreed to the invitation which had been sent to me by the Hon. the Native Minister when he invited all the tribes to go to Rotorua and make Rotorua the central Maori gathering for the purpose of receiving their Royal Highnesses. Now, the statement made by the honourable member for the Western Maori District is this : that the Government knew that there was a man up in his district who was looked upon as being on a par with any king. Well, no doubt, in his mind, that is the case. And then he went on to insinuate that this man—not naming him, of course—was the king head of the Maori people. Goodness gracious me! we never knew anything of the kind. And then he went on to complain that because of an old-time custom of his people he could not agree to the invitation sent to him by the Government to go on to Rotorua, but he also gave members to understand that this man up

in his district was the King of the Maoris. Well, assuming that to be good-which I contend it is not-it does not matter where the reception is to be made. If he was really the King of the Maoris it was not for him to grumble, because any place in the Island would

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let me tell you this: that the honourable member is entirely wrong in asserting that this man -whom he did not name, but whom I shall name-this alleged Maori king, Mahuta, is the King of the Maoris. The Maoris never knew of kings in their days, not at all ; there was no such things as kings. There were men of different ranks, holding sway over their particular areas at that time, and over their particular people. I do not dispute that this alleged Maori king, this Mahuta, is a chief of some rank, but to be said he is King of the Maoris is absurd to any one who knows anything about it, excepting a small section who claim allegiance under him, and it is very, very small indeed. How could other tribes look upon this particular individual as king of the Maori people ? Mr. CARROLL .- He is head of the Waikatos. Mr. HEKE .- He is simply head of his own people in the Waikato district, and that is all. His influence is only centred in that particular locality, and nowhere else. I was going on to say that the people up in our part of the country in the North of Auckland had very good reasons to believe that he was no king, or that he was a member of a tribe that could for a moment assert that it had any superiority over our people. If we go back to the olden history of our country and people we will find that our northern tribes made raids right throughout his particular country, and defeated some of the very people that this alleged king represents ; and how could we look upon a man who belongs to a tribe that has been defeated by others to be King of the Maoris ? Not at all. Then, this king movement was never countenanced by Ngapuhi. The honourable member goes on to claim that the ancestor of the alleged king, who is now Mahuta, ought to receive some consideration from the Government because of his assistance to the pakehas in the early days. Well, this assistance might be all right, but it was not so very much. The assistance given by Potatau was nothing to be compared to the assistance given to the English Government by Tamati Wakanene. Now, the whole dissatisfaction of Mahuta and his people in this matter, as expressed by the honourable member, was not at all on account of Maori customs being infringed, or anything of that kind ; it was not because the local people at Rotorua did not send an invitation to the alleged Maori king, because I know as a fact that the meeting of the Arawa people, of whom Te Heuheu, Te Keepa, and others were present, sent a letter inviting the alleged Maori king to go to Rotorua. That was apart from any recommendation made from the Government to them to the same effect. Now, the intention of Kaihau and others in supporting Auckland was to claim a superior position for this alleged king-a position far and away ahead of any right he has. If the wish of the Waikato Maoris and of the alleged King Mahuta had been acceded to by the Government at all at Rotorua. All the tribes had made up their minds to this. We were not going to allow this so-called Maori king to claim any position of superiority that he has no right to. Therefore all the tribes of the east, west, and of the northern electorates and South Island agreed to support the Government in this : that they should come to Rotorua to receive their Royal Highnesses. They did not consider the inconvenience of travelling. No; they said this was an occasion where it was good for them to show their loyalty to the son of their King, not Mahuta, but King Edward VII., which they did; and I am proud to say they did it well. And in this respect I have already said outside of the House, and I repeat it again in this House, that the tribes who were represented at Rotorua desire to convey to the Native Minister, the Premier, and the Government their thanks for the care and assistance throughout the whole of the performance. Although the Natives found they had to suffer little inconveniences, they put up with it gladly for the purpose of showing themselves before this high and august visitor whom they had the pleasure of seeing and doing homage to. Sir, it tickles my fancy very much when I consider the claim made by the member for the Western Maori District on the part of the man who considered himself on a par with the King of the British Empire. Why, the grandparent of this

man was only a man of third consideration when the new idea to create a Maori kinz was mooted. The first man who was noticed and called upon to accept the position is a man who belongs to the East Coast-the great and famous Te Kania Takirau. From here it was rejected. They sought Te Heuheu, the great chief of Taupo. It was also rejected, and it was only after this that it found its way to Waikato. The king idea was taken from the Bible and information supplied by Europeans. My people-the Ngapubis-never gave it their countenance. The Maori tribes throughout the colony never objected to this particular tribe going to Rotorua. If they desired to go to Auckland with their canoes no one objected. My people never objected, and I never objected. But when I noticed that the member for the Western Maori District, and the alleged Maori king, Mahuta, were communicating with the Government, aided by Auckland, for the purpose of getting Mahata special recognition on the platform in Auckland. I stepped in, along with others, to notify the Government of the objection of our tribe. Our position was this : If the Government concede this position to Mahuta, then the meeting at Rotorua will not be recognised by our tribes. But here is the funny part of the whole thing : Instead of Waikato not being represented. instead of Mahuta not being represented at Rotorua, he was represented there by his own immediate relative Honana, an old chief of Waikato. An old connection of the king, his seere. tary, and a good many others, were all there paying homage to our Royal visitors. Mr. HERRIES .- Did they get medals ?

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Mr. HEKE .- I do not know. Mr. CARROLL (Native Minister) .- 7.30. Sir, I do not intend to take up the time of the House at great length this evening, because I do not propose in any way to deal with the Budget which has been the subject of this debate lasting over now a considerable space of time. We have not had any further light added to that which is contained in the Financial Statement, and the criticism which has been levelled against the tables, and generally against the policy of the Government as shadowed forth in that Statement, has not been of such a character as to need any reply thereto. I may say in a general way that it is astonishing how many members, who profess to know so much about tables and the finance of this country, should differ so materially one from the other ; and any one not understanding the true position of affairs would be quite mystified, I am sure, in listening to the different versions enunciated by the various speakers. The main reason why I now take part in this debate is to answer some points in the speech delivered by the honourable member for the Western Maori District. There were some statements made by him which I cannot possibly allow to pass unchallenged. I do not care much myself for adverse criticism-that is to say, where I feel that I am in the right. I take very little notice of the utterances of others adverse to myself on any large questions with which I am associated. Neither do I care for Press criticism ; and I am sure if the remarks contained in any newspaper were of a character justifying the responsible persons being brought before this House for a breach of privilege-if it depended on me to move, such a motion would The honourable member never be moved. representing the Western Maori District, in the course of his speech, condemned the Government on its Native policy, and its administration thereof. He told the House that this Government, in respect to the Natives, had not given effect to their public utterances ; and, as contrasted with previous Governments, he said they were a long way behind in that consideration which they should show, and which is due to the Native people. He further said that during his term in this House as a representative of his people nothing had been done to the advantage of that race. Now, on this point I must differ from the honourable gentleman. I will remind the House that during the administration of the present Government, and while he has been a member of the House, there have been more Native grievances settled than ever have been recorded in any previous Administration. We have had more work done and grievances remedied through the medium of what is known as the washing-up Bill-the Special Powers and Contracts Bill-each time it has passed than was ever achieved before by any Government. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not last session. Mr. CARROLL. - Although a similar Bill did not pass last session, last session was not the

only session that this country has enjoyed in its parliamentary history. There have been washing-up Bills passed through this House at different times, and the majority of questions settled and validated have been chiefly matters specially affecting the Native race-grievances handed down through and by successive former Governments as a legacy to the pre- sent Administration. And, furthermore, I can tell the House that the Government has spared no time, no care, or attention in devoting itself to the investigation of Maori grievances. We have been plain and out- spoken with the people. We have taken them into our confidence. We have asked them time after time to tell us the real source of all their troubles, and where we have discovered them to be genuine and remediable we have not failed to set them right, and where we have found them to be beyond redemption we have not been afraid to tell them so. We have not kept them buoyed up with false hopes for any ulterior purpose ; but plain speaking to them we have found to be efficacious, and that has been one chief reason why at the present time the ma- jority of the tribes in this colony have reposed such confidence in the present Administration as they never before conceded to any other. They know where they are. It is because we have gone on the policy of plain speaking, we have taken the trouble to visit their districts and interview them personally, and find out where the pinch was-where the corns were that gave the trouble-and, as far as we could, recti- fied the evils of the past, that we now enjoy the fact of a prevailing contentment in the minds of the Maori people. The honourable member and his particular section are entirely singular in their dissatisfaction. The honour- able member mentioned the Native Land Act passed last session, and he said that it did not emanate from the Native people, that it did not embody the desires and aspirations of the Native race : it was not the kind of legisla- tion they required. The honourable member said it was manufactured solely by the Govern- ment, and that he was unaware of it. An Hon. MEMBER .- The worst Bill ever passed by this Parliament. Mr. CARROLL .- The honourable member will see by results later on that it will redound to the credit of this institution. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not at present. Mr. CARROLL .- If the honourable member lives long enough he will congratulate himself on having been a member of this Assembly when that Bill passed into law. Well, my honourable friend the member for the Western Maori District said he was against it-it was a bad Act, it was loading the land and the people with burdens. Now, I will just quote his re- marks on the Bill last year. There was no gentleman in this House who was more at my elbow all through the fight of last session when we carried this Bill through all its stages. He said,- " Sir, I stand up to inform the House what is the desire of the Maori people generally with regard to the Maori Lands Administration Bill. The wish of the Maoris in connection with this

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Bill of 1899 was first submitted to them, and at the present moment this Bill is thoroughly understood and appreciated by the Maoris throughout the Island. It has been before them in all parts of the Island. They have dis- cussed the matter amongst themselves, and they have given their suggestions with regard to it, and all their desires have been discussed and settled by the Native Affairs Committee, before whom this Bill went; and in order to convince the House, Sir, that what I am stating is correct, I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to this fact: that it is within their knowledge that there has not been a single petition or word of remonstrance of any kind whatever against this Bill received here during this year. This desire on the part of the Maori people throughout the country is not of to-day-it is not a new departure-it is a matter that has occupied their attention during many years past. The Maori lands are called upon to suffer disabilities of many kinds, and the Maori people therefore are in support of this Bill, because they can see that in this Bill pro- vision will be made whereby they will be able to lease their lands to their satisfaction. And I would point out that this is not a benefit that will be solely enjoyed by the Maori people. Both races will equally share in that benefit ; and I have no doubt the colony at large must derive a direct benefit from such a measure as this." Even after this Act was placed on the statute- book, and during the recess when we adminis- tered the Act so far as we could by parcelling this the colony out

into several districts and carrying out its provisions, the honourable member was in favour of its policy and its principles. The only difference was this : that a certain area in the North Island he desired should be comprised in one district, whereas those who owned the larger area of the land within the proposed boundary wished that it should be cut up into two districts, so as to give them the control over their own lands, instead of allowing them, as they would be if one district was carried, to be outvoted by the particular section of the people represented by the honourable gentleman. A section, though large in numbers, were more or less landless. Sir, this Act found favour in his mind until that position was arrived at. Then what happened ? This boundary dispute had to be referred to the people-in fact, a referendum was instigated, and the result was that two districts were determined on instead of one. Immediately that occurred the honourable member declared the Act was bad, that it was not what they wanted, and that it came into operation as the result of Government design. Honourable gentlemen, if they will just read the speech I have referred to, delivered on this very measure towards the close of last session, and compare the same with the remarks uttered last night by the honourable member, cannot place much confidence in the consistency of the honourable gentleman as a representative man, and certainly Mr. Carroll's remarks which his position demands. I shall now leave him at this stage to reconcile himself to the inconsistency of his position. Another charge he made against the Government was that the Government, instead of ceasing its purchasing operations in the Waikato or in the district he represents, have continued them. I have to inform the honourable gentleman that that statement is not correct. The Government has kept faith with the Maori people in that respect. The Government declared that it would not enter into any further Native-land purchases, but that it would confine its operations to the completing of purchases already under negotiation. That only has been done, and nothing more. Every contract that was entered into between the Government and the Natives for the purchase of land in the Waikato district has been closed up, and there are no purchases going on at all at the present moment. Then, the honourable gentleman told the House-and I agree with him to a certain extent-that the purchases by the Government have not been at the best prices obtainable for Native lands. That is so. And he says that lands sold to the Government for 6s. an acre could have been sold to private individuals for a larger sum -- Hon. MEMBERS .- Hear, hear. Mr. CARROLL .- I hear " Hear, hears " from all sides. I do not dispute the fact in some cases; but, in the result of these transactions, does the Native come more favourably out of his dealings with private individuals than he does with the Government ? Take all the purchases by private individuals : we will say they have given larger prices for Native land than the Government. Why? Because in every case they pick out the eyes of the land. They do not buy wholesale like the Government. The Maori looks upon the Government as a body to victimise, and they frequently have the best of the bargain. They say, " We can pass off on to the Government any character of land." But they cannot do that with the private individual, who is more or less prepared with some lever at work, and a definite quarry in view. Though the private individual offers a good price, he gets far more than value in the quality of the land that he secures. He has the best of it in all directions. Will the honourable gentleman point out to me one single Native or set of Natives who are in well-to-do circumstances to-day in consequence of their alienation of land to private individuals ? He Private individuals have no such obligations as those cast upon the State. They have no national concerns to trouble them : they do not care whether the Maoris are pauperised or not. It is not for them to consider that ; but the State, on the other hand, has to provide for all, and especially has it to guard the welfare of the Natives. They appeal to the State when they are in difficulties. They look to the State to help them when they need that help, and why should not the State have some little benefit ? The State buys for the public, and the public is made up of both races.

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estate just the same as the white people. When the honourable member asks the Government to

consider the case of the landless, he is asking the Government to give back some of the land out of the public estate which he is condemning them for having bought. It is out of this very land that the Government will have to make provision for the landless Natives. Sir, I do not want to detain the House at present-I intended to speak for half an hour only, so as to enable the debate to be closed early this evening. But before I sit down there is one thing I must touch on, and that is with respect to the Rotorua reception. I entirely disagree with the honourable member. He said that Mahuta could not possibly go to Rotorua, because the invitation had been tendered him by the Government ; had it been tendered him by the Maori people then he would have gone. Now, not only did the Government tender him an invitation, but the Arawa, the residential people of Rotorua-the people of the kainga - issued an invitation to Mahuta to be there. They said, "Welcome here! This is your canoe, come ! " I may tell the House that Mahuta had agreed to go to Rotorua; but the honourable member, for purposes of his own and those in league with him, prevailed upon Mahuta to decline at the last moment. Europeans had more to do with it than any ground that could possibly arise out of Maori etiquette. The proper Maori sentiment was in favour of Rotorua. That was the true marae for the reception of the Royal visitors ; that was the marae decided upon by all the Maori tribes of both Islands. Individual maraes such as what Mahuta contended- or the honourable member and his friends contended-for was out of the question. The people, and not the individual, was the chief concern. The object of the honourable member and those who were leagued with him was that Mahuta should be given a special audience and made a special feature in the arrangements, to the subordination of all the other chiefs in the colony. It was asking that Mahuta should be proclaimed head of the Maori people, without the Maori people having an opportunity of saying " Yea " or " Nay " to the same. Why did not the honourable member and his friends go boldly and face the Maori people, and ask that special distinction might be allowed to Mahuta, instead of trying to work a position for him through a pakeha source? But why should all this be done for Mahuta? Because his grandfather had at one time been proclaimed king by some of his tribe. In respect to this Maori kingship I may inform the House that it was offered round to chiefs of different tribes before it ultimately settled on Te Wherowhero, Mahuta's grandfather. It was first offered to the leading chief of the East Coast at that time, and then it passed round to the West Coast, and thence to the middle of the Island; but none of the chiefs to whom the title was offered accepted. One chief said, in reply to the proposal, "I have inherited my chieftainship through a long line of illustrious ancestors. I do not that that accounted for my position.". It was thus refused by different chiefs representing the different tribes, and gradually the title found its way back to Te Wherowhero (Pota- tau), and he became Maori king, and his descendants are styled accordingly after him. I would advise the honourable gentleman, so far as concerns Mahuta and the remnants of the Waikato people, to try and educate them up to a proper appreciation of the times, and of the changes which have taken place and are occurring, and how they should fit into the spaces suitable for them. He should tell them that it is impossible to give effect to the dream of the Waikato people-a dream they have entertained too long for their good; that their extravagant and cherished aspiration to have an establishment of Maori authority centred in the line of Mahuta, and recognised by the Government, is absolutely hopeless; that the tribes of New Zealand will never agree to it; and that it is useless wasting time and substance in the pursuit of a shadow. Let the honourable member tell them that, and he will represent them excellently well. The time and energy they waste in striving after the unattainable could be better devoted to matters more to the advantage of the Maori people. We all sympathize with Mahuta and the Waikatos. We all sympathize with the representatives of the Maori race, and specially the representatives of the leading families: and it is the desire of every European and Maori in these days, and it is the desire of the Legislature, to direct them into such channels, the outcome of which will be for their good. It is time they were made to understand the responsibilities of every one living in this country. They should share with Europeans the burdens and responsibilities of settlement and colonisation and

government. You cannot now make any material difference between the Natives and the Europeans. You must try and harmonize what little discrepancies there are between them, and make their object a common one—the good of the people, the good of all. The honourable member knows very well that, so far as the Premier is concerned and myself, we are willing to do all in our power for the good of the Maori race, for the good of the honourable member's tribe and people. We will do what we can to provide landless Natives with land, as we have done for the Natives in the South Island. We want the assistance of the honourable gentleman. We do not want him to throw obstacles in the way of helping the people. We do not want such a list as he gave us last year, containing three thousand names of Maoris supposed to be landless, and then, upon inquiry, found to be landed proprietors. We want truer help than that if we are to do justice. If the honourable gentleman will help the Government in a clear way to arrive at the end he desires he must be genuine; he must supply us with correct data, and prove every case he submits. The House will demand it, for it is a large question. And whatever the

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of the Parliament. It is a matter of regret that these differences on matters have lasted so long, and I had hoped the time had now arrived when no one would stand up and say that there was one section of the Native people in the colony that stood out and isolated themselves, as Mahuta and his people are doing. I should have thought that by this time they would have sufficient confidence—I do not say in the Government, but in the Legislature of this country—to expect justice being done them. I must now bring my remarks to a close, so as not to prolong the debate. I have introduced a Bill this session proposing to amend the Native Land Act; and, when the second reading of it is on, we shall be able to deal at greater length and more minutely with the Native question and its various phases. Mr. SEDDON (Colonial Treasurer) .—I hope the moment or two that I will take up by way of preface will not be counted in my time. As forty odd speeches have to be replied to, and as each member has an hour, I desire to ask honourable members if they will agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders by giving me an extra half-hour, making an hour and a half in which to reply. Sir, I move, That the Standing Orders be suspended accordingly. Hon. MEMBERS .—No, no. Mr. SEDDON. —Then, Sir, I hope that honourable members and the people of the colony will note that this debate has been proceeding for three weeks, and that over forty speeches have to be replied to; and when I ask for an extra half-hour it is refused. I thought those honourable members opposite who opposed the half-hour extension would have been fair to me, and would have given me the opportunity of replying fully, and placing before the people our true financial position, and showing the absurdity of the adverse criticisms that have been made. That opportunity has been denied me, and, as the gentlemen opposite are responsible for this, we must conclude that they are afraid of the reply that I have to make. I do hope, Sir, that you will protect me from interruptions during the short time at my disposal. Before commencing my reply I desire to make a statement of policy. There shall be no material change from the policy that has obtained for ten years. We have stood by the workers and the struggling farmers of the colony, and we intend to continue doing so. We have done our best to develop the resources of the colony, and to look after the well-being of all classes. This we shall continue to do. Moderate borrowing is essential, so long as moneys are available in the colony and can be spared without detriment to our commerce and general requirements. Reasonable expenditure on public works is also necessary. If the country is to progress, conveniences must be given to the people. You must, therefore, have expenditure at a moderate pace, preference being given to our main trunk railways and to the roads to the back blocks. We must also have our railways fully equipped, so that Mr. Carroll a reasonable time. We must continue to settle the people on the land; we must also continue advancing cheap money to our settlers; and we must further promote settlement by the purchase of large estates and the acquirement of lands for workmen's homes; and we must also extend our markets. Sir, I say that low steamer freights are essential, as are also the lowest possible rates on our

railways. Without these, owing to the distance from the markets of the world and to other disadvantages, the people of this country will not be able to successfully compete with their more favourably situated competitors. Then, as to labour legislation, it is as well that there should be a declaration made. As far as the women and children are concerned, I must ask Parliament to confirm the provision in the original legislation that they shall not be called upon to work more than forty-five hours per week. I ask that this shall be done for the health and protection of women and children. In regard to the proposed forty-five hours for 8.0. men to work, I have come to the conclusion that we shall be going too far, and I therefore think we should insist that the maximum hours shall not exceed forty-eight ; and if there is to be any alteration by way of reduction, or fixing pay for overtime, that should be fixed by the Arbitration Courts. or by arrangement between the employers and employed. But we must fix the maximum at forty-eight hours. Now I wish to refer to another matter that has been a source of trouble, and that is in respect to the payment I for holidays. I think we have had proof put before us that to give thirty-two days of holidays is more than is reasonable, and I am of opinion it would have a detrimental effect. and therefore, that will not be proceeded with, leaving it, of course, as I have said, as far as the women and children are concerned. Then, there is an ambiguity to be cleared up in connection with the legislation as to compensation to workmen for accidents. I make these announcements simply to clear the way. And now, Sir, I will proceed with my speech in reply. A great deal has been said this session about my old chief, the late John Ballance, and the policy which he foreshadowed. and which he carried out as long as he was here with us. Sir, member after member on the opposite side of the House, and our candid friends on this side of the House, have made these statements. But what have they been doing? They have been doing an injustice to the memory of the late John Ballance, because they have kept back from the House and the country the real facts in respect to the policy of Mr. Ballance and his Ministers of 1891 and 1892. They kept themselves to what was put forward in the Financial Statement of 1891, but they overlooked all that he said in the Statement of 1892. What does Mr. Ballance say there ? He says this :- "Can the colony afford to bring to a termination the construction of roads and bridges. which alone would enable settlement to pro-

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ceed on public lands, or would it be a wise policy to hang up many of these lines of railway that are now approaching a paying point ? To say that we should sit down content with such partial results would surely be considered the quintessence of folly." Then, he further said,- " I do not think it would be wise, even if it were feasible, to attempt to raise another loan in the English money-market at the present time." Mark that. Then, further, speaking in 1892, the year before the banking and financial trouble, and when the money-market in London was not favourable, these are the remarks of the late John Ballance :- " The same objection, however, that applies to foreign loans does not apply to borrowing within the colony, and I believe it possible to place a moderate loan at a reasonable rate of interest, extending over some time, without any difficulty." Just exactly what we are doing. We borrowed locally in the colony half a million- because the London market was unfavourable - at reasonable rates on short-dated debentures. At that time I was stated, by all the Conservative papers and by those honourable gentlemen opposite, to be the strong man of the Ministry : " Seddon was the strong man of the Ministry," and " It was Seddon that must be looked to." It was not our late chief. By doing this they sought by detraction of Mr. Ballance and extolling myself to make mischief. Far be it from me to say anything that would dim the lustre of the deeds and services of my late chief ; but I say at that time it was said that I was the strong man of the Ministry; and now it is said that this then strong man of the Ministry is running the colony headlong to perdition. Now they extol my late chief, and elevate him,-make him a saint,- and I am the one not to be trusted. Keep him as such, revere his memory, and I will help you to maintain him as deserving every praise. In 1892 he converted the 1877 loan - \$500,000 I think it was. He paid £110,000 for that \$500,000,

so that £610,000 was the price to the colony. He was denounced by the Conservative Press and by those gentlemen opposite for so doing. They said it was a financial job ; and one and all said, "Why don't you borrow the money ? " He converted that loan. I stood by him ; it was the right thing at the time to do. We had our struggles during that period, but he was going in for a moderate borrowing policy, and, in order to obviate borrowing that year, he paid \$610,000, or £110,000 premium. I had to defend him against these gentlemen opposite ; and now from my own candid friends here I have to experience almost a reversal of the situation at that time. They denounced me and they denounced the Government, and they say we are not carrying out that policy; but I say that proof positive of our consistency to that policy is to be found in the records of this House and of the colony. Then, Sir, I just want to say a word at this point in reference to a remark made by the honourable member for Riccarton. It is in connection with a slight mistake in the price at which the money was raised in London. marked at 3½ per cent., while really we actually paid 4 per cent. The honourable gentleman made the discovery, but at the same time he forgot to find out that there is a margin of £20,000 in the amounts chargeable under the permanent Act, and was at the most a slight clerical oversight. It was a small error, and my honourable friend was very keen to detect it. I come now to the debate itself. I may say it has been of a somewhat varying character. At one time it was certainly going dead slow; at one time-I think, the second night after the debate started-no one would speak at all ; but, Sir, I then suspected there was something behind all this, and it was not long before it made its appearance. Our friends opposite abdicated. If I might use an American term, they absolutely "skedaddled" ; they would not attempt to debate the Statement at all, or criticize the policy therein foreshadowed. But then, Sir, some of my candid friends encouraged them, by making some adverse criticism on the Statement, and they at last plucked up courage, and prolonged the debate. And, Sir, it has been, so far as they are concerned, a miserable exhibition from the very start until the time they finished. Sir, I only need call members' attention to the last three speakers on that side. I will begin with the member for Selwyn. I remember, Sir, in respect to that honourable gentleman, a statement that once appeared, to the effect that Sir John Hall wrote all his electioneering speeches for him, and, after the reading exhibition the other evening, I feel satisfied that statement is correct. Sir, I think if ever we want to introduce a lay-reader into the House I know where to put my hand on one. The member for Selwyn, Mr. Hardy, would excel in that capacity. Then, Sir, I come to the member for Waitemata, another of the last three speakers. Well, Sir, he disappeared ; he conceived, we saw him in labour, and then there were some involved sentences of a questionable character ; and what was the result ? Sir, I may tell the House-and I do it without wishing to hurt the honourable gentleman's feelings -that I hope he will not do it again, because the result almost proved to me and to the House very clearly that there was an indication of political senile decay. Then, Sir, I come to the member for Patea. I mentioned something about members of Parliament and the fly in amber, in another place, and I was surprised to see how some members had brought it up in Parliament. Was it reasonable to bring it up in this way? I say No. But, as to the honourable member for Patea : First of all I had an official intimation that he was defeated by fifteen votes ; then I had an official intimation that he was defeated by six votes ; then I had an official intimation that he was defeated by one vote ; and then I found him in Parliament by the bungling of the Returning Officer. Here is a member

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electorate, and is it any wonder that I ask the question, having in view the fly in amber, How did he get here ? Sir, there is no doubt that beautiful amber does sometimes show to advantage grubs and worms; but I say the Parliament of the country is no place to beautify and embalm these political worms and place them on show. Sir, during this debate have we heard that there has been an under-estimate of our revenues ? Certainly not. Even the member for Palmerston has not said that. But the Opposition have wished the House and the people of the colony to infer that my estimate of the receipts will not be

realised. In regard to our expenditure, I admit that this year it is abnormally high. But who is responsible? Is the Government to be condemned for that abnormally high expenditure? I say that during the past year there were circumstances that were absolutely beyond the control of the Government, and, instead of members finding fault with us, there ought to have been general pleasure expressed that we were able to meet the extra expense without additional taxation, and that we are in a position to look forward, -as I do with hope, -to have a surplus at the end of next year of over £100,000. The abnormal expenditure, I may remark, totalled £120,000. In the Budget the Government advise a course . of prudence and economy. We advise that the colony should go "slow " in regard to borrowing and in regard to expenditure, and, because we have done that, the Opposition and Conservative Press of the colony have, like a pack of hounds, taken up the cry, and the next we hear from them is that it has been their advice that the colony should go "slow," and practice prudence and economy. I say, therefore, that there has been a complete indorsement of our policy in the colony in regard to the slowing. down of our expenditure, and that, instead of being condemned for that policy, we ought rather to be extolled for advising it at the proper time, and not at a time when too late, and when difficulties had arisen. Later on I shall deal with our candid friends. First of all, I wish to speak of the finances of the colony, and if I have the time I shall reply to the statements of our Opposition and candid friends later on ; but, in saying what I wish to say on our finances, I have no doubt I shall at the same time be dealing generally with what our adverse critics have urged against the Budget. The actual increase of the indebtedness of the colony has been one of the principal charges levelled against us, and I will meet it at once. It has been said that the tu quoque argument is not fair. Well, I say that, taking the ten years' administration of previous Governments, a sum of £11,638,639 was added to the public debt from the year 1881 to the year 1889, or an average of one million and a half per annum. What is the average of the present Administration ? In the ten years, 1891-1900 the amount added to the public debt was £9,206,502. I have a complete table to show the amounts, and I will read it :- Mr. Seddon 1880 to 1890, and from 1890 to 1900. Gross Debt. Year. At close of Annual each Year. Increase. € 31st March, 1880 27,029,311 1880-81 28,185,711 1,156,400 1881-82 . 28,479,111 293,400 1882-83 965,900 29,445,011 1883-84 31,071,582 1,626,571 1884-85 32,195,422 1,123,840 1885-86 33,880,722 1,685,300 1886-87 35,741,653 1,860,931 1887-88 36,758,437 1,016,784 1888-89 38,375,050 1,616,613 .. 1889-90 38,677,950 292,900 Total for ten years, 1880-1900 £11,638,639 € 31st March, 1890 88,677,950 38,830,350 1890-91 162,400 1891-92 38,713,068 Dec. 117,282 1892-93 39,257,840 544,772 1893-94 39,826,415 568,575 1894-95 40,386,964 560,549 1895-96 2,663,816 43,050,780 1896-97 44,366,618 1,315,838 1897-98 44,963,424 596,806 1898-99 46,938,006 1,974,582 1899-00 47,874,452 936,446 Total for ten years, 1890-1900 £9,206,502 But our opponents do not mention the fact that included in that amount there are seven millions sterling that do not necessitate the taxpayers of the colony raising a single shilling wherewith to pay interest. That is a fact that has been kept back from the people. The next question is, How is that done? I will show how it is done. Table showing the Increase of Debt during the Liberal Administration, and the cost per Annum of the Direct Interest-earning Debt, and the Amount earned per Annum by the Outlay of such Debt. Costing per per annum. Amount. Annum. Earning Purpose for which Debt was raised. Direct interest-earning- - € £ Land settlement 2,075,566 76.287 103 .77% . Advances to settlers 2,380,000 72,350; 107.100 Loans to local bodies 1,205,900 60,295 51.265 Lands improvement ... 500,000 17,956 92.5 0 Bank of New Zealand 17,500 500,000 preference shares ... 17.500; 16,079 New Zealand consols ... 459,389 16,079 District railways 47,000 1.450 1,645 ... Additions to open 695,000 lines 81,875 22.875 ... Dairy industry 1,781 62 ... \$7,794,696 £983,856 £314.831 Front per annum■ 60,975 ...

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Purpose for which Debt was Amount. raised. Direct Interest-earning- £ £ (brought forward) ... 7,794,696 ... Non-direct interest earning- Purchase of Native Lands ... 649,700 Public works 1,910,000 Increase by

conversions 646,312 Sinking Fund accretions 1,407,70J ... Naval and Military Settlers 27,226
 Government Accident Insur- 8,000 ance 4,642,998 Total .. 12,437,574 Less redemptions-
 1,280,420 Consolidated Stock Act, 1884 416,259 Other Debentures ... 1,676,679 Increase of Public Debt,
 1891- 1901. £10,760,895 Then, on that we are paying £283,856 by way of interest, but we receive
 from it £344,831 in the way of interest, or a profit over interest of £60,975. What reply have the members
 op- posite, or our mistaken and misguided candid friends, to say to that fact ? The amount of non-
 reproductive money added to the public debt for the last ten years is only £4,642,938. That is all that can
 be reasonably put against us as compared with the public indebtedness placed on the colony by
 preceding Ministries. Then, Sir, I take the average. The average during the last thirty years-since the
 inauguration of the public works policy-has been £1,380,866 a year. I have a table prepared to prove that,
 and I intend to put that table on record and prove every figure :- Average Annual Increase of Public Debt
 from 1871 to 1901 (Thirty Years). Gross debt, 31st March, 1901 £49,591,245 1871 8,165,241 #cc-zero .
 Increase for thirty years £41,426,004 Average annual increase, £1,380,866. Average per annum for ten
 years, ending 31st March, 1891 1,064,639 Average per annum for ten years, ending 31st March, 1901
 1,076,089 Average per annum for ten years, ending 31st March, 1901 (exclud- ing direct interest-bearing
 debt, £7,794,636) 296,625 Or 11 per cent., as against increase of 19 per cent. in population. Gross public
 debt-thirty years 1871-1901 .. 41,426,000 The following are the increases made in the public debts by the
 different Ministries :- 1871-73 (Fox Ministry) .. 1,445,095 1874-1876 (Vogel Ministry) 6,855,326 . . 1877
 (Atkinson Ministry) 3,439,350 .. 1878-79 (Grey Ministry) 2,125,600 .. 1880-82 (Hall Ministry) .. 6,450,500
 .. 1883 (Whittaker Ministry) 965,900 1884 (Atkinson Ministry) 1,626,571 1885-1887 (Stout-Vogel Ministry)
 .. 4,670,071 1888 91 (Atkinson Ministry) 3,088,697 1892-93 (Ballance Ministry) 437,490 . . 1894-1901
 (Seddon Ministry) 10,333,405 Total amount under Hall Administration (three years), £6,450,500, or an
 average of £2,150,166. Total amount under Atkinson Ministry (six years), \$8,154,618, or an average of
 £1,359,103 per annum. Total under Seddon Administration (eight years), £10,333,405, or an average of
 £1,291,675. Taking the average of non-interest-bearing indebtedness it has only been #296,625 a year,
 as against the Atkinson Administration of £1,359,103 per annum. The amount for three years under the
 Hall Administration was £6,400,000-or an average of £2,156,000 & year. The total amount of the Atkinson
 Ministry for six years was £8,154,618-an average of about £1,359,000 a year. The average of the Seddon
 Administration has been only £1,291,167. From 1871 to 1891-thirty years-there was a total increase of
 forty- one millions-an average of £1,380,000. The average for the ten years the present Liberal party have
 been in office has been £1,076,000. The average for the ten years before that was £1,064,000. Now, take
 from this ten millions the four millions and a half, and what does it give you ? It gives you the non-interest-
 bearing debt at £296,000 a year for ten years, and that with a population of 750,000. Con- trast that with
 the preceding ten years, when the population averaged half a million people, and I ask, Who has been
 heaping debt upon the people of the colony? You must consider how the population of the country has
 increased, and the wealth of the colony has also increased. The argument of the honourable member for
 Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) was, "No babies, no loan." He in his speech gave the increased indebtedness
 relative to the increased popula- tion, and said that in ten years our indebted- ness increased 33 per
 cent., whilst the popula- tion increased 19 per cent. He omitted to state that if you take the
 non-interest-producing debt, we have only increased the indebtedness of the colony by 11 per cent., as
 against an in- crease of population of 19 per cent. That is a complete answer to everything said by the
 honourable member on that head. If you go to a banker and ask him for an advance the first question he
 asks you is not " How many children have you got ?" but " What security have you got to offer for the
 advance you wish to have ? " I have proved that our coun- try has so improved in material wealth and
 population that we were fully warranted in increasing our public debt at the moderate rate I have
 indicated. I wish to explain also that in the indebtedness \$250,000 in ten years was annually given by

previous Ministers to local bodies, whilst during our term of office we have advanced £1,104,000. That is a still further reduction. The non-interest-bearing money has been \$751,000, local bodies' repayments £80,000, and advances for roading \$244,955. There is the answer to that point. Then, I take the public debt per head of population. On the 31st March, 1891, it was £64 3s. 7d., and on the 31st March, 1901, it was £61 19s. 4d., a decrease of £2 4s. 3d. per head. But take again

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indebtedness -take that for the seven millions. -and then see where your indebtedness comes in : because the general population is only called upon to pay on the non-interest-bearing debt, and, if you take it on that basis, it is only £54 per head, as compared with £61 per head- that is to say, it is less per head on the basis of population by \$7 17s. 6d. sterling. The following table gives the figures :- Rate per Head of European Population. s. d. Public debt- 31st March, 1901 49,591,245 64 3 .. 1891 38,830,350 .. 61 19 .. £10,760,895 £2 4 3 Increase But if the interest-earning amounts of the public debt, as on the 31st March, 1901, be deducted, the calculation stands thus :- Rate per Head of European Population. s. d. Public debt- 31st March, 1901 49,591,245 .. Deduct interest-earning 7,794,636 .. amount 41,796,609 54 10 Debt on 31st March, 1891 .. 38,830,350 61 19 .. Decrease. . . £2,966,259 £7 17 This represents a decrease. Now we come to the question of taxation, and the rate per head of taxation :- Taxation per Head of European Population. Rate per Amount. Head. £ s. d. Year ended 31st March, 3 19 6 1901 3,042,690 .. Less interest on inter- est-earning moneys, 240,000 3 13 £7,000,000 .. 2,802,690 0 6 3 Year ended 31st March, 3 9 3 2,179,730 1891 Showing an increase for the ten years of only 4s. 1d. per head of population. But take the condition of the people of this colony to pay now, as compared with a little over ten years ago, where you had shelter-sheds, thousands of people unable to find employment and leaving the country, when there was misery in our land, and ask yourselves this question : Are not the people of this colony better able to pay 4s. 1d. per head as an increase, when we consider the miserable condition of the people in 1889 and 1890? There is the answer. You must take the condition of the people to bear the burden. Then, take the interest and sinking funds. I have prepared a statement here showing the average amount paid as interest :- Mr. Seddon loans :- (a.) 1881-1891- £ Average amount paid on non- 1,685,842 .. interest-earning money Average amount paid on inter- 3,310 est-earning money .. (b.) 1891-1901- Average amount paid on non- 1,676,035 interest-earning money Average amount paid on inter- 95,342 est-earning money (2.) Interest per head of population :- (a.) 1881-1891- # s. d. On £1,685,842 (non-interest-earn- 7 ing) 2 18 4 .. 4 On £3,110 (interest-earning) 0 0 1 1 (b.) 1891-1901- On £1,676,035 (non-interest-earn- 7 3 ing) 2 . On £95,342 (interest-earning) 2 0 1891-1901 - On £44,296 (interest- earning and paid from separate 1 3 0 accounts) .. The interest per head of population in 1881 to 1891 was \$2 18s. 4d., while for 1901 it is £2 7s. 3d. So that, per head of population, it is now really less than it was. Taking the non- interest-bearing debt into consideration, it is less than it was ten years ago. There is the answer to that. Then I come to the next ques- tion-that is, the progress of the colony, and the ability of the people to bear the increased indebtedness and to pay the interest :- 6 Statistical Comparisons for Whole Colony. 1900. Increase 1890. Total produce per cent. 13,477.966 38:10 of colony .. 9,759,846 Wool 4,935,216 17:35 4,208,365 Frozen meat 2,327,133 122.57 1,045,576 699,909 427-93 Butter 132,576 237,093 156-18 88,647 Cheese Sheep (number) 16,116,113 19,348,506 20.06 Cattle (number) 1,222,139 46.92 831,831 Value of land and improve- .. 123,225,029 138,591,347 13.39 ments 3 Value of lands unimproved 75,787,895 90,901,000 19.0 Value of lands 1901. improved .. 122,225,029 147,000,000 20-27 Increase, unimproved value .. £15,113.105 Increase, improved value .. \$24,774,971 So that, if our debt has increased by ten millions, our value of land alone as improved has increased by nearly twenty-five millions. or fifteen millions more than the increased indebtedness. And, Sir, I say if that is not a complete answer to anything that has been said in respect to our moderate borrowing no one can give it. There is the condition of the country and the security we have to offer : and there is no country, I

believe, in the British Empire that stands better than New Zealand does at the present moment. However, the increase, as I have said, is \$15,000,000 on the unimproved, and on the improved #24, 774.000
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And now, Sir, I must leave this special ques- tion, because my time is going. I must deal now with the revenue and expenditure. The following is a comparative statement of the revenue and expenditure for the years 1890-91, and 1901-2 : - 1890-1891 - 4,282,504 Revenue 4,175,108 Expenditure £107,396 1901-1902- 5,896,000 Estimated expenditure . Estimated revenue .. 5,763,814 £132,186 Estimated expenditure, 1901-2 5,763,814 4,175,108 Actual expenditure, 1890-1891 Increase £1,588,706 Estimated revenue, 1901-2 5,896,000 .. Actual revenue, 1890-91 4,282,504 .. Increase £1,613,496 Revenue comparatively in favour £24,700 Then, what will please members more than enough will be this : They will say, " How about your revenue, Mr. Treasurer ? Have you reason to believe that your estimates will be realised ? " Yes, Sir, I have, as the following figures will show :- Revenue for the Five Months ended 31st August, 1901, and for the corresponding Period of last Year. (Consolidated Fund). Five Months Five Months ended ended 31st August, 31st August, 1901. 1900. Ordinary Revenue- d. £ s. d. B. 893,089 859,713 2 6 Customs 6 6 Stamps 284,107 12 0 286,628 7 2 ... Post and Telegraph 32.613 15 cash receipts 29.635 3 10 4 ... Land-tax ... 1,391 17 3,603 12 2 1 ... 4,122 13 2 Income-tax 4,476 0 2 ... Property-tax ... 34.478 90.456 19 11 Beer duty 8 1 745,953 12 Railways 642,928 2 4 ... Registration and other 11,559 17 11 10,576 15 6 fees Marine 12,440 13 10 10,790 7 10 Miscellaneous 54,474 4 7 . 17,444 2 0 ... Territorial- Cash land sales 30,441 11 10 32,151 11 0 ... Deferred - payment land sales 3.354 18 1 5,652 4 6 37.914 Pastoral rents, &c. ... 33.960 10 9 £2,148,816 9 4 £1,995,142 17 6 Comparison last year- 2,148.816 9 4 1,995,142 17 6 £153,673 11 10 Increase. There is also an increase in railways up to the present time. Let me compare the figures with the figures for five months last year :- d. d. 6. 8. 140,545 13 3 April 155,551 11 6 .. 9 May 153,084 147,176 10 7 8 .. June 153,248 139,498 14 10 9 11 .. 5 128,281 18 4 July 143,903 10 .. 125,846 19 11 August 140,165 12 10 1 4 681,349 17 745,953 12 Estimate for five months 656,000 0 0 733,333 6 8 More than the £25,349 17 1 £12,620 5 8 estimate I therefore think that, with the seven best months of the year to come, my expectations will be more than fully realised. Then, I want at this stage to say what has been done to help to bring the country to this prosperous state. A great deal has been said against members on this side of the House ; but our friends of the country and our friends of the town will know how to value that. The Opposition are at their old tactics by trying to sow dissension. I would here advise the country, and the country repre- sentatives in this House: I say, do not set brother against brother -the brother in the country against the brother in the town-but keep them together as one whole, working for the common good, working for the benefit of themselves and the people of our fair colony, and for the good of the children who are to come after them. Let not party politics, let not the exigencies of the party opposite interfere with or destroy the harmony that exists. Let all work together for the general good. Then, to show that we have not neg- lected the country districts, I may mention that the advances to settlers amounts to £2,000,000; that, under the Land for Settle- ments Act, we have expended £1,710,000; in the Agricultural Department £25,000, upon cool-storage, grading of produce, experimental stud-farms, poultry breeding, et cetera. Then, by the removal of the duty from agricultural machinery I am losing £1,500 a year. Can it be said, then, that we are doing nothing for the farmer? I have had it taken out pound by pound what we have given to the farmers and pastoralists of the country on our rail- ways, in remissions specially affecting them, and it amounts to £78,000 this year, or a total of \$248,000 during the last five years. And yet there are some honourable gentlemen who will say that we are not helping the farmers of the country. I say to those who are the representatives of labour in this House, that we have given the labourers of the coun- try legislation. We have given them the ex- pense connected with Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts ; but, as regards monetary assistance, we have given them nothing in com- parison to

what we have given the farmers of the country. And, what is more, they have not asked for it ; nor do they begrudge the farmers what we have done for them ; but they have helped us to do it, because they recognise that if the farmers are prosperous there must also be prosperity in the towns, and we have a prosperous New Zealand. What did those

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8.30. do when they were in distress financially ? How did they raise money ? They actually took and increased the grain-rates on the unfortunate farmers of Canterbury. That was the only remedy they had for raising money to fill their depleted Treasury ; and the farmers of Canterbury will never forget or forgive them for it. Yet they talk of themselves as being the friends of the farmers; but the farmers have shown that the proper place for them is the cold shades of Opposition. Then, some honourable gentlemen have complained that there has been an abnormal increase of salaries-that it is shown on the estimates, and so on. One honourable gentleman-I think it was the member for Riccarton or the member for Nelson City-it was the latter, I think ; and I know where the member for Nelson City got his figures from ; he evidently had been reading the Evening Post. He challenged the Ministry ; and the advice I have to give to the honourable member is: Do not go to the Opposition Press for your figures. He said that outside the classified departments there was an increase in salaries of £45,000. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- I never said that. Mr. SEDDON .- As far as the honourable member for Riccarton is concerned, he did not state any amount ; but I will come to him by-and-by. Now, the honourable member for Nelson City made the statement that outside the classified departments there had been increases in salaries by over £45,000, and he challenged my colleague to prove the contrary. Well, I tell the honourable member -- and when we get to the estimates I will ask him where he can point to this £45,000 of increase of salaries in the unclassified departments. The total amount of proposed increases of salaries, as shown on the estimates, are as follows :- In departments subject to classification 43,633 Cadets 1,464 Under agreements, or by regulations 1,120 Ordinary increases 9,852 \$56,069 (a) Classified Departments- Post and Telegraph, under £9,484 classification . . On promotion 3,708 13,192 Railway Department - Under classification 10,000 Other increases, wages, &c. 20,441 30,441 £43,633 (b) Other Departments - \$7,386 620 under \$200 .. 224 between \$200 and \$300 2,965 \$300 . #400 46 £1,015 \$400 . \$500 695 21 175 6 over \$500 .. . 7 heads of departments 250 2,135 924 £12,436 Mr. Seddon not dare to touch the classified departments. They are responsible as well as we are for the classification ; and, of the large increase in the Railway Department, £20,000 is presented by increase of wages practically in the Railways Department. That, I say, is for wages. We know who insisted upon the increase in the wages of the unfortunate workers in our railways. An Hon. MEMBER .- The Opposition. Mr. SEDDON .- No, they did not. It came from the Government and from the Liberal party. It came from the Ministry and the Government, and their own party, and we take credit for it, and we glory in being responsible for that increase of the working-men's wages by 1s. per day. There is nothing to regret in that. But what did you vote for last year? It was said, " You must have more men, and, of course, you must pay them a living-wage." Now, coming to the estimates we have prepared, we will give you the fullest information, and I undertake to say there will be no motion to take back the estimates and cut them down by £50,000 when you have got the particulars. It is not fair till the House gets the particulars to complain and say we are not careful. Every pound in the estimates has been carefully considered. Take the Secretary to the Treasury : Twenty millions of money went through his hands last year, and his salary for that is not one-half of what a bank inspector receives. We have not been paying salaries commensurate with the responsibility or with the efficiency of the men we have had in New Zealand ; but if you are to have brains in the public service- which you must have-you must pay for those brains, and if you do not pay for brains your best men will leave you, and you will have muddle and disaster. I am not prepared to withdraw one shilling from the estimates, and I' am fairly sure to be able when in Committee £ on the estimates to justify

every proposed increase. I will now come to the question of the Consolidated Fund. There was some anxiety which arose owing to the large expenditure in the first quarter in the Consolidated Fund. I will tell honourable members how it arose. I do not want to keep anything back from honourable members; it is my duty to give them the fullest information. There was in the Colonial Secretary's Department an increase of £15,000 because we had the census. Then, there was in the Education Department— you are all responsible for it—an increase of £19,700; then, in respect to defence, it was brought into the first quarter of this year—the capitation of Volunteers, \$22,400. We shall have to change the time for fixing the capitation; the time we have now is February, and we do not get in the returns, and hence it was not paid till the first quarter of this year. Then, in the Department of Lands and Survey— putting more men on to surveys to get people on the land—there was an increase of 96.5.6. There is your anxiety gone in respect to the increases in the Consolidated Fund for the first quarter. Then, we come to additions to

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open lines; you last session authorised half a million, and we only spent \$350,000. The orders went Home and to America, and the locomotives and rolling-stock did not come to charge last year, but were brought to book in the first quarter of this year. The expenditure in public works for last quarter was as follows:— s. d. Maintenance department - £ 28,204 14 6 New works Locomotive Department Rolling-stock 167,044 8 1 . . Workshops machinery 7,182 5 7 .. Gas plant 1 409 1 . . £202,840 11 1 You have, too, for wages mostly, an additional \$28,000 for new works. You cannot get your railway engines and carriages in the workshops in the colony, and have people in Great Britain and America making your locomotives and trucks, and then complain when the bills come to hand. I expected the amount would be high, but it will not be at the same rate for the next three quarters. Nothing of the kind. Now, I think I have removed every doubt as regards the expenditure, and the increased indebtedness, and the increased salaries. I now come to what some of the members have said during the debate. I will give the first place to the member for Hawke's Bay. That honourable gentleman accused me of bribery. Now, what happened? I find this recorded: Mr. Fraser, speaking to his constituents, said,—" He then secured the co-operation of Captain Russell, and buttonholed Ministers. When the supplementary estimates were brought down, there was €3,500 provided." An Hon. MEMBER .-- Which Fraser? Mr. SEDDON .- There is only one real Fraser in the House—the member for Napier. He said that when the supplementary estimates were brought down he got the assistance of Captain Russell and the two buttonholed me, and I, in a weak moment, was seduced from the path of rectitude and virtue and gave them \$3,500: I bribed Hawke's Bay and the honourable member by giving them \$3,500 for the Spit Road. Now, Sir, I say that honourable gentlemen who come to Ministers and insist on expenditure in their districts, and also help other honourable members to have money expended, ought not to turn round on the deluded but generous Colonial Treasurer and say, " Bribery, bribery !" When the honourable member for Hawke's Bay again comes to me for expenditure I shall stipulate that if I give him anything it will be on condition that he does not accuse me of bribery. That honourable gentleman said, further, that last year there was an increased expenditure on our railways of £97,000; and he further said—and I hope that his words will be taken to heart by every farmer in New Zealand:—"There must be no further concessions on our railways." That is the policy of the Opposition as enunciated by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. There is to be no further concessions to the farmers, producers, or any one else on our VOL. CXVIII .- 34. railways. He is not the only member on the Opposition side of the House who has said that there must be no further concessions on our railways. That part has been played before by them, and those honourable members have always argued that our railways should be administered by Commissioners, who would refuse to give concessions. Their friends the Commissioners bled the people, prevented investment, and almost suffocated the producers of the country. The only desire of the Opposition and their friends is to save themselves. Fearing further taxation, they say, " Do not give any further concessions on the

railways." To save themselves they would keep up abnormally high rates to the detriment of our farmers. But we object to this. After we have made our railways pay 3 per cent. on their cost, we have given anything above that principally to the producers of the country. Sir, the railways should not be turned into machines for bleeding the people. They are intended for the convenience and the comfort of the inhabitants of the colony. They are further intended to promote settlement and our industries. This can only be done by having the lowest possible rates. Far be it from me to say one word that would detract from the memory of the late Sir Harry Atkinson; but I must refer to the remark of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, to the effect that our borrowing as compared with that of the late Sir Harry Atkinson when he was Colonial Treasurer was enormous. Now, Sir, while Premier and Treasurer, that gentleman borrowed £8,154,618, or at the rate of \$1,359,000 per annum, and the whole of this was non-revenue or interest-producing. The amount borrowed by us is, on the same basis, \$297,000 per annum. The honourable gentleman said that the Opposition were opposed to the co-operative works. I would ask him to challenge the Government on that head, and they will be prepared to meet them. The honourable gentleman also said, in most pathetic tones, "What would happen if the five thousand men employed under the co-operative system were discharged?" This is what would happen: Our roads and railways would be made under the contract system at a greater cost. The same number of men would also have to be employed. Men are not being employed on the co-operative works to till in time; and no work is undertaken unless it is of national importance, and has been demanded and voted for by honourable members in this House. That being so, I say it is very unfair of the member for Hawke's Bay, and of those honourable members opposite, to adversely criticize what we are doing in this respect. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay concluded his speech with reference to something mythical, and said a party was coming down and taking possession of the Premier and carrying him away in blue flames. I think he also said something as to what would be a fitting epitaph for me. That was a grave subject to talk about, and outside the Budget, or finance, for under those conditions £ s. d. would not be a consideration, and it

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what on earth has such a subject to do with the financial debate? If I were to go on the same lines I could say of the honourable gentleman that here below he was an apostle of the earth, earthy. That is all I would say of the honourable gentleman. Now, Sir, I have something to say with regard to the speech of the honourable member for Bruce; but before doing so I would remark that, owing to the time-limit, I am afraid that my candid friends are going to escape. The honourable member for Bruce compiled a little table which I have had copied. He said "The total available ways and means up to 31st March, 1901, was £2,339,749, and the appropriations from 1900-1901 were £2,196,365," and taking the one from the other it "leaves available on the 31st March only £143,384." Sir, I say-I wish I could use a stronger term-no more misleading, no more unfair statement could be made, because the honourable gentleman knows that in the one case he has taken the actual ways and means, in the other the appropriation. He has not taken the actual expenditure of last year. There was not, as stated, £143,000, but there was available, after deducting the actual expenditure from the ways and means, £1,032,238 on the 31st March last; and yet he would lead the country through this false table to believe that there was only £143,000, whilst there was considerably over a million available. And he, forsooth, aspires to be a Colonial Treasurer! He wishes to be put on these benches! One who would mislead the country in that way deserves the highest censure possible upon him; he should be mistrusted, denounced, and relegated to obscurity. You must to the £1,032,238 add \$500,000, the amount out of surplus available for public works. Take from this the contingent liabilities, \$1,292,096, and what do you find? Why, that after making due provision for the so-called liabilities you have £240,142. You have over £240,000 after providing for the liabilities. But he wanted the country to believe that we had incurred liabilities beyond what we could meet if the charges came to book, and that we had not sufficient ways and means left to

meet the so-called liabilities. Well, I will admit, for the purpose of my argument, that they were to some extent liabilities, although they were not, and then, Sir, there would be over £240,000 left, in lieu of being unable to meet liabilities, as the honourable gentleman wished it to be inferred. He is only wrong again by half a million. How is he misleading the House ? He does not take into consideration the \$500,000 we had of cash surplus last year. He ignores that altogether, and, for the purpose of misleading the country and honourable members, he makes that false and misleading statement by putting appropriations against ways and means, instead of being fair and placing actual expenditure against ways and means. However. Sir, I take now the cash in hand: In the Public Works Fund on the 31st March, \$232,000 ; balance of loan, \$800,000; transfer the \$500,000 I have referred to, and that gives \$1,532,000. Taking Mr. Seddon and deducting that from the \$1,500,000, leaves £240,000. Sir, I want to go further than that. What are those liabilities ? As they appear they are simply misleading. They are not liabilities at all : more than one-half are commitments. Some of them may never be used at all, and some may take two years. Members may have seen in the Roads and Bridges Account items of liability. They could not understand it. Well, I will let them into the secret. When the Cabinet has authorised an expenditure, the Under Secretary for Lands sends out to the district surveyor that the authority has been given, and that authority is put down as a liability. I tell the House and the country that what has been taken as liabilities, and which, for want of a better technical term, have been mentioned as liabilities, are not and never will be actual liabilities at all. Then, another member told us that we had taken power or would be compelled to borrow £3,000,000. It has gone home to London that we had to borrow \$3,000,000. and that we could not pay our way without it. That is a statement that has appeared in the London journals, and I say it injures the credit of the colony. We can go on with a million a year for public works. Then, Sir. the honourable member said we had borrowing powers up to five millions, and by the way he put it we must raise five millions. Mr. J. ALLEN .- No, I did not. Mr. SEDDON .-Well, then, what did the honourable member mention it at all for ? We have had that power, and larger power than that, for years, and our annual increased indebtedness has been a little over a million for the last ten years, although since 1893 during all this time we have had borrowing powers of nearly five millions. Power is given to us by way of Treasury bills to meet emergencies, and, I ask. What has been the exercise of that power ? The exercise of that power has been only a million a year. I say this could only have been mentioned for the purpose of destroying or helping to destroy the credit of the colony. And it has gone Home now that we cannot do with less than three millions, and our loan will only be one million, as now proposed. I say, if members would only see the injury they are likely to do by these remarks, they would hesitate before making them ; and I implore them now not to injure our colony. I say, if honourable members opposite wish to get rid of me, if they really wish to get rid of this Government, let them do it without injuring their country. If, Sir, my stopping here injured the credit of this colony, or retarded the progress and prosperity of New Zealand, the Governor could have my resignation to-morrow. I shall not hold office on such a basis. I say we are fairly administering the affairs of this country, and if this is done to the injury of the colony it recoils upon those who do it. Then, Sir, we have had something about Commissions, and it has been said during this debate that there have been too many Commissions. I could mention one honourable gentleman-

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sions, and saying he was going to bring Mr. Seddon to book, that "it was a wilful waste of public money; and what earthly good could arise from it ?" Next day a telegram was sent to him asking him whether he would accept a position on a Commission, and he accepted, and he has not reviled the Premier about Commissions since. At the same time, in justice to myself, I am bound to say that the strong terms used by the member against Commissions had not reached me at the time he was offered the position. Hon. MEMBERS .- Who was it ? Mr. SEDDON .- Oh, I never give my friends away. Now, Sir, I am going to read an extract from a public record, and I am going to show the necessity there is for Royal

Commissions :- Extract from Report of Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the working of Coal-mines in New Zealand. " We visited this mine on the 20th March last. We found a prevailing feeling of apprehension of danger on the part of miners employed, but they declared that if they gave evidence they would lose their employment. We entered the mine by the only air-intake, and crawled along it, chiefly on our hands and knees, for a distance of between 8 and 10 chains. The whole place is creeping. In every face, air deficient. The Inspector of Mines, who was present, could not obtain any reading from his anemometer. unfavourably impressed with the condition of the whole mine. There was a want of care for the lives of the men employed. The chief ground, however, for representing this now to Your Excellency is the apprehension of some grave catastrophe through the want of proper ventilation. We strongly recommend that immediate steps be taken to compel the owners of the mine to put it in a condition of safety." Sir, the honourable gentleman, the member for Bruce, and others say there should be no Commissions ; and yet the owner of that mine, upon which that report is written, is an honourable member of this House; and, speaking of me in my absence in respect to South Africa, he said I was actuated by political motives, and that I had used our noble lads on every platform for political motives. Sir, contrast my actions and my feelings with the gentleman who has a report against him like that I have read. And this honourable gentleman, since the first day of the session, has not demanded an inquiry nor questioned the report. No, Sir, but the Commission has been assailed. I say we want Commissions where valuable lives are risked under conditions such as the Royal Commission on the Coal-mines of the colony have described in their report. Do not, whatever my faults might be, and they are many, where it is a question of life and death, where there is suffering and anguish on the part of parents for the noble lads-do not say that those who to a large extent are responsible for endeavouring to help the Empire in an emergency have been actuated by political motives. God able gentlemen-shall I call them our candid friends ? I will name them: this political triplet is composed of the member for Riccarton, the member for Ashley, and the member for Nelson City. Let members take their speeches and they will see that they must have been either colloquing and consulting or that there is coincidental inspiration or the hidden hand. What do they say about the public debt. The member for Nelson City says, - "The public debt has increased more than it has ever done in the colony previous to this Ministry coming in." The member for Riccarton says, - " Does the country realise the awful state of things involved in carrying on with borrowed money." The member for Ashley says, - "The public debt at the present time is truly alarming." Then we come to another question-the Midland Railway. The member for Nelson says, - "Now, Sir, I have very little time left, but I do want to refer to the Midland Railway. The Commissioners did way question. . not report, nor were they asked to report, nor were they even permitted by the terms of the Commission to report, as to whether the debenture-holders had been well treated or ill treated. It is a question for Parliament to decide how much or how little of this sum should equitably be paid to the debenture-holders." The member for Riccarton says, - "I feel ashamed of this colony taking over the Midland Railway and not paying the value for it. Do the righteous thing.' And the member for Ashley says, - " It is wrong for us as a Parliament to withhold from those people that which they are in equity they have a entitled to. claim. The Government of this colony must be clean-handed over this Midland Railway business otherwise the people will say, 'Get you gone, and give place to more honest men.'" The one says "The treatment is questionable "; the other, "I feel ashamed ; do the righteous thing "; and the other, "Be clean-handed, or get you gone." Sir, what does this point to? Those members are raging against an increase of the public indebtedness, and in the next breath they say, inferentially if not practically, we must increase the indebtedness of the colony by giving the debenture-holders of the Midland Railway \$300,000 of public money. For what? And when it is admitted by all there is no legal liability at all ! Sir, I say this colony will do justice to the debenture-holders, but not on account of what those honourable members have urged. Our hands must not be forced. I will not do anything that is inequitable or unjust. The matter must be

considered calmly and dispassionately ; threats only tend to prejudice equity. But in our present position it is not possible to deal properly with it. It is a matter that must go before a Committee. It would be wise, however, for those honourable members not to make any

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for the tendency of such words is to make the people infer that we are not doing justice, especially when, as I have pointed out, the speakers are unanimous in their remarks on the subject. The Evening Post has been touching on the same matter. The statements have all been pretty well on the same lines, so that I must come to the conclusion that there has been an inspiration, and I know there is a fount from which such inspiration may flow. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Time is up. Hon. MEMBERS .- Go on. Hon MEMBERS .-- No, no. Mr. SEDDON .- The following two lines give exactly the present situation :- Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway, And fools who came to scoff remained to pray. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) .-- Sir, I wish to make a personal explanation. The Premier has misrepresented me. He accused me of having stated that the ways and means of the Public Works Fund were a certain amount, and that I had only quoted the appropriations for the year. It is true I did that, and I immediately followed it by quoting the actual expenditure for the year, and I showed that the expenditure for the year, including the liabilities, had gone beyond the ways and means of the Public Works Fund, and I repeat that now. Sir, the honourable gentleman attempted to explain away my argument by saying he had a balance of half a million in the Consolidated Fund. It is perfectly true he had that half-million in the Consolidated Fund, but it was not part of his ways and means ; for he had already transferred \$500,000 from the Consolidated Fund to the Public Works Fund, and I have given him credit for this already. That was one misrepresentation. The other misrepresentation is this: He accused me of misrepresenting the liabilities of the Public Works Fund. In order to put myself right I shall quote the words of the statute :- "The liabilities of the Public Works Fund shall mean and include all liabilities under any contracts entered into by the Government under the authority of any Act in that behalf." I say that any liability must of necessity include a contract, as the Act says, entered into by the Government under an Act on that behalf. The Premier has made a remark in regard to a mine I am interested in, but I shall probably have another opportunity of saying something on that subject. With reference to the Commission's report, the Minister of Mines has told me that the Inspector's report has been received, and I have moved that that report be laid on the table. Mr. SEDDON .- I have not gone as far as I might have gone in respect to the report on the mine I referred to. I say that report has been in existence some months, and it has been known to the honourable gentleman, and he has taken no action whatever in the matter. I say I will not hear reflections cast on Mr. Haselden, or upon Mr. Proud, or Mr. Lomax, who were Commissioners. Mr. Proud has a reputation as a mining Inspector and expert in the Old Mr. Seddon's soul of integrity and efficiency ; nor on Mr. Lomax, who is an experienced coal-miner. It is a most serious matter, and some steps must be taken to remove that state of things. Mr. J. ALLEN .- What steps did you take ? Mr. SEDDON .- Did not the Inspector come down ? Mr. J. ALLEN .- No. Mr. SEDDON .- He was with the Commissioners. I come to another misrepresentation of the honourable member. I have his table copied, and he says here,- "The total available ways and means up to 31st March, 1901, was \$2,339,749, and the appropriations from 1900-1901, were £2,196,365, leaving available ways and means on the 31st March, 1901, of £143,384." It is quite true that later on-because he knew he was going to be brought to book for it-he used these words: "The expenditure during the year was \$1,307,511." Therefore you deduct that from the ways and means of last year and it leaves the balance available of £1,032,236, and not taking, as the honourable member did, the appropriations. If you do not spend the money, you have the money at hand. I cannot quote from Hansard, but I guarantee that I am reading what Mr. Allen said. An Hon. MEMBER .- You are misquoting. Mr. SEDDON .- It so happens that what I have used is a clipping or cutting from Hansard. Now who is misquoting ? Mr. J. ALLEN .- The Premier omitted to quote the words between the words I

first used and later ones. I certainly did quote the ways and means of the Public Works Fund. I deducted the appropriations for the year, and I said so in plain language, and then I went on to say that "that available balance we did not have." The Premier forgot to quote those words. I said I did not know in the history of the colony that it had before occurred that at the end of the financial year the colony had no ways and means to meet its responsibilities. Mr. SEDDON .- I should like to ask the honourable gentleman why he should trouble to prove a negative. The words he used were : " this available balance we did not have." Certainly not. He had available \$1,032,000. He puts a table there to show and prove that. to infer that only £143,000 was available at the end of the year. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL (Riccanton) .- Sir, the Premier has hinted rather than stated that two parts, at any rate, of the speech I delivered on the Financial Statement were the result of inspiration. It is not at all difficult for one to understand from what direction the honourable gentleman thinks the inspiration came. I wish to assure him of what he already knows -- that I was one of the earliest speakers in the debate. I spoke before the member for Nelson City and the member for Ashley. I needed no inspiration from anybody as to the position I was going to take up. I did not confer with either the editor of the Evening Post or any other gentleman in regard to the speech I was going to deliver.

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Mr. SEDDON .- Then, I presume the honour- | submit to you, Sir, that if a member gives able gentleman was the leader of the candid triplets. The other two followed his example. Mr. GRAHAM (Nelson City) .- I also wish to make a personal explanation. The Premier has been good enough to say, in reference to my remarks on the Midland Railway and other subjects, that they were so like the remarks of some other honourable members that they showed that members had been, I think he said, colloquing together. I wish to assure the Premier that neither of the members he referred to, or any other member in the House or person out- side the House, knew anything about what I was going to say, or supplied me with any material. I can only express the hope that other matters the Premier has been speaking about for the last hour have been more cor- rect than his statement with reference to that point. Mr. SEDDON .- You three were all very candid and kind while I was away. Mr. GRAHAM .- I could not help your being away, and I expressed my regret for your ab- sence at the time. Mr. SEDDON .- Then, if your regret was sincere, a good many of the things you then said you could not have said. As the honour- able gentleman has said he had not consulted with any one, I must accept his denial. Mr. GRAHAM .- You believe me, I hope, and accept my assurance. Mr. SEDDON .- I believe you. I can only say that the remarks of the three gentlemen in respect to the increased debt and the Midland Railway were so much alike that I naturally concluded there had been mutual inspiration. Mr. MEREDITH (Ashley) .- The Right Hon. the Premier has been pleased to refer to me in his speech. I should like to tell him I do not withdraw one jot or tittle of the facts or figures in my speech. I further say I had no confer- ence with the honourable member for Riccar- ton or the honourable member for Nelson City in any shape or form. or with any officer or department of the public service. Nor was I furnished from the archives of the Premier's office with figures, as some other honourable members have been. I had to work out my own facts and figures and compile my own speech, and I am prepared to stand by that speech. Mr. SEDDON .- Then, Sir, I will only say this to the honourable gentleman, to show how misleading he was in respect to myself both in regard to his facts and his figures : The honour- able gentleman accused me of having last year cost the colony £2,410 -. An Hon. MEMBER .- Order ! Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable member must sit down when I rise to address the House. It is the duty of the Premier as leader of the House to respect the Chair, and the honour and dignity of this Parliament have been brought into disrepute by frequent at- tempts not to do so. I have called upon the Premier not to proceed and he has no right to do so. I hope in future he will obey the ruling of the Chair. Mr. SEDDON .- I will, with due respect, figures in his speech about my salary and ex- penses and says they are correct, I should have the opportunity of showing they were mislead-

ing and incorrect. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- As the Premier knows, personal explanation must be confined to the particular point to be explained. No reference whatever can be made in personal explanation to figures used in the course of the debate. Mr. SEDDON .- Then, I may be permitted, in personal explanation, to say that the honour- able member stated that certain facts and figures given in his speech were correct. In those figures he said that I had drawn Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - I must certainly object to this being prolonged. I have already ruled that the honourable member mentioned no particular subject and no particular figures. Mr. SEDDON .- I will then say, generally, that I am positively aware that the figures given by the honourable gentleman are abso- lutely incorrect ; and I will also say that, with regard to the remarks upon the Midland Rail- way, he will see that I compared his remarks in Hansard with those of the member for Nelson and the member for Riccarton. Mr. ATKINSON .- I rise to a point of order. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable member must not proceed : this is debating the question. Motion agreed to, and the House went into Committee of Supply. # SUPPLY. CLASS I .- LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENTS. Legislative Council, £1,870. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) said he understood that on the first item they could discuss the esti- mates generally. He wished to discuss the por- tion of the estimates dealing with the troopers sent to South Africa. He would have made these remarks in his speech on the Financial Statement, but the Right Hon the Premier was not present, and he wished him to hear, because what he wanted to say he desired to say to his face. He (Mr. Allen) had said that the Premier had utilised the troopers from South Africa and the patriotic movement for political purposes, and he intended to prove it abso- lutely. The Fourth and Fifth Contingents had lately returned from the South African cam- paign by the "Tagus." Those men had gone through the very hardest of the South African campaign. They had gone through Beira, and the wretched climatic influences had af- fected them, and affected them seriously, and the result had been that nearly every trooper had broken down in his constitution. They were on their road home. They came as far as Albany broken down in constitution com- pletely. When they got to Albany they were ill, nearly every one of them suffering from enteric-from typhoid, which he believed was the same thing. And at Albany the medical officer of the "Tagus " reported this sickness, and that report was sent to the Premier, as Defence Minister, to this effect : that owing to

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the constitutions of these men being broken down it would be disastrous to send them by the colder route to Invercargill, and the Defence Minister was asked to authorise that the ship should come by the warmer route. That au- thority for them to come by the warmer route was refused, and they were told they must come to Invercargill, that being the landing-place, and they must go, therefore, by the cold southern route. He was not going to make any direct charges ; it was too serious a matter. He was going to say this, however : The Premier had to take the responsibility of refusing to accept the medical advice, which recommended that these men, being broken down in constitution, should not come by the cold southern route, but should come by a warmer one, and he had taken that responsibility ; and he (Mr. Allen) asked the House and the country what that responsibility was. The honourable member wanted to know what the political capital was? He (Mr. Allen) would tell him. The political capital was to please the people of Invercargill. He accused the Hon. the Premier of not acceding to the advice given to him by the responsible officer of the ship, who told him it was a dangerous thing to send these men by the cold south- ern route. He (Mr. Allen) was certain of this from knowledge that had been placed in his hands, and not from one source alone : that these men had been injured in constitution by going from Albany to Invercargill to a much greater extent than if they had gone by a warmer route, and the responsibility was the Premier's. He said this was a serious matter for the Premier to face, and he would have to answer to the House and the colony for de- clining to accept the advice forwarded from the doctor. It was an easy matter for him to have said, after he had received the doctor's advice, that the ship should come by the warmer route. Now, he appealed to the member for Inver- cargill if it were not true that, if the people of

Invercargill had known that the bringing of that ship to Invercargill would have sacrificed the constitutions of these men-whether they would not have willingly foregone the honour of receiving these men for the first time at Invercargill. Now, these men were brought to the Port of Dunedin by the cold route, transhipped from there to another boat and sent back again to Invercargill, and landed at Invercargill on a cold day, and spent a considerable time on the wharf on a cold, wretched, miserable day ; and everybody who knew anything about enteric knew that it was coldness that invariably brought on an attack of enteric again. Sir J. G. WARD said it was not much, if any, colder in Invercargill than in Dunedin. Mr. J. ALLEN said he did not care ; it would have been just as bad to bring them to Dunedin, and they ought to have come by the warmer route. He would say no more on the matter at present. He was in possession of important evidence to prove what he said to be correct - that the recommendation of the doctor to bring them by the warmer route was forwarded to the Premier, and his was the responsibility. Mr. J. Allen Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had gone from bad to worse. He understood when he rose that he was going to prove that he had been using the returned troopers for political purposes, but before he sat down he had accused And him of something much more serious. how heartless a man must be in making that statement on such a shallow pretence! He was one of the most dangerous men who could sit in a Parliament. An honourable gentleman should hesitate before casting such a stigma on a fellow - member; and when it came from a gentleman who, it was reported, allowed his mine to remain dangerous to the men month after month and week after week -- Mr. J. ALLEN .- I have not killed any of them yet. Mr. SEDDON said, Had it not been for the compulsion of the law there was no saying what might not have happened ; it was evidently no fault of the honourable gentleman's. Suppose the honourable gentleman had been guilty of running the great risk the Coal Commissioners said in their report he did, and suppose a catastrophe had happened, he (Mr. Seddon) would not have said of him what the honourable gentleman had said of him (Mr. Seddon). The honourable gentleman had simply gone on the evidence of a short telegram sent by Colonel Davis on the advice of the doctor of the "Tagus." He had not that telegram with him. There was a custom in the House, and if the honourable gentleman intended to make this charge he should have intimated it to him, and he would then have been prepared with the telegram to read to the House and the country. When the communications on the subject were read, the country. and, he hoped, the honourable member, would clear him of the serious charge. But he treated with scorn the honourable gentleman's charges. He had changed his ground. He could not quote from Hansard, but he could say what he had read in Hansard. The honourable gentleman did not say a word about the "Tagus" in his speech when he accused him, in respect to the boys at the front. of being actuated by political motives. He said he had used the troopers on every public platform in the colony for political purposes. He had entirely changed his ground now from what he had said in the debate. It was reported against the honourable gentleman that he had said on the platform that he had used the contingents for political purposes, but the honourable gentleman had now changed his tactics by making charges in reference to the "Tagus." Communications had been sent to General Kitchener and to the Transport Office. and it could be shown that those charges were absolutely unfounded. The question was as to whether the vessel should go to Wellington or to the Bluff. A communication he had in his possession would show that the owners of : he vessel had been at work in the matter. Thes alleged that it would be unsafe to send a single-screw steamer to the Bluff. Further representations were made, with the result that the

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Imperial authorities had agreed that the vessel should go to the Bluff. On the arrival of the " Tagus " at Albany orders were received that she should go to the Bluff ; but what was done ? The vessel stopped over three days at Albany while cables were being sent to the Imperial authorities with the view of getting the Transport Department to change the vessel's destination. He himself was also cabled to from

Albany on the subject. The Transport Office again said that the vessel must go to the Bluff ; but, on further representations being made to the Admiralty, it was decided that the boat should not go to the Bluff, for the reason that she was a single-screw steamer, and that, so far as they could learn from the chart, it would be scarcely safe for her to go there. He (the Premier) was prepared to be judged by any nautical man in the colony as to whether the change in the route had anything to do with the matter. The doubt at issue after the "Tagus " arrived at Albany was Bluff or Port Chalmers. The climatic difference between Albany and the Bluff, or Albany to Dunedin, or Albany to Wellington routes was so slight that it could not possibly have had any effect on the health of the people upon the steamer. It was really a question as to whether there were any great climatic difference between the Albany- Dunedin and the Albany-Wellington routes ; and he maintained there was not. He hoped the honourable member now would withdraw his remarks. If he did not know that what had been said was correct he showed gross ignorance, which was unpardonable. As to the sending of the men to Invercargill, he could inform the honourable gentleman that every man transhipped from the "Tagus " to the " Tutanekai " in order to be taken to Invercargill had the sanction of the medical officers and the officer commanding to his going. If the medical officer that the honourable gentleman had alluded to had decided at Port Chalmers that it would be unwise to take any man, or even the men as a whole, he (the Premier) would have been the last person in the world to have ordered them to go ; but every man who went to Invercargill went there with the approval and sanction of the medical officers. Then, there were no lives on his shoulders, because no one died between Albany and Port Chalmers. An Hon. MEMBER .- Yes. Mr. SEDDON said the boat had entered the Dunedin Harbour, or Port Chalmers, before the man died, and he was so seriously ill some time previously that his death was not unexpected. If the information the honourable gentleman had was on a par with its incorrectness he was not surprised, and he could not sympathize with him in the position he now found himself. Could an honourable member who said such things about a fellow-member be pure himself ? Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) said that the statement made by the honourable member for Bruce was one of the most outrageous things he had ever heard said in Parliament. He wanted to know whether the member for Invercargill was going to sit in his place and allow the aspersion of the honourable member on the people of Invercargill to go unchallenged. He said that these men were sent to Invercargill for political motives, and he understood the honourable member to say that the member for Invercargill had informed him that if the people of Invercargill had known the position- Mr. J. ALLEN said he did not say that. He said, " if they had known." Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable member might just as well say that, if the people on board the "Tagus" had known that there would be any deaths on board the "Tagus," they would have sent the men ashore at Albany and had medical attendance there. The honourable member talked about the cold in Invercargill as against that in Dunedin. There was absolutely nothing in this, as the difference between the two places was hardly perceptible, and certainly not sufficient to make the difference between life and death. He was not going into the question of whether the "Tagus" could or could not go into the Bluff Harbour- every one knew that it could-but he wanted to deal with the charge that had been made against the Premier. That was not a charge that ought to be allowed to pass by with the mere utterance of the member of the House who made it for the purpose of getting at an opponent. The onus of that charge lay upon the honourable member to prove ; but the point that he wished to come back to was that the honourable gentleman tried to make out that these men were sent to Invercargill for political purposes. The honourable member represented a place very close to the City of Dunedin, and was it not within his recollection that the citizens of Dunedin requested that one of the returning contingents should make Port Chalmers the first port of call. Did the honourable member not recollect that Auckland residents asked that the same should be granted them; and that every portion of the colony was anxious to see the men who were coming back from South Africa come back to their portion of the country, so that they might

give them a warm welcome ? And one place which had not until the arrival of the "Tagus " had an opportunity of seeing returned contingents was the southern town of Invercargill, which represented a great provincial district, where the people had helped with men, and money to send away our men ; and the people there requested, as they had every right to do, that the Government should allow them an opportunity of welcoming a contingent. In consequence of the refusal of the Admiralty to allow the steamer to go to the Bluff, and so enable the men to land there, the original programme could not be carried out ; and but for the fact that the citizens of Invercargill had expended a great deal of money and made extensive preparations to give the men a right good welcome-which they had done-the men would, after the dogmatic refusal of the Admiralty, not have been sent there at all. But, as the Premier had said, no man was sent back to the Bluff who had not

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that he could not understand how an honourable member could come here and say the Government were responsible for some deaths which the honourable member referred to, but of which he personally had previously heard nothing. An Hon. MEMBER. - Have you not heard of them ? Sir J. G. WARD said he had heard of some of the deaths, but not from such a cause as alleged to-night. But if there had been anything connected with the deaths of any of the men in the direction indicated by the honourable gentleman, he ventured to say that the Press would have directed the attention of the public to it long ago, and they would have found a universal demand throughout the colony for a public investigation outside the House into this matter. But it remained for the honourable member, in consequence of strictures made by the Premier earlier in the evening, to take advantage of this opportunity and make these serious charges across the floor of the House. Mr. J. ALLEN. - That is not so. Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable member ought to have given the Premier notice of his intention to make one of the gravest and blackest charges that could emanate from the mind of any man that he intended to make the charge. What more serious charge could be made than to accuse any member of the House of being guilty of the death of four or five men for political purposes ? He said that to assert that this contingent had been sent to the southern port for political purposes was absolutely contrary to fact. The honourable member might just as well say that the returned troopers who went to Wellington, Dunedin, and Auckland in every instance were sent there for political purposes. They had been sent to those ports chiefly because the citizens had been anxious to extend a welcome to them. However, he rose for the purpose of expressing his very, very deep regret at hearing a charge of that kind made by any honourable member against another member of the House. Mr. SEDDON (Minister of Defence) said that, in a matter of this kind, probably members would not think it was unjustifiable for him to take the course he now proposed in answering the honourable member. He now challenged the honourable member to tell the House and the country how many of the men who went to Invercargill had died. He told the honourable member, so far as he had been able to ascertain, not one. In reference to the question of the "Tagus" going to the Bluff, he fortunately had in his room a communication from the Agent-General, and he would read it :- # " Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W., 12th July, 1901. "SIR, -In reference to the copies of letters and telegrams which I have the honour to transmit herewith, I beg to state that on Thursday morning, the 4th instant, I received your cable message requesting me to use my influence to induce the Admiralty to refuse the mounted infantry returning by the transport 'Tagus' to be landed at the Bluff Harbour. I at once sent a message to the Admiralty asking for an interview with the Director-General of Transports, and an interview was granted me that morning. I represented to him fully your wishes in the matter, and the different reasons which induced the Government to urge that the original intention of landing the men at Bluff Harbour should be adhered to. In reply, he informed me that the Hydrographer of the Admiralty had advised that Bluff Harbour was an inconvenient and dangerous place for a vessel of the length and tonnage of the ' Tagus.' I combated this view, and assured him that

large trading-steamers made regular use of the harbour. He then stated that the 'Tagus' had left Albany bound for New Zealand, and could not be communicated with. The interview then ended. "I informed you of this by telegram, and in reply received your message stating that the 'Tagus' could be communicated with at Dog Island, in Foveaux Strait. I thereupon sent by hand to the Director-General of Transports the effect of your message ; but my messenger was told, in reply, that the objection based on the score of the inadequacy of the harbour must still prevent the Admiralty meeting your wishes. "On the same day, therefore, I again went to see the Director-General of Transports. I had in the meantime secured the names and tonnage of the largest steamers sent to the Bluff by the New Zealand Shipping Company, the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, and the Tyser Company respectively, and these details I laid before the Director-General of Transports. After another lengthy discussion with him, he suggested that I should see the Junior Lord of the Admiralty. "This accordingly I did, and went into the whole matter again as from the beginning. The Junior Lord stated very emphatically that the Admiralty had taken expert evidence on the question, that their expert advisers were against sending the steamer to Bluff Harbour, and that, as the owners also protested against doing so, the Admiralty did not see their way to go against the advice. He reminded me that ships of war did not use the harbour, and said, finally, that it would not be proper for the department to send a steamship owned by private persons into a harbour into which they would not send their own ships." That was, as the Admiralty would not send the "Ophir" into the Bluff, they would not send the "Tagus" :- " I then suggested that the information about Bluff Harbour on which the expert advisers of the Admiralty had relied dated probably from some time back, and that recent improvements in the harbour removed all the objections. I urged that the opinion of the mercantile companies who make use of Bluff Harbour and whose headquarters are in London should be taken on the point. It was finally decided that

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I should write officially to the Secretary to the Admiralty stating your request, though the Junior Lord would hold out no hope that it would be granted. All he indicated was that the Admiralty would be prepared to examine Bluff Harbour afresh, and would only be too pleased to find themselves able to form a higher estimate of it. Such examination would, of course, take time. " On Friday evening, therefore, I wrote a letter to the Secretary to the Admiralty-copy of which is annexed - stating your wishes, and giving the reasons to the best of my ability. " On Saturday morning, however, I received your cable message suggesting that the 'Tagus' should be stopped at Dog Island and the men transhipped there into the 'Tutanekai.' I sent this without any delay across to the Admiralty Office, and naturally expected a favourable response. Instead of that the clerk who carried the message had to wait all day without receiving a definite answer, and at six o'clock in the evening was assured by one of the highest officials that it would be impossible to decide the matter that day. He therefore went home. Nevertheless, in the evening the matter was decided unfavourably, and the letter from Sir Evan Macgregor-copy of which is herewith enclosed -- was posted to this office. There is no Sunday delivery of letters in London, so it did not reach me until Monday morning. I had made arrangements that any answer given on Saturday should be brought to me directly by the clerk aforesaid, but owing to the statement made to him at six p.m. I heard nothing till Monday. "On Monday morning, before informing you of the refusal, I paid a last visit to the Admiralty, where, after considerable delay, I was able to see Sir Evan Macgregor personally. I went more with the wish to obtain, if possible, some information as to the reasons which had led the Admiralty to refuse the request for transhipment than because I had the least hope of inducing them to make any concession. Sir Evan Macgregor, though very busy, courteously went to find the Junior Lord, who was sitting on a committee, and obtained from him the statement that the transhipment was objected to for reasons connected with navigation and possible risks. There was nothing more to be done except to wire you the result, which I immediately did. " While regretting the very unsatisfactory outcome of the matter, I

would desire to point out that it was only placed in my hands on the morning of Thursday, the 4th instant, when the Admiralty had already gone into it, and when its officials were committed to a definite refusal. The prospects of securing arrangements satisfactory to the Government are always much greater when it is possible for me to approach the Imperial authorities before any distinct decision has been come to. The great departments here are seldom inclined to change their minds or to withdraw from any position once taken up. - I have, &c., "W. P. REEVES." " From Premier to Agent-General. "(Telegram.) " Received 4th July, 1901. " ASKED Kitchener returning Fourth Fifth land Bluff. Transport Officer, Cape, also notified Government 'Tagus' would disembark them Bluff. Order that effect was given of arrival 'Tagus' Albany. Just received cable from Colonel Davies that, by order Transport Officer, London, ' Tagus' was go Port Chalmers. Ascertain whether it is so, for, if correct, it is treatment this Government resents and is undeserving of. Arrangements made for reception troops Bluff, Invercargill, and Gore, and, after services rendered by officers and men and what Government of New Zealand has done, to be treated absolute discourtesy and breach faith if 'Tagus' ordered Port Chalmers is reprehensible and undeserved. Trust cable from Colonel Davies incorrect. See matter at once. Urgent." " From Premier to Agent-General. "(Telegram.) " Received 4th July, 1901. " SECRETARY of State for Colonies cables 'Tagus ' going Otago. Royal Mail Steamship Company asserts Bluff danger. This outrageous condemnation of one of our best ports reprehensible. Refer New Zealand Shipping Company, Shaw-Savill, Shire, and Tyser lines, whose vessels, larger than 'Tagus,' go Bluff regularly. Government of New Zealand demand inquiry into circumstances. Still hope good faith be kept, seeing all arrangements made reception Bluff and Invercargill." " From Agent-General to Premier. "Sent 4th July, 1901. " (Telegram.) "IN answer to your telegrams of third and fourth, Director of Transports states 'Tagus' has left Albany for New Zealand and cannot be communicated with." Therefore it was the Admiralty, or Transport Department in London, that sent out the instructions that the "Tagus " was to proceed from Albany to Port Chalmers. The vessel was kept in Albany while communications on the matter were passing as between Albany and London. If the steamer had come west-about and on to Wellington instead of round by the Bluff, where would the benefit have come in ? The climate of Wellington at that time, he ventured to say, was worse than that of the Bluff. Hon. MEMBERS. - Hear, hear. Mr. SEDDON said he was not making any mistake when he said that. At all events, if that was what the honourable gentleman based his charges on, he would say this: that the movement to land the men at the Bluff came from the people of Southland and Invercargill. They said they had never had the opportunity of receiving or of sending away any of the contingents, and, as Southland had done its share in the patriotic movement, they justly asked that the honour should be given to them ; and accordingly he arranged for the Fourth Contingent to go to Invercargill. The Dunedin people also asked that the Fourth, as it was their special contingent, should go South, and not to Wellington, and he had it on the

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highest authority that the men themselves wanted to go to the South Island. The men had come mostly from Otago and Southland. Then, simply because he gave effect to the men's wishes, he was to have such a statement made about his actions as was made by the honourable member. He would disregard the statement, and say that the honourable member, if he wished to do justice to himself, would withdraw it at once. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) said he had nothing to do with the Admiralty, nor with the correspondence which the Premier had read from the Admiralty. He did not care whether the Admiralty ordered the vessel to proceed from Albany to the Bluff, or from Albany to any other place. He wished to remove an impression which apparently Sir Joseph Ward had as to what he (Mr. Allen) said with respect to Invercargill. What he said was that if the people of Invercargill knew what the medical officer said as to the boat going to the Bluff the people of the Bluff and Invercargill would at once have dispensed with the pleasure of receiving them there. The Premier had complained that he (Mr. Allen) did not give him

notice that he would bring up this matter. He might explain that he did not think it necessary that written notice should be given. He had already given the honourable gentleman notice in his speech on the Financial Statement that he was going to make some remarks in the presence of the Premier, because the Premier was not present when he (Mr. Allen) spoke in the financial debate. Mr. SEDDON said, As this matter was so important, he hoped the Chairman would allow the honourable member to quote from Hansard of the present session. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN (Major Steward) said, as this was a very serious matter, he thought there could be no objection to the honourable gentleman quoting from Hansard. Mr. J. ALLEN said this was what he said :- " And, Sir, it is the same with everything else they profess, but they never practice ; and if the Right Hon. the Premier were here to-night I should have to say something about his professions with regard to those who have been of great service to the colony during the last two years -- those who have been fighting our battles in South Africa. Everybody knows how the Premier has paraded 'our boys at the front,' and on every platform in the colony he has made political capital out of them. I recollect the Premier's patriotism about twelve years ago. It was the patriotism of separation and the patriotism of elective Governor ; and to-day, Sir, I say-although I will not say what I should say if the Premier were here-I say that he is parading 'our boys at the front' merely for political purposes, and that alone ; and I will prove it to the Premier when he is present. I will not take advantage of him in his absence, but when he is present in the House I shall prove, I think, to the House and to the country that he has simply been using our boys who have gone to the front solely for political purposes, and that he cares no more about them than he cares about everybody Mr. Seddon else : he only cares when he can utilise them for his own political advantage. " An Hon. MEMBER. - You know nothing about it. "Mr. J. ALLEN. - I do know something about it, and I shall say what I know when the Premier is here. I will not say it to- night." That was all with regard to that. Mr. SEDDON .- Is there a word there about the change of route ? Mr. J. ALLEN said it would have been unfair to the honourable gentleman to have said it then. He simply wished to prove to the Minister for Railways that this was not brought forward because of the strictures-as the honourable gentleman said-the Premier might have made upon himself. He also wished to inform the Premier that he had intended to make a statement about the " boys at the front " when he spoke on the Financial Statement some time ago. He delayed making the statement until the Premier was present. He now took the first opportunity of making this statement. He saw no reason why he should tell the honourable gentleman what he was going to say so long as he warned him he was going to say something as soon as he had the opportunity. With regard to the Admiralty, he had nothing whatever to do with that. The men were shattered in constitution; the doctor knew it; the doctor so reported ; and the Defence Minister was warned in a telegram that it was unsafe for those men to come by the cold southern route. Mr. MEREDITH .- Where is the telegram ? Mr. J. ALLEN said he had not the telegram. He would ask the Premier whether he had the telegram. Mr. SEDDON said he had told the honourable member that the communications received would be placed before the House. He said that no communication emphatically stating it was dangerous for the men, as had been mentioned by the honourable gentleman, had been received by him. Mr. J. ALLEN said, as the Premier denied the receipt of the telegram, all he asked for was an inquiry into the whole matter, and see whether any such telegram was sent and whether the Premier received it. But the inquiry must be a thorough one-no party inquiry, and no pillorying of him (Mr. Allen) with a majority from the other side. Let them have a fair inquiry. He asked for nothing more than a fair inquiry. Let all the correspondence. let all the documents-the official documents dealing with the "Tagus," the doctor's report, and all the official reports-be produced, and he would stand by the result of that inquiry. He could not say more than that. Mr. SEDDON said, On a telegram which the honourable gentleman had never seen. and which he could not give to the House, he had charged him (Mr. Seddon). Was that a right and proper thing for any member of the House to do ? Then, the honourable member went on to say he wanted an inquiry, but it

must not be a party one. An honourable member would stand up and make a serious charge like that.
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without the slightest foundation, except some telegram he had not seen. The honourable gentleman had never seen the telegram. Mr. J. ALLEN .- No. Mr. SEDDON said, Then he (Mr. Seddon) wanted to know what was his foundation for this charge. Was it some one who had told him? Was it because some one had told him something that he would stand up in his place in the House, under the protection of privilege, and make the statement he had made ? The honourable gentleman was in other hands. Mr. J. ALLEN .- I know where I am. Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member was in other hands, and any one who would so far forget himself as to do what the honourable member had done must be left to himself. Mr. ATKINSON .- What does that mean ? Mr. SEDDON said it meant that if a man had a conscience at all, if a man recognised the seriousness of what he was doing, and the great wrong he was doing-if he recognised that-remorse would be his punishment. That was what he meant. If the honourable member had no remorse or conscience, if he as a man was devoid of that finer feeling which should permeate the breast of every fair-minded man in the land, he was unworthy of notice, and he ought to be treated by him (Mr. Seddon) with scorn. He would take no notice of him at all. Then, the honourable gentleman said that he had given the Premier warning. What warning had he given? The honourable gentleman's language was that "the Premier was parading our boys at the front for political purposes." Was there a word of warning in that to indicate that he had something in his mind about their going to Invercargill? He had used those words, and according to them he was now in a false position. No such warning indicating a serious charge as that now mentioned had been given. The honourable gentleman had gone further, and said, " The Premier's professions about the boys at the front are for political purposes." There were political professions and there was parading at the front ; but was there anything to indicate what the honourable member had now brought on to the floor of the House ? Was there anything to cause him or any member to suspect that there was anything behind, such as had just now been mentioned ? He maintained there was not, and that by no possible construction could it be made to suggest that the honourable member had this in his mind. His opinion was that the member for Bruce had not this in his mind at the time. Mr. PIRANI .- Oh, yes, he had. Mr. SEDDON said, It seemed the honourable member's keeper sat behind him ; it was the honourable member for Palmerston. Why did not the member for Bruce give notice that he would ask for the correspondence between the Premier and the officer commanding the men on the "Tagus " from Albany should be laid on the table? There was nothing to warrant what he had said. Why had he not asked in a proper manner that this correspondence should be produced ? If it had been refused, that would have given some colour to his statement. No. warning had been given, no request made for the correspondence. The honourable gentleman had done nothing open or honourable : he had laid back to the last moment, and then took this opportunity of giving him (Mr. Seddon) a stab in the back. Well, he had had a good many things said against him in his time, but this charge was one which would bring its own condemnation to the mind of every right-thinking member of the House and to the people of the country. In making such a statement without being able to give anything in support of it the honourable gentleman was playing a desperate game ; but he was foiled, absolutely foiled, for the facts were against him. The people of the country would know now how to take the honourable gentleman at his true worth. He now knew him better than he had done before. He had. been warned against the honourable member as being dangerous by an old colleague who had passed away. That warning at the time, he thought, had not sufficient foundation, but now he knew it was well founded. Still, he could hardly believe it. He could not understand the honourable gentleman making such & charge, and believed that in his calmer moments he must see that it was his duty to withdraw what he had stated. He (Mr. Seddon) had nothing to keep back with respect to our soldiers, or in respect to his actions in connection with everything that had been done for them. He was prepared to give the fullest in-

formation in respect to what had passed between him and the Home authorities and the officers. He would be judged by that correspondence; he had nothing to keep back. And would the parents of our sons at the front believe the honourable member? Why, he (Mr. Seddon) had gone, as he believed, on the right track. It had been his wish to see that everything was done to remove the anxiety of the parents, to give justice to the sufferers, to give due credit to our sons; and in respect to this matter there was certainly nothing political in it on his part. The movement for the Fourth and Fifth Contingents to go South came from Otago, and it came from Southland; and, in deference to that, the destination of the steamer was arranged by the Transport Officer. And when they came to Dunedin that was the time; and if the medical officer had then said these men should not go to Invercargill, and he (Mr. Seddon) had insisted on sending them to Invercargill without the consent of the medical officer, then he would probably be to blame. But he said that his indication was not strongly that they should go, and they went on this condition; and he did not know one man who went to Invercargill who had suffered. He did know there were many who fell ill; and it did not matter by which route they came - if they had malarial fever or enteric fever in the system, it was not a question of going a few miles out of the latitude on the sea that would make any difference. There were some who came to Auckland, some who came to Wellington, some who came to.

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South at all who had their constitutions affected in this way, and had fallen sick on the way and since they had arrived in the colony. This was one of the attempts made by the honourable gentleman, he supposed, to prevent the first item being passed to-night. He wanted to keep them from the estimates. Let him tell the honourable gentleman this: he was going to give the telegrams referred to to members, and have the same laid on the table of the House. He hoped hereafter that they would have from the honourable gentleman a withdrawal of the statement he had made; and he hoped the honourable gentleman would reflect and see for himself that he never gave him (Mr. Seddon) the slightest indication that there was anything whatever serious in his mind. He took it, when the honourable gentleman read these remarks, that he was alluding to the sending-forth of the contingents, not the reception of the contingents. Mr. PIRANI said there was a reference that the contingents would be two years in South Africa. Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman did not say a word about bringing them home. Mr. PIRANI. - Yes. Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member would keep on protecting his friends, but he did not think that if he protected the honourable member, under these circumstances, he would get much credit. His own opinion was the honourable gentleman did not make up his mind until the close of his (Mr. Seddon's) speech, when he referred to the Commissioner's report. Well, then, it was in the honourable gentleman's mind, and he did this deliberately - he would not say with malice aforethought, because that would be unparliamentary. the honourable gentleman would do that, he (Mr. Seddon) would not be safe when the honourable gentleman was near. Mr. PIRANI wished to make a personal explanation. The Premier had practically accused him of giving the member for Bruce, Mr. J. Allen, that information. Mr. SEDDON. - I did nothing of the kind. Mr. PIRANI. - That was the inference. Mr. SEDDON. - No. Mr. PIRANI only wished to say that if that was what the Premier insinuated it was simply untrue; that was all. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said he hoped during the supper adjournment members on both sides had had time to cool down. But they must realise that a very serious charge had been brought by the member for Bruce against the Premier. The charge, so far as he could understand, amounted to this: that while the returned troopers were at Albany the doctor reported to the officer in command that, on account of a number of men suffering from malaria and enteric fever. it would be dangerous to take them into a colder climate, and the officer in command cabled to that effect to the Premier, notwithstanding which the Premier insisted on the troops landing at Invercargill, Mr. Seddon died. Mr. J. ALLEN said he did not say that in consequence of it the men died; he had said the responsibility was taken off the shoulders of the

doctor, and was on the Premier. Mr. SEDDON .- Did you say I received a wire from the doctor that it would be dangerous for the men to be taken South ? Mr. J. ALLEN. - I did not use the word "dangerous." Mr. SEDDON. - I repeat the honourable member did use the word dangerous; if not, then what did you say ? Mr. J. ALLEN said, This was what he had said : The doctor advised that it would be unwise, on account of the shattered health of the men, to bring them by the cold southern route. The Premier was so advised ; and, notwithstanding that advice, he said they must go to Invercargill. Mr. SEDDON .- You have changed the word from " dangerous" to "unwise," and upon that you base the charge against me ? Mr. MASSEY said, Though it had been qualified to a certain extent, still the charge was so serious that the matter should not be allowed to rest where it was. The difficulty was to know what to do. The only course, it seemed to him, to adopt was to set up a Committee of inquiry, the difficulty being the tendency of such Committees to develop into party Committees and to look at questions from a party point of view. He would suggest to the Premier to set up a Committee of five members- two from each side, with the Speaker for Chairman. If that were done he was sure the honourable member for Bruce would withdraw from his position if found to be wrong. In the meantime the matter might be allowed to drop. Mr. SEDDON said, If any member was to be allowed to make such charges, and the course suggested was taken, no member of the House would be safe. He said that no honourable member would be safe. The honourable gentleman did not give any grounds for his statement. beyond mentioning that there was a communication in which he alleged the doctor said that it would be unwise to do a certain thing. He thought the honourable member's words ought to have been taken down, as when a member made a reflection on another member it was customary to make him withdraw. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN. - If it was desired that the words should be taken down, a motion to that effect should have been made before any other honourable member had spoken. Mr. SEDDON thought a serious matter like that ought not to have been overlooked. The responsibility rested with the honourable member, and he ought to have given the House something to support him in his statement ; but he had not attempted to do so. He had now intimated that he was afraid to face a Committee. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) said. He particularly wanted to speak on the matter, because he

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was present when the troops landed from the steamer at Port Chalmers. He went with them to Invercargill. He was not going to deal with the question of whether the member for Bruce (Mr. Allen) was now dealing with the question he referred to in the financial debate. He would recall the condition of the weather at the time the Fourth and Fifth Contingents arrived in the colony. He supposed it was the worst weather the colony had experienced for ten years. From the North Island to the South Island it was, he supposed, the coldest spell of weather they had had for years. When they left the North Island there was snow everywhere, and that state of things continued right down to Stewart Island. The vessel, therefore, would have experienced cold weather wherever she went. Whatever action the Premier had taken with regard to bringing the troops to any one part of the colony it was surely impossible for him to foretell what the weather would be on their arrival. The troops went first to Port Chalmers, and not to the Bluff. The honourable gentleman had said that the Premier was in some way responsible for the deaths that had taken place. Without giving names, he would give the particulars of each case. The first man took ill immediately after leaving the Cape, and he died before the vessel reached Albany ; the second was so ill on arriving at Albany that he had to be taken to the hospital there, where he died after the departure of the steamer ; the third man took ill on leaving Albany, and died of embolism before arriving in New Zealand ; the fourth died on the steamer, and never landed on the shores of New Zealand ; the fifth man was very ill when they landed at Port Chalmers, and had been ill on the trip across from Albany. He was taken to the Dunedin Hospital, where he died of pneumonia. Sir J. G. WARD .- He did not go to Invercargill at all ? Mr. McNAB said that none of those he had mentioned had gone to Invercargill. The sixth

man went to Invercargill. There was nothing wrong with him at Port Chalmers, and, as Invercargill was his home, he would have gone there in any case. He subsequently left his own home-so he (Mr. McNab) was advised -and went to Dunedin, which was a very unfortunate thing for him to do under the circumstances. He took ill, he understood, at Dunedin, and then returned to his home, where he died. That was a very sad case indeed. The seventh case was that of a man who was ill nearly all the way across from Cape Colony ; he was operated on twice for abscesses. He never went South, but was shifted with great care to the Dunedin Hospital, where he died from the effects of the abscesses. He never went south of Dunedin. The eighth man died at Timaru. He could not trace whether he was one of the sick men who were left on board the steamer at Port Chalmers, and shifted from there to Timaru, or whether he was one who, being in good health when he landed, went to Invercargill and came back to Timaru. But beyond these facts, and that he was a member of the Geraldine Rifles and died at Timaru, he could not tell what his movements were. What was the reason so many men were in that condition when they came away from South Africa ? They had been in the interior and in a warm climate for a long time, and the first appearance of illness came on when they were mobilised at Worcester. They took colds, and got into such a condition that they had to be hurried away from that place to prevent a high mortality taking place. It would be as reasonable to blame Lord Kitchener, who was responsible for ordering the men to be mobilised at Worcester, for what had taken place as to say that the Hon. the Premier was to blame because, in agreeing to the wishes of the Invercargill people, he ordered the men to go round by Invercargill. There were no grounds whatever for supposing that the result would have been anything else if the men had come to the North Island instead of to the South Island, because the two men who might not be included in the category of men who arrived in the colony ill would have had to be sent on to the South in order to reach their homes. He did not think there was one single circumstance that could have been foretold. In connection with the trip to Invercargill there was a good deal of sickness, which was the result of exposure for three days after they got ashore ; but it was a happy thing to be able to say that, as far as they could trace it at the present time, no one lost his life in consequence of it. In regard to the question of drafting, he was on board the steamer when the men were passed by the doctor, and eighteen or twenty of them he would not allow to go, and sent some to the hospital and some were kept on the steamer. As one who was present when the men landed in this colony, who went round to the Bluff in the steamer with them, and who came as far as Gore, at any rate, with the men, he did not think any human being could have prevented the unfortunate illness and death of these men. Together with the member for Invercargill and other members he was present at Port Chalmers when the men landed. The members of the Dunedin Reception Committee were also there -the Mayor of Dunedin (Mr. Denniston), the Chairman of the late Reception Committee that sent the men away (Mr. Kempthorne), and Messrs. J. F. M. Fraser and J. Chisholm, who had taken an active part in connection with all the arrangements : and there was not a man in this colony more insistent than were these gentlemen on the men going to Invercargill and the original programme being carried out. They telegraphed to the Premier to have the programme carried out, and not to disappoint the Invercargill people. It was very much to be regretted that the feelings of the parents and relatives of these fine young fellows who had lost their lives, unfortunately, on the eve of returning to their homes-some in sight of their native land and some after landing-should be harassed, and have their feelings torn asunder as they would be where any person in the colony was charged with circumstances which would lead inevitably to the conclusion that there was a responsibility between the Premier

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the country. Mr. HANAN (Invercargill) said he had listened with the greatest surprise and regret to the extraordinarily outrageous, reckless, and reprehensible statement of the member for Bruce. The honourable gentleman's statement to-night should let members of the House and the people of the

country know to what extent some members of the Opposition were prepared to go in order to hurl a charge against the present Government. He felt sure that there was hardly a member of the House who possessed the feelings of a man but must have been pained and shocked to think we had a member -80 lost to good taste, so lost to fairness, so lost to all that was manly, as to stand up in the House and say what had been said. He said any man who would stand up in the House and make the grave and foundationless charge that had been made this evening was unworthy the name of a man, and much less to be a member of this honourable House. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) moved, That these words be taken down. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said, in speaking to the motion, He would ask honourable members opposite to contrast this incident with what had occurred earlier in the evening. When a member of the House had levelled a very serious charge against him, did any of the honourable gentlemen opposite rise to protect him and move that the words be taken down? Members sat there and heard the charge made, and it was as much a breach of good taste and of the Standing Orders of the House by a friend on their side as it was by a member on his side. He said the application of the words of the honourable member for Invercargill was an application he had heard before in the House. Members could take an outside simile and say that any person who accused him of the charge was unworthy of the name of a man, and was unworthy of a seat in this House. He said, if the honourable members opposite thought they were going to block the business of the country by the course taken, and thought to prevent the favourable effect of his speech in reply on the Budget, they were making a miscalculation. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) rose to a point of order. On a motion that "words be taken down " he believed there was no debate, and that it was the duty of the Chairman to ascertain the pleasure of the Committee. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said that was the rule. Mr. HERRIES said the Premier had been allowed to speak, and if the right honourable gentleman was going to debate it they would all take a hand. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked, Was it the pleasure of the Committee that the words be taken down ? Hon. MEMBERS .- No, no. The ACTING CHAIRMAN said there was a majority against it, and the words would not be taken down. Mr. McNab spectator, indifferent, and speak in the polished language of novels in regard to a matter so serious as this, and otherwise deal with it as with kid gloves? The strongest words of condemnation that a man could utter would not be out of place on an occasion like this, when such a cruel and baseless charge as was heard this evening was made against the Premier. And on what grounds ? Here was a man who posed as a would-be leader of the people of the colony levelling a terrible accusation against the Premier on the flimsiest possible evidence? The honourable member sometimes talked about law and legal principles, but what legal evidence had he brought forward that night to support his serious charge? It was simply hearsay evidence, and the remarks of the member for Bruce could only be attributed to an hysterical and diseased imagination. The honourable member stated that he had heard some of the statements which he had given utterance to in the House ; but before publicly mentioning them on the floor of the House he should surely, as a right-thinking and sensible man, have made inquiries into them to ascertain what truth there was in them. Instead of doing that, however, he had taken it upon himself to give expression to wild and reckless statements that had not a tittle of evidence to support them. Justice and common-sense demanded that such charges as had been made that evening should only be made when supported by the strongest and most conclusive evidence; otherwise no man's reputation or liberty would be safe in the country. Then, reference had been made to the Premier using the visit of the contingent to Invercargill for political purposes. In taking a prominent and leading part in connection with the sending-away and reception of the troops the Premier had simply given effect to the wishes of the people. During the last twelve months especially the flood-gates of emotion had been opened in the colony. and the people from one end of it to the other had been swayed with a profound sentiment of admiration and delight, causing great outbursts and public demonstrations of enthusiasm, and the Hon. the Premier, as the leader of the people, had simply been doing his duty on

and off the platform by giving effect to the public expression of the feelings of the people of the colony, which had been ablaze with patriotism. As far as the Premier was concerned, if he had wished to make political capital out of the visit of the troops to Invercargill, would the honourable gentleman not have gone to Invercargill himself to attend the ceremonies in connection with the welcome to the men ? He had been pressed to attend ; but the reply he sent was that he could not attend as he had to remain in Wellington to attend to the business of the colony. Then, as far as the people of Dunedin were concerned, he would point out that a short time before the arrival of the contingent in the colony the Premier was speaking at a

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his remarks said that, having regard to the important part that Otago and Southland had played in the raising and sending-away of the contingents, it was only right that the men of the Fourth Contingent, on their return, should land in the south of the colony, and not in Wellington. The remark was received in 11.0. Dunedin with the greatest enthusiasm. It was the desire of the people of Dunedin that the troops should go to Invercargill, where extensive arrangements had been made for their reception. They fully recognised the great part Southland had played, shoulder to shoulder with the people of Otago, in equipping and sending away the contingents. How any man in his right senses could for one moment think of associating the unfortunate deaths of some of the young men in New Zealand with the visit of the other members of the troops to Invercargill was beyond comprehension. Every soldier who went to Invercargill had returned to his home carrying with him pleasant and grateful recollection of his visit. The troops were received at Invercargill with the greatest possible hospitality and enthusiasm, and in every sense the reception was one that was not only a credit to that town, but to the whole colony. The member for Bruce had tried to have a slap at him (as member for Invercargill), and at the Premier, but he had ignominiously failed. He felt certain that the people of New Zealand would now have the measure of the member for Bruce, both as a politician and as a man. Mr. CARNCROSS (Taieri) said he felt almost at a loss how to shape his words on the present occasion. He had been in the House many sessions, he had seen some very heated scenes, he had been present during moments of great excitement, but never during a moment of the greatest excitement in that House had he known such charges to be laid at the door of any one as had been laid at the door of the Premier that evening. An Hon. MEMBER .- You are forgetting 1891. Mr. CARNCROSS said he was forgetting nothing. That was not a time for flippant interjections. That was one of the gravest moments he had ever taken part in in that House. Did honourable members recognise what was the position ? Did they recognise the charges laid at the door of the Premier ? In so many words the Premier was virtually accused of manslaughter for the sake of political display. Was there any man in the House who was not shocked to hear that ? Was there any one in the galleries who did not feel shocked when they heard those words come from the member opposite. The honourable member spoke with the cool confidence of a man who believed he could prove his position. If the honourable member really believed he had the facts behind him, had he played the part of a man, had he played the part of even a politician, in connection with this question? Ten weeks of the session had elapsed, and yet the honourable member did not bring up this subject before that evening. It was the honourable member's opportunity after the meeting of the House, when he should have impeached the Premier before the country, and not have delayed bringing up the matter until that late period of the session. This charge had been made by a gentleman who had all the benefits of education, who had all the benefits of mixing in refined society, and who knew full well the terrible nature of the charges he had made that night, and yet he calmly and coolly made this charge. The honourable member was not performing his duty to the people he represented, nor to himself, nor to the country, in keeping this matter nursed up for this particular occasion. It was his duty to have impeached the Government on the very first opportunity with this extraordinary knowledge in his possession. They had

heard a great deal lately about the honour and dignity of Parliament. He would like to know where the honour and dignity of Parliament came in when a charge of that kind was made for the sake of-should he say, political notoriety. He was anxious to see how the Press of New Zealand treated this matter, and if there was not one universal chorus of indignation throughout the whole of the Press in New Zealand condemning the honourable gentleman he would feel ashamed to acknowledge that he belonged to the fraternity. No such charge had ever been made within those walls before. The business of the honourable gentleman and of the House was now to go through with this and probe it to the very bottom, and see it through to the bitter end ; and if the honourable member could not prove his allegations he should hide his diminished head in political shame. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said it was with feelings of horror and indignation that he had heard the charge made that night by the member for Bruce, and yet this matter seemed to be treated by some honourable members on the other side with levity. It seemed to him that if members could listen to a discussion of this kind and snigger at it they must be men of diseased and morbid minds. Now, as member for the City of Dunedin, he could say that when the "Tagus " arrived, and when it was known that the troopers would be taken to the Bluff, there was very great soreness throughout the city that members of the contingent who had friends and relatives there should not be able to receive them ; and if there had been any serious complaint of the character now made it would surely have reached his ears, and yet he could say, as to the matters mentioned in the charge of the honourable member for Bruce, he had never heard so much as a whisper. He was member for the City, and he was continually going about the streets and meeting with people who felt sore about the troopers being taken down to the Bluff, and he certainly would have heard something about this matter if there had been anything in it. They had been told that this had been done for political capital. Well, if the right honourable gentleman had wished to make political capital out

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lowed those soldiers to go back to Invercargill, because the honourable gentleman required no strengthening of his reputation or influence or power down there. If he wanted to please the people, and to please the greatest number, he would have allowed them to disembark at Dunedin, as he had many telegrams requesting him to do, and he would have never run the risks of seriously offending the people of that large and important city. It appeared to him that this charge was of a very serious character, and, so far as he could gather, it had been laid on purely hearsay evidence. He must say it seemed to him a mere act of desperation on the part of a political opponent and of a party driven to despair. It was the basest and lowest thing a political opponent could do. He, along with the honourable member for Invercargill, regretted that any member of the House should have descended to such depths. Mr. A. L. D. FRASER (Napier) was afraid they were drifting in the direction that had been mentioned by the honourable member for Franklin. The matter was very simple, and did not require a legal mind for its solution. They had practically a plaintiff and defendant. The plaintiff had figuratively charged the defendant with being guilty of manslaughter, with having caused the death of six persons. An Hon. MEMBER .- And for political purposes. Mr. A. L. D. FRASER said he would leave that aspect of it on one side, as he desired to avoid all ill-feeling. But that was the way the matter had come before them, and would go before the country. Surely if they could trust the people to elect a Parliament they could trust them to judge between the honourable member for Bruce and the Premier. They had heard what the plaintiff had to say ; but they did not need to hear the Right Hon. the Premier, for they had heard the defendant's case from the honourable member for Maita, who had proved to an absolute demonstration that the honourable member for Bruce - to speak generously-was under a mistake. Following Court practice, the honourable member for Bruce might now be heard in rebuttal, and could deny or qualify the statements made by the honourable member for Maita, if he was capable of so doing ; and, if he could not, the action might be disposed of by a verdict for the defendant. To his mind the

honourable member for Bruce had been misinformed, and had misrepresented the Right Hon. the Premier. The matter might conclude-he could not say in a satisfactory manner, but in a far better manner than it would if they continued the debate. He took it that, without disrespect to the honourable member for Bruce, they must accept the evidence, if he might so term it, of the honourable member for Maitland. He could, himself, speak with absolute knowledge of one unfortunate young man who had died. He would not mention the name, but would give it to any member who desired to know it. This young man had been very ill all the way from the Cape ; he was Mr. Barclay New Zealand. As soon as he reached the first port he was taken to the hospital, and every care bestowed upon him. And what was the action of the right honourable gentleman who was now charged with manslaughter? What was the action of the man who did everything for political capital? This man who had no heart and no humanity, what was the first thing he did? Within half an hour of the steamer being communicated with that young man's father and mother were acquainted with his dangerous condition ; special arrangements were made for them to leave Napier the next morning, the steamer was kept for them to be taken down, and they arrived in time to see their son before he died. That was what was done by one who was said to lack humanity-by one who is now charged with manslaughter. He (Mr. Fraser) would leave honourable members and the country to judge between the party who made this charge. not supported by a tittle of evidence, and the one who was accused. He might say, further. that, to his own knowledge, within the precincts of the House, the father and mother had come to see the Right Hon. the Premier to thank him for the kindness their son had received in South Africa, on the way back, and when in Dunedin. He need say nothing more. He hoped the honourable member for Bruce would take the suggestion thrown out and withdraw his charge. He might safely say that he had been misinformed, after the statement that had been made and the evidence produced by Mr. McNab. If he would not do so he (Mr. Fraser) would say that the statement of the honourable member for Bruce did admirable credit to his imagination, but left his veracity derelict. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said a considerable amount of heat had been introduced into this debate, and it seemed to him that, in agreeing with the view of the last speaker. it was a matter between that honourable gentleman and the member for Bruce and the Premier. The member for Bruce had asked for an inquiry, and, no doubt, if he got the inquiry, and the result went against him, he would withdraw every word of his charge. He believed. however, that the honourable gentleman was prepared to bring forward evidence to substantiate his statement. If that was so, why should he not have the opportunity ? No man among them, of course, could speak from his own knowledge. All their knowledge must be bearsay. The honourable gentleman was not on the "Tagus." Mr. HANAN asked, Would the honourable member for Bruce make the statement outside ? Mr. HERRIES .- I think so. Mr. SEDDON .- I challenge the member for Bruce to do so. Mr. HERRIES asked, What about those honourable gentlemen who talked about the wickedness of charging the Premier with manslaughter in connection with this matter? When, several sessions ago, the Premier charged

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one of the leaders of the Opposition with being the author of the Poverty Bay massacre, did not these honourable gentlemen, who were now so sensitive, applaud the Premier for making that charge against the Hon. Mr. Rolleston ? Mr. HORNSBY .- Not the author. Mr. HERRIES said the honourable gentleman was not a member of the House at the time. Mr. HORNSBY said he happened to be in the House at the time. Mr. HERRIES said that Mr. Rolleston was charged on that occasion with being the author of the Poverty Bay massacre, and on the flimsy evidence of a publican of Tolago Bay. He had no wish to rake up these things, but if the honourable member for Invercargill would use language such as he had used in his last speech these things would be raked up. Every one who knew the Hon. Mr. Rolleston knew that he could not be guilty of such a thing. Mr. GILFEDDER asked, What has that got to do with the "Tagus " ? [Mr. PIRANI mimicked the honourable member for Wallace's utterance.] Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa)

rose to a point of order. Was it in keeping with the dignity and decorum of the House that an honourable gentleman, sitting in his seat, should imitate and mimic in the most offensive manner the utterance of a brother member of the House ? Mr. SEDDON (Premier) moved, That the Acting-Chairman call upon the honourable member for Palmerston to apologize for mimicking another- as he had done another member-when he was speaking in the House. He hoped the honourable member would admit the impropriety, and would at once express his regret to the House. If they were not to have ' more serious things happening, then they must put a stop to such conduct as he complained of. To mimic the voice of an honourable member was certainly irritating and disrespectful to the House. He asked the honourable member to realise the seriousness of the position, and withdraw, and express regret for what he had done. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said it was only for him to point out to the honourable gentleman that conduct of that kind was likely to lead to disorder and, of course, was not proper. It was impossible to ask the honourable gentleman to withdraw an objectionable sound ; but he had to say that if it occurred again he would think it his duty to take further steps. Mr. PIRANI said, If the Premier would not so constantly mimic other members every time he got up, other members would not follow his example. Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member was making an unfounded statement; he never did anything so rude, and he would move that the honourable member be called upon to apologize for his conduct. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said the only method in which that could be done was for the Chairman to report the offending member to the Speaker. He could scarcely ask the honourable member to apologize to the House. VOL. CXVIII .- 35. to order before his attention was called to the matter by the member for Wairarapa. Mr. SEDDON moved, That the matter be re-ported to the Speaker. He had done all he could to endeavour to have the matter settled. Mr. PIRANI rose to a point of order. The Acting- Chairman had already ruled, and his ruling had been obeyed ; and it was only when the ruling of the Chair was disobeyed that a member could be reported to the House. Mr. SEDDON said the Acting-Chairman had ruled the honourable member to be guilty of disorder. Mr. PIRANI .- No, he has not. Mr. SEDDON asked whether the conduct of the honourable member was orderly or not ? The Acting-Chairman had asked him to withdraw, and he had not done so. He asked that his conduct be reported to the Speaker. Mr. HERRIES said they could not ask a member to do an impossibility. The honour- able member had used no words, and it was impossible to apply the Standing Order. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said he had called the honourable gentleman to order for making an unpleasant noise before his attention had been drawn to it. He hoped the honourable member would not render it necessary for him to take any further steps in the matter. He did not think he could ask him to apologize, and he did not think he could report him as having been guilty of disorderly conduct, as he had not refused to obey the Chair. Mr. SEDDON said, if the Committee was not to report a member for disorderly conduct when the Chairman called attention to the fact that he was disorderly- Mr. PIRANI objected to the Premier direct- ing the Chairman as to how he should rule ; and moved, That the Premier be reported for disorder in the Committee. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN requested the honourable member for Palmerston to sit down. Mr. SEDDON said, If a member was guilty of unbecoming or disorderly conduct, and the Chairman so informed him, then he would have to withdraw the offensive expression, and could be called upon to apologize. He moved, That the honourable gentleman be reported. Mr. PIRANI maintained that, the Chair- man having ruled on the point of order, the Premier had no right to discuss it. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said he had not stated that the honourable member had refused to obey the Chair. He understood the honour- able gentleman had obeyed the Chair, and that he would not again offend. Mr. SEDDON asked the Chairman if he understood the honourable member to say that he would not again transgress ? The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said he distinctly understood that. Mr. HERRIES said that when he was inter- rupted he was expressing the hope that the in- cident would be terminated. He hoped that the gentleman considered would agree in some way to have a Commission of inquiry into the

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supreme importance. He did not know what evidence the honourable member for Bruce had, but he was quite satisfied that that gentleman would not make such a statement as that without having absolute confidence in it. Mr. O'MEARA said that he should give his authority for it. Mr. HERRIES hoped that the heat which had been shown in the matter would end as soon as possible. They wanted to get on with the estimates. He himself had a good deal to say about them, and hoped that they would not be kept out of their beds till six o'clock in the morning to get through the first item. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) said that when he rose a few moments ago to move that certain words be taken down, he did so simply in connection with the episode that had occurred, and not to indicate his sentiments in any way. He knew nothing whatever of the facts of the case, nor did he know what the motives of the honourable member for Bruce were. He, therefore, held his peace. He had no desire to canvas the question, but when he moved that the words be taken down, the Premier, in justifying their use, said that similar words had been used on occasions in the past, and that when he was assailed no one on the Opposition side of the House moved that the words be taken down. He (Mr. Hutcheson) pointed out that the Premier could hardly expect those on that side of the House to be the first to move in the matter, although the Premier must admit that at times they were prepared to stand by him as against his followers. The Premier had urged justification for the previous wrong that had been done in what he (Mr. Hutcheson) conceived to be a misuse of the customs of Parliament. The honourable gentleman thought to justify it because a similar wrong had been done. If he were to follow that line of argument he would say that the action of the right honourable gentleman had justified the statement made by the honourable member for Bruce, inasmuch as the Premier had insinuated that a certain coal-mine, in which he believed the member for Bruce was concerned, was a serious menace to human life, and that the honourable member knew it. In justification of that, the Premier read a garbled 11.30. account from the report of the Commission. He would point out that the honourable gentleman was doing his Mines Department no great credit; nor did he think the honourable gentleman's colleague the Minister of Mines indorsed what he said, because the House had always been assured that the Mines Department, so far as inspection went, was the best regulated department in this or any other colony. That was where he was justified in declining the precedent the Premier pointed out -that because some injury had been done to him and allowed to pass, that was justification for what was, in his opinion, a repetition of it. Arguing on those lines, the Premier gave great provocation to the member for Bruce, putting it in the extreme way he did. The Premier wanted the country to believe that the member for Bruce Mr. Herries businesses a man could be engaged in-namely, in working a mine which, because necessary expenditure was not incurred, was a danger to life. Mr. SEDDON said he did not give the strongest portion of the Royal Commissioners' report. Mr. HUTCHESON said he would like to hear the Minister of Mines on the matter, and he would also like to hear what the departmental report said upon the mine. However, he was not there to go into details of the mine, nor vet into other statements that had been made. He thought the member for Bruce and the Premier should have settled this between themselves, and should not have dragged the whole House into this, and then charge this side of the House with a malicious design .to cause an acrimonious and bitter debate in order to stop the estimates. Surely they did not want to do this. Mr. SEDDON said he was under the impression, and had since been informed, that the member for Bruce had mentioned this to some members of his own party. Mr. HUTCHESON could assure the Premier that, so far as he was concerned, he did not wish to use that or any other thing to prevent the estimates coming on. He wanted them to come on, because he had a whole lot to say on them. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said he supposed the Premier meant himself (Mr. Pirani) when the honourable gentleman said that the member for Bruce had mentioned this to some of his own party. Mr. SEDDON .- Not the charge; about the officers and men of the " Tagus." Mr. PIRANI said, in confirmation of the statement made by the member for Bruce, that he

intended to mention this subject in the Financial Statement debate, but did not do so owing to the absence of the Premier—he mentioned to the Premier, as he mentioned now to the House, that the member for Bruce told him (Mr. Pirani) the evening he spoke, that he intended to bring up a question in connection with the "Tagus." He thought it was time to drop this subject now : but before he left this rather acrimonious discussion it seemed to him a most extraordinary thing that a member of the House, or a member of the Committee, could say another member was unworthy to be called a man, or a member of this House, and yet there should be an almost unanimous desire not to take those words down ; while a mere interjection by himself, or an imitation if members liked to call it such, should be asked to be taken down almost unanimously by the same lot of members. They wanted " blood," as the Premier termed it, he supposed. One matter he wanted to direct attention to in connection with the estimates was the marvellous manner in which the printing and stationery vote was increasing. He noticed by the estimates the gross amount this year was \$50,704. Now, besides that, there was a large amount of money being spent by the Government in print-

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ing work altogether outside the Government Printing Office. It could not be said that this large increase in the printing and stationery -estimates had been caused by any exceptional printing in connection with the Royal visit, for most of that was done ; but it seemed to him an extraordinary thing that a book like the " Right Hon. R. J. Seddon's Visit to the South Sea Islands," which was purely a private concern, should be printed at the expense of the taxpayers at the Government Printing Office. An Hon. MEMBER .- What edition was that ? Mr. PIRANI said this was the second edition. He understood there were two editions of this book. The first edition had on the outside, in elegant gilt letters, "A Premier in Search of Health." Besides that, there were a number of beautiful pictures that did not appear in the second edition. The Minister in charge of the Printing Office was in his seat, and might say a few words in explanation of this fact : On very good authority he had been told that there was an edition of 2,500 copies of the work printed, bound, and destroyed. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Utterly incorrect. Mr. PIRANI said, Well, he had been told so. Printed on the cover was " A Premier in Search of Health." He would not enter into a full description of the illustrations—they were really beautiful—but they had been left out of the second edition. The books had been printed at the Government expense, and if the Printing Office was to be used for printing works of the kind, it was an improper use of a Government department. He knew a little about printing himself, and his estimate of printing 2,500 copies of the work was £280—illustrations and all. It did not say whom the book was written by, although he had no doubt that the Premier, among his multifarious duties, had taken upon himself to write it. That was not the only instance of work being done at the Printing Office which had blocked the returns and other reports that ought to have been ready for Parliament. This, he contended, was a misuse of the power of the Government. If the Government wanted to issue a special work of the sort, permission ought to be obtained from the House. There was another item on the estimates that was just as bad—namely, £260 for a number of copies of the January issue of the Review of Reviews, which contained an article in praise of the Ministry. It was not right to throw money about broadcast in this way. The Government Printing Office was becoming an enormous tax upon the people of the colony ; and if members had been asked to vote separately on many of the different items of printing that had been done in the last few years at the Printing Office, he was sure a great many of them would not have been sanctioned. Honourable members knew how the House had treated the proposed expenditure on a work of irrigation : it was struck out of the estimates. Unfortunately it was reinstated later on, as the Government had committed themselves to the expenditure on the work. Mr. HALL-JONES .- It was not done at the Printing Office Mr. PIRANI was aware of that ; he was simply pointing out the evil of getting work of the sort done without the permission of the House. All extraordinary printing that could not be classed in the ordinary printing should be paid for out of a special vote. He felt

certain that the House would deal very tenderly with the vote for the Review of Reviews, and also with "A Premier in search of Health." He doubted if, when members had to go to the Government cap in hand for £100 for a road or a bridge and could not get it because money was not available, the House would sanction such a vote. He was not speaking about the 11.0. quality of the work, or whether it was a useful work or not ; but there ought to be a special authorisation if work of this sort was to be carried out at the expense of the colony at the Government Printing Office. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he was not going to sit there quietly and hear said what had been stated by the member for Bruce, and that on the flimsiest, the most paltry, the most unfounded, and the most unwarranted pretext and foundation. If the honourable gentleman said he had foundation for his statement to the effect that the medical officer of the "Tagus" said it would be un- wise to bring the men to the Bluff-was that the only justification for what the honourable member had said? If that was all the honourable member had heard, and if that was all that could be heard, and if that was all that could be brought against him (Mr. Seddon) he would ask, What conclusion could" members come to? The only conclusion they could come to was that the honourable member must have been suffering mentally at that time-he hoped only temporarily - and that he had really forgotten for the moment what he was saying, who he was speaking to, and where he was. He thought the honourable member should express his contrition for what he had stated. He believed now that the statement had been made designedly, and that the honourable member endeavoured by that, probably, to create a mild sensation. He wanted to take public opinion away from the finances of the colony. The honourable member waited his opportunity, just as history told them certain other persons waited their opportunity and then struck a blow. He bided his time and struck a foul blow. It would be unparliamentary for him to say they had a political anarchist in that House, but the action of the honourable gentleman was exactly the action taken by those enemies of organized society, those fiends When a charge was made in human form. against him by the late member for Patea, whom he afterwards brought to book, and when he was placed in a position of defending himself, that gentleman refused to attend the Committee, and his opinion was the same course would be followed by the honourable gentleman opposite, who had said that he did not want a party inquiry. Now, the late member for Patea did attempt to justify himself, because he did produce something-which afterwards proved to be a forgery. Had he taken the action on that

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occasion as he could have done, that gentleman and two others, his confederates, would have been kept in seclusion by the Government for a time. And if the honourable member opposite would dare to say outside what he had said inside the House, he would take a course that would prevent repetition. He dare not say even within the precincts of the House what he had stated in Committee. As it was, he would treat him with contempt. Now he was going to read the honourable member a communication. This was to Colonel Davies :- "I have asked Commandant to see doctor with contingents, and have told him that any members of troops likely to be detrimentally affected by cold, or who are not sufficiently strong to go to Bluff, may be allowed to land in Dunedin. " R. J. SEDDON." Then, he had another communication to Colonel Penton, Dunedin :- " See doctor with contingents. Any members of contingent likely to be detrimentally affected by cold, or who are not sufficiently strong to go to Bluff, may be allowed to land in Dunedin. "R. J. SEDDON." He again repeated that the question that arose whilst the "Tagus" was at Albany was as to whether she should go to the Bluff or to Dunedin. The Admiralty decided they must go to Dunedin ; and she went there, and there the matter ended, and no communication from either Colonel Davies or any one else could alter the situation or facts. It was the Bluff or Dunedin, and nowhere else. They did not go to the Bluff ; they went to Dunedin, and the men who were ill landed at Dunedin. If they had come to Wellington they would have had to send all the men to their homes -to Dunedin, or Invercargill, or elsewhere in the South Island. It was never intended to keep them in Wellington, and for

the honourable member to state what he had stated against him (Mr. Seddon) was monstrous. He was not one of those who was going to put up with the honour- able gentleman or any one else saying a thing of that sort. Another communication he would mention. It was one to his colleague ; it was not usual to mention these matters, but on an occasion of this kind it was only right to do so. The telegram he had sent was :-- " Dr. De Latour telegraphs that there is danger to health in the men of the contingents having been sent to Invercargill, and having to go in trains, &c. See that the men are well cared for, housed, and fed ; and especially see to their warmth on the train, even though blue or red blankets are borrowed or bought to be used as rugs. And I would not get out at too many stations, but get train through as soon as possible. "R. J. SEDDON." That was what he had done, that was the way he had met the situation, and he was sure that no one could be more careful or more vigi- lant than he had been. Even if the men had landed at Wellington they would have had to be sent to the South Island ; and the question between the owners and the Government was Invercargill or Dunedin. The owners were Mr. Seddon willing to go to Dunedin, and instructions were to go to the Bluff. He could only say again, as far as the estimates were concerned, that he was desirous to see the first item put through, and for what had happened now he was not respon- sible. The honourable gentleman had stopped the House from going on with finance, and he could only again add, Was the opportunity a right one, a fitting one, or a proper one to bring up this question? If it had been done delibe- rately with forethought and with premedita- tion, was it proper that it should be brought up without the slightest warning. The honour- able member had accused him wilfully, he could not say maliciously, but certainly without the slightest foundation, and he had used language which, if challenged at the time, he would have been compelled to apologize for, or he would have been expelled from the House. He re- gretted that no one had taken notice of the matter at the time by moving that the words be taken down. That opportunity had been lost. This was his (Mr. Seddon's) fourth speech, and the honourable gentleman had the right of reply. He hoped that reply would be what it ought to be-a withdrawal of the statements made and an abject apology to the House. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) said it was of no use to obscure the matter. The communication he referred to was not the communication the Premier had read, and had nothing to do with it. The communication he referred to was one sent to the Premier from Albany on the recommendation of the doctor. He did not know the exact words, but it informed the Pre- mier that it would be unwise-that was the very mildest word-unwise for the troops to re- turn by the cold southern route. The reply to that was that they must go to Invercargill. That was the communication he referred to. A good many members on the other side of the House had said a good many hard things about him, but he had borne them with patience, and he asked the House in fairness now to get the Premier to consent to a thorough inquiry. And if he was wrong about this com- 12.0. munication from Albany to the Pre- mier, then he would apologize to the House and to the Premier. He asked for a thorough inquiry, that papers and witnesses should be called, and if he could not prove that that com- munication was sent, as he said it was, and that the purport of it was that the ship should not go by the southern route at all, but should go by a warmer route, he would apologize. Honourable members had accused him of say- ing harsh things, but they had overlooked the fact of the harsh things that had been said by the Premier about the Hon. Mr. Rolleston in connection with the Poverty Bay mas-acre. In the course of the debate that night the Pre- mier had said some very harsh things about him (Mr. Allen). He had told the House, how- ever, that it was not on account of any harsh things that had been said concerning him that he had made this charge against the Premier. He had made it that night because he had not had the opportunity of doing so in the financial debate.

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Mr. SEDDON. - Why did you not ask for the { nected with despatching and dealing with these correspondence ? Mr. J. ALLEN said he wanted something more than correspondence. He knew perfectly well what the tabling of correspondence meant. Let him have a thorough inquiry ; that was what

he asked for. Let him have the opportunity of producing evidence, and let him call for papers, and if he could not prove that that message was sent from Albany and was disregarded, then he would apologize.

-- Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said that what the honourable member had said earlier in the evening was very different from what he was saying now. Earlier in the evening the honourable member said the Premier was responsible for the deaths of some six men. Mr. J. ALLEN asked to be allowed to explain. What he had said was this: that the Premier, not having accepted the advice given through the medical officer, must accept the responsibility of not taking that advice. Mr. SEDDON. - No, that is not what was said ; you went much further. Sir J. G. WARD said, No ; the honourable member said he put the responsibility on the Premier, in consequence of what the Premier had done, for the death of these six men ; and that was the seriousness of the charge. If the honourable member had said that after the receipt of a telegram the Premier had not taken a particular course, and that it would have been better if he had taken another course, it would be on the lines that was now suggested. But the honourable gentleman originally made the charge that the Premier was responsible, in consequence of not having acted on the advice tendered to him, for having caused the death of six men. Now, when the honourable member asked for an inquiry, seeing that his charge against the Premier was that he had actually been the cause of the death of these six men, by not doing what was right, that was the inquiry he ought to have-not as to whether a certain telegram had been received or not, but whether, owing to want of judgment on the part of the Premier, the deaths of all these men had been caused. The charge really was that owing to want of judgment on the part of the Premier. or owing to political motives on his part, he was the cause of the death of those men. The honourable gentleman had said that the Premier had used the returning contingents from South Africa for political purposes, and that by doing a particular thing these men had died, and the Premier was responsible for it. He was quite sure that any member listening to the honourable gentleman at the time he made this accusation must have listened with a great deal of pain, and must have been shocked at the charge he made against the Premier. There was not a man who knew the Premier who believed that he would have been guilty of doing anything of the kind, or of doing anything calculated to cause the death or inconvenience of any member of the contingents. His whole actions throughout had shown the opposite- right through the extraordinary difficulties contingents in South Africa. While they were in South Africa, and right through, everything was done by the Premier to insure their comfort and happiness, as the honourable gentleman knew. After all was said and done, what did the whole matter narrow itself down to ? With respect to the landing of this contingent, it was a difference between Dunedin and the Bluff, and for that particular steamer-the "Tagus "-it was a matter of eight hours' steaming or nine hours at the most, and, even if she had the worst weather, only ten hours' steam-and there was scarcely any climatic difference between the two places. Any person who knew would agree with him that the temperature and the class of weather was very much the same. At the time the "Tagus " arrived the weather was bad all over the colony. The seriousness of the charge lay in the assertion that the Premier was responsible for the death of these six men. The member for Maitland had shown that some of the men referred to died before they reached the colony at all. An Hon. MEMBER .- Where did he get the information ? Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable member for Maitland took great interest in all matters connected with the contingents, and had gone down to meet the "Tagus." One of those who died, died in Invercargill at his own home, and would have gone there in any case. One died on the route, one died at Albany, and one before he landed at Port Chalmers, and another immediately after going into hospital at Dunedin. The honourable gentleman was asking the House to believe that the whole of them died in consequence of the difference in the coldness of the weather between Dunedin and Invercargill. Mr. J. ALLEN said he said nothing about the difference between Dunedin and Invercargill ; he referred to the difference between the warm and cold route. Sir J. G. WARD said the weather was cold all over the colony at the time-the coldest that had been experienced for many years in Christchurch,

Wellington and Auckland. Where would the contingent have come to if the boat had not gone to a southern port ? It would have come to Wellington, and all the men would then have had to go south just the same, and by going to Wellington first would have had a longer voyage. Mr. J. ALLEN said, Those that were ill would not have gone south ; those who were ill did not leave Port Chalmers. Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable gentleman could not get over the fact that the steamer would have come to Wellington. If they had gone to Wellington, the honourable member would have had the same charge to make. Mr. J. ALLEN .- What about Auckland ? Sir J. G. WARD said that a number of our men who had returned to Auckland had suffered from enteric. One of them had called on him that day. Mr. MONK .- They should be better cared for.

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been shown, and he was sorry to hear members saying anything to the contrary. No communications had been received from the families of members of contingents, or from the members themselves, complaining of carelessness, and if there had been any warrant for the stories of the honourable member it would have been found in the Press of the colony long ago. They would have had charges from other sources, quite apart from the unjustifiable one that the honourable member for Bruce had just made. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) said that, as some of the information he had supplied had been challenged, he desired to say a few more words on the matter. As he understood the Premier's speeches had been exhausted, he would move, That the item under discussion be reduced by #1. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said that, if the honourable member moved to reduce the item by £1, debate would be confined to the question that the particular vote be reduced. The honourable gentleman would achieve his object by moving to report progress. Mr. McNAB said, In that case he would move, That progress be reported. He wished to say that he was particularly interested in contingent matters, as fifteen men had gone from his district, every one of whom had returned by the "Tagus." He was particular to watch what was being done in connection with the men, and, as deaths occurred from time to time, he had taken a record of them. So far as he knew, he had a complete record of them, which he would be glad to let the honourable gentleman see if he desired it. He had also available at five minutes' notice the newspaper records with the information as to ailments of those men, and as to whether they took ill after landing in the colony or before that. For instance, there was the information, which was common property to all southern members about a trooper who died before reaching Albany. The honourable member for Bruce knew that one of the men had been left behind at Albany in a dying condition, and he must also have known that a North Island man had died in sight of the colony. He also knew that the honourable member for Napier had referred to the case of another man belonging to Napier who had died before the vessel reached New Zealand. Two men were sent to the Dunedin Hospital in practically a dying condition. One of them had died from the result of an operation. When men died under operations medical men never admitted it. The person always died from the cause that brought the operation into existence. You could not trace in these cases of death anything at all, and you could not suggest anything that the Premier could have averted, because every one of them would have come through the same class of weather that the steamer experienced since leaving Cape Colony; and every one connected with the steamer said that there was not a single day on the voyage that they could get about without wearing their over- on their arrival was due to the fact of their mobilising where and when they did, and to the bad weather experienced on the voyage. In addition to that there were more than six hundred men on the steamer, and every one knew that pneumonia was mostly caused by people being cooped up in insufficient quarters and not being able to get proper exercise. When the steamer arrived in the colony there were as many as forty men in the hospital ; and was the Premier to be blamed for that ? Why, honourable members who went south to meet the men had also caught colds, and some of them had not yet properly recovered ; but were they going to blame the Premier for their discomforts? He did not believe that any human being could have

anticipated what had taken place, and that there were going to be deaths. An Hon. MEMBER asked, What about the doctor's recommendation ? Mr. McNAB said that, supposing the men had come to Wellington, they would not have been sent on to Rotorua, but to their homes in the South. And, then, if the doctor said that these men should come to the North, why did he not send them to the North when the vessel was just on the point of sailing, instead of sending them into the hospital at Dunedin. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said he had sent for his telegrams in this connection, and he was going to put them on record. This matter had cropped up rather suddenly, and, as there were three departments to which his communications were sent, members would understand the difficulty he had laboured under to-night when this charge was brought up without the slightest warning. Here was the first communication he was going to read. It was a cable from Colonel Davies, from Capetown :- "Fourth and Fifth sail to-day in 'Tagus,' bringing captured Krupp and Pom-pom. All " Colonel DAVIES." well. Then he received this from Surgeon-General De Lautour from Dunedin :- "I took measures to-day to unload ship hospital. Consider pneumonia due to overcrowding. Quite unavoidable under circumstances. 2437, Sergeant W. F. Bell, Marton. and 2394, Private J. Nicholas, Auckland, too ill to be moved. They belong to North Island, and are under care Surgeon-Captain Watt and Nursing Sisters De Montmorency and Frankland, whose untiring energy, skill, and kindness cannot be too highly praised. 2692, Private McKechnie, enteric, severe ; 1015, Private J. P. Heenan, abscess, severe ; 1402, Sergeant J. L. Long, Awamutu, pneumonia, severe ; 1091, Bugler W. Cheeseman, pneumonia (?), are in Dunedin Hospital. 1108, Sergeant Major L. Murphy, Invercargill, and 1121, Private H. W. Campbell, Invercargill, are at Miss Stronach's private hospital ; both improving. 2601, Private P. A. Hardy, rheumatism, convalescent ; and 2266, Private F. C. Long, malaria, not severe, are in Miss Church's hospital, and under my immediate care. 1252, Corporal W. F. Bell, Wellington, pneumonia, severe; 2630, Saddler W. Murphy, malaria, convalescent, are in Miss. <page:559>

Tobe's private hospital, St. David Street, Dunedin, under immediate care of Surgeon-Captain Closs. I have visited every man after superintending their transshipment, and seen that they are comfortable. I have also arranged for accommodation in case of further sickness." What did honourable members think he was recommended to do? He was recommended to put these men on the quarantine-grounds at Port Chalmers by the doctor, because there was not sufficient accommodation in the Dunedin Hospital. He said, "No; put as many as you can in the hospital and put the others in private hospitals in Dunedin." This was the telegram :- "Brigade-Colonel Surgeon De Lautour, Dunedin .- Have forwarded your telegram re sickness troopers on 'Tagus' to Commandant and Colonel Davies and to Captain-Surgeon Thomas. I do not approve suggestion re Quarantine Island. It is bleakly situated, and the convalescent patients would, in the majority of cases, prefer to get to the districts from which they come; and in respect to those from the North Island the climate and surroundings are favourable to recovery. In the case of the patients confined to bed, those belonging to Otago should go to the Dunedin Hospital, and if they are more than there are beds for in the public hospital the balance should be sent to a private hospital. If there is any danger to patients proceeding to Lyttelton and Wellington, in such case such patients should be removed to hospitals. In this my communication I have simply expressed my opinion and do not instruct, and leave to you or the surgeon-captains to do what you think best in the interests of the sufferers. You may, however, take an instruction that no expense is to be spared in doing everything possible and practicable to restore to our returned sons that greatest of God's blessings, good health. "R. J. SEDDON." He was advised to put the men on the quarantine station at Port Chalmers, and his decision on the matter was contained in the reply he had just read to the House. Mr. J. ALLEN .- That is not the communication from Albany. Mr. SEDDON said he would read the communication from Albany too soon for the comfort of the member for Bruce; and, if the honourable member had still remaining some spark of what should belong to those who had finer feelings, and to those who had the feelings of a gentleman, he would with-

draw everything he had said. He had told the House time after time that before the "Tagus " left Capetown the suggestion was that the vessel should make for Wellington, and between that time and the time he received the communication from Colonel Davies the destination was changed-that was, after the vessel had left the Cape-to the Bluff. Then, there was a controversy with the ship- owners and the Transport Department as to whether it should be the Bluff or Dunedin, and that was the point at issue at the time the boat was delayed three days in Albany. Cables, of course, were sent Home about the matter, and he had proof of them. The men were actually forced to stop there for three days while attempts were being made to get the order to proceed to the Bluff altered, because the owners did not want a long vessel with only one screw to go to that port. The point in the dispute was as between Dunedin and the Bluff. Now, the communication he received from Albany was this :- "Dr. Thomas, P.M.O., 'Tagus,' officially notifies me very unwise expose troops been through Beira to cold voyage to Bluff. Also, on account of sickness on board at present. He strongly recommends port of arrival should be changed. Please instruct. " Lieut .- Colonel DAVIES." . That was the only communication he had received. Mr. MASSEY said that bore out every word the member for Bruce had stated. Mr. SEDDON asked, Did that bear out what the member for Bruce had charged him with doing? Was there a word about it being dangerous? Was there a word about the warmer route? Why, as between Dunedin and Wellington it was only. a matter of eight degrees. But the point at issue when the boat was at Albany was Port Chalmers or Bluff ; not Bluff or Wellington. The fact was this : that when the dispute was going on between the owners and the Government as to the boat going to the Bluff or to Port Chalmers, Lord Kitchener and the Transport Department desired to meet the wishes of the New Zealand Government and the people of Otago and Southland. Was there anything in the communication to show that the route to Port Chalmers would imperil the health of the men, and was dangerous to take? No. Was it on the telegram from Colonel Davies that the honourable member had founded the charges he had made against him that night ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Is there another communication ? Mr. SEDDON said he had received no other communication. Parliamentary rules 12.30. would not allow him to use language sufficiently strong to mark his indignation. He had nothing to conceal. These communications were public property, and the House could have them with pleasure. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Did you read your reply ? Mr. SEDDON said he did not think personally he had sent a reply, because the "Tagus " had left. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Oh, yes, there was. Mr. SEDDON .- Whatever reply had been sent would be given to the House. He might point out that on the 10th June the temperature at Wellington and the Bluff was the same. He hoped members had noticed that Dr. De Lautour, on the arrival of the steamer, said that the pneumonia was owing to the overcrowding of the hospital. He had not heard from the doctor nor from any one else, since the day the men landed, any complaint, nor anything whatever except from the lips of the honourable gentleman that night. Dr. De

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July :- "For your information I forward names of sick troopers per s.s. 'Tagus': 1252, Corporal Bell, Wellington, malaria, serious ; 2437, Sergeant W. F. Bell, Marton, pneumonia, serious ; 2365, Private F. W. Forbes, Thames, pneumonia, very severe; 2394, Private J. Nicholas, Auckland, pneumonia, severe ; 2601, Private E. A. Harley, Christchurch, rheumatism, improving ; 2630, Saddler W. Murphy, Cheviot, malaria, convalescent; 2533, Sergeant A. Webster, Hokitika, malaria, taken ill this day; 3641, Private N. T. Martin, Dunedin, diseased fauces, to go home to friends; 1108, Sergeant-Major L. Murphy, Invercargill, malaria, taken ill this day ; 1109, Robert McAulay, Portobello, pneumonia, convalescent, discharged home; McKechnie, Napier, enteric, dangerous - this man was sleeping, or semi-comatose, could not get his number; 1121, Private H. Campbell, Invercargill, pneumonia, convalescent ; 1015, Private J. P. Heenan, Dunedin, abscess of liver after enteric, very dangerous ; 1359, Lance-Corporal D. Trengrove, Pahiatua, colic, convalescent ; 2613, Private F. Knox, Ashburton, malaria, convalescent ; 2380, Private A. E. Nicholson, Auckland, malaria, convalescent ; 1326, Private R. W. Rylie, Wellington, pneumonia,

convalescent ; 1680, Private J Robertson, Kelso, dislocation of shoulder ; 1137, Private J. D. Maloney, Dunedin, convalescent ; 2241, Saddler G. Fernandos, Wellington, jaundice, convalescent ; 2724, Private E. W. Speck, Taranaki, pneumonia, convalescent ; 1512, Private J. W. Groves, Wairarapa, bronchitis, convalescent ; 2441, Farrier W. E. Brown, Nelson, pneumonia, convalescent ; 1453, Private H. B. Patton, Auckland, pneumonia, convalescent ; 2687, Private A. W. Johnston, Taranaki, malaria, convalescent ; 1091, Trumpeter W. Cheeseman, Wellington, malaria, taken ill this day ; 1402, Sergeant J. L. Long, Te Awamutu, malaria, taken ill this day ; 1662, Corporal E. Massey, Oamaru, bronchitis and sore throat, convalescent. In addition to above there are several invalids who require watching, Surgeon-Captain Watt remaining in charge of invalids. " HARRY A. DE LAUTOUR, Brigade-Surgeon Lieut.-Colonel, P.M.O., Otago." That boat only took about nine days between Albany and Port Chalmers. She had to go to Albany, and the only question was whether she should go to Port Chalmers or the Bluff. She never went to the Bluff ; she went to Port Chalmers. An Hon. MEMBER.- She ought to have gone to Auckland. Mr. SEDDON said her first orders were to go to Wellington, then she was ordered to the Bluff, and then Port Chalmers. Port Chalmers was her final port. All through he had done his duty to the young men of this colony. It was well known that sickness developed between Albany and the Cape. The hospital was overcrowded, and the doctor said the over- Mr. Seddon -- pneumonia was caused by overcrowding. He (Mr. Seddon) had absolutely insisted upon an inquiry as to overcrowding, and he had asked what was the meaning of it. There was the correspondence about that point, and honourable members would see that he had done his duty. When it came to the inquiry as to overcrowding, Dr. De Lautour, the Commandant, and Surgeon-Captain all said the inquiry was not necessary, and so the matter dropped. When he (Mr. Seddon) did order the Commandant to put the "Tagus" under inquiry he was advised there was not any necessity for it. On the other hand, the Commandant and the Surgeon in charge informed him practically that the sickness was unavoidable. The sickness had got into the systems of the men and the change from South Africa aggravated it, and yet he was told he was responsible for that ; and it was said that the boat should have gone by the warmer route, and that he (Mr. Seddon) had been told it was dangerous to go by the other route. This was pure fiction. There was absolutely nothing more than what he had read. An Hon. MEMBER.- Read it again. Mr. SEDDON said they had heard it read already. Any one who would take up such a view as the honourable member must be devoid of the finer feelings of mankind. That was not a very harsh way of putting it. Honourable members did not seem to think that he had any feelings at all. It was simply the jaundice of political prejudice which blinded the honourable gentleman, who still questioned his statement. The telegram was :- "Dr. Thomas, P.M.O., 'Tagus,' officially notifies me very unwise expose troops been through Beira to cold voyage to Bluff. Also, on account of sickness on board at present he strongly recommends port of arrival should be changed." The honourable member had denied that. Did he withdraw that statement, and admit he had made a mistake? As would be seen by the telegram, there was sickness on board the "Tagus" on arrival at Albany. Was he to be held responsible for that ? Mr. MASSEY.- I have nothing to withdraw I have said nothing. Mr. SEDDON said some one on the other side had asserted that his statement was incorrect. Honourable members should not play with a serious thing like this. He was not treated with the courtesy that he extended to honourable members both inside and outside the House. As all could now see, the charge made by the member for Bruce had been founded on so slight a pretext that it should have been at once withdrawn; and not to withdraw it was to stand condemned by every right-thinking person in the country. At all events, he was now determined to go on with the business of the country. The business had been stopped for fully a week by the honourable gentlemen opposite in some way or other, and it seemed that this was to stop further business. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN.- Time is up.

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Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) was glad to notice that members generally, and even the Premier, were coming

to a more judicial frame of mind. This was a very serious matter, and they should, at all events, endeavour to look at it strictly impartially. What they had just heard read from Colonel Davies, the officer in command of the troops, was stronger and clearer than anything he had expected. It said that a number of men were suffering from that worst of diseases where a cold climate was concerned—pneumonia. Mr. SEDDON .- Certainly not. There is not a word of that in the telegram from Colonel Davies. Mr. MASSEY said that was in the telegram. An Hon. MEMBER .- That was the one from Dunedin. Mr. MASSEY understood that the telegrams and cablegrams mentioned that a number of men were suffering from pneumonia, and that the doctor, through Colonel Davies, said that it would be very unwise, under the circumstances, to take the colder and southerly route. An Hon. MEMBER .- No; not to take them to the Bluff. Mr. MASSEY .- He recommended the warmer route. An Hon. MEMBER .- Which is the northerly route ? Mr. MASSEY was unable to say ; he understood that instead of taking them to a southern port it was suggested to take them to a northern port. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) said the honourable member was mistaken. The steamer in the first instance was under the orders of the War Office, and the intention was that the steamer was to proceed via Albany to Wellington. No one could have altered the destination of the steamer except the War Office. The Premier could not have altered it. After she got to Albany the instructions were that the steamer was to go to the Bluff. The owners of the steamer refused to allow her to go to the Bluff on the ground that she had only one screw, and that it was dangerous to do so. The next port fixed for her was Dunedin, and the point in dispute between them was the Bluff versus Dunedin. But she could not have been ordered to Auckland by the Government of this colony. The War Office controlled her movements; and she had already been ordered to Wellington, which was afterwards changed at Albany to the Bluff. Mr. SEDDON thought he had made it clear, and if he had not he would make it clear now. The order was, as he had said, by General Kitchener, who promised that the contingent should go to the Bluff in the first instance. There was a communication from him to that effect. The Transport Officer at the Cape changed it, against the orders of the General. When they were to go to the Bluff they were to go via Albany. There was some hocus-pocus, and they changed the ship from the "Gulf of Taranto." At all events, when the "Tagus " was put on, the question was raised that she . could not go to the Bluff. However, she in | cargill." the ordinary course had to go to Albany, and when she called at Albany she got her instructions to go to the Bluff. When she arrived at Albany the Transport Department gave her instructions to go to the Bluff ; and then, two days after her arrival there, he (Mr. Seddon) got that communication that she was not to go to the Bluff, but that she was to go to Port Chalmers. It seemed the owners objected to the vessel going to the Bluff, and kept her there at Albany two or three days. That was the point. When she arrived at Albany she got her instructions to go to the Bluff, and the captain did not like to go to the Bluff. Now, he (Mr. Seddon) was told, and it was on record, by Colonel Davies, and, strange to say. Colonel Davies's communication to him was that they landed at Albany on Saturday night, and were leaving at nine o'clock next day. But, instead of doing that, they remained at Albany, with all these sick men on board, two or three days, whilst the owners were cabling Home and getting the destination altered from the Bluff to Port Chalmers. Then, ultimately, the Admiralty said she must go to Port Chalmers. That was the whole thing. She could have left Albany on the Sunday, and as a matter of fact she never left until the Wednesday, and all that time cables were going Home to the Admiralty from the owners asking to get the destination changed from the Bluff to Port Chalmers. If they had left on the Sunday they would have gone on direct to the Bluff. For two whole days he (Mr. Seddon) never got a single word from the doctor or the captain or the colonel in charge, or from any one else, that it would be injurious to send the men to the Bluff. Take the date of the telegram. The boat was there two days before he had received it. It would be well understood that he was not pleased with what had happened. Mr. MASSEY could quite understand the Premier not being pleased ; but this point had not been made clear : Would it not have been possible for the Defence Minister, on receiving the

cablegram referring to the health of the men, to have recommended that the route be changed, and the boat should come to Wellington instead of Dunedin or the Bluff ? Sir J. G. WARD .- What difference would that have made ? Mr. MASSEY said he understood a great deal of the mischief was done, not during the voyage across, but on the arrival of the vessel, on account of the very cold weather experienced. However, all these differences of opinion showed the necessity for an inquiry of some sort. Members seemed inclined to make out that the charge was worse than it really was. He had during his first speech on the subject given way to Mr. Allen to enable him to make his position quite clear, and this was what his Hansard proof said. Mr. Allen said- "The doctor advised that it would be unwise, on account of the shattered health of the men, to bring them by the cold southern route. The Premier was so advised, and, notwithstanding that advice, he said they must go to Inver-
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was no exaggeration there. Sir J. G. WARD said that was not his first speech. Mr. MASSEY said, No; but that was what he said in placing his position clearly before the House. They would never get the matter cleared up without some sort of inquiry being set up. Mr. SEDDON .- Who are you going to try ? Mr. MASSEY said there should be an opportunity for the honourable member for Bruce to prove his assertion. The Minister for Railways would realise what they had felt two years ago when Mr. Rolleston had been charged with being the author of the Poverty Bay massacre. He would quote a few lines. Mr. Seddon, quoting from a letter written to him by one Michael Mullooly, said this :- " Now, sir, may it please you to make a charge against Mr. Rolleston, which is a very grave and gross scandal that ought not to go unpunished. Mr. Rolleston was the cause of the Chatham Islands outbreak "- And a lot more, leading up to the Poverty Bay massacre. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Justice) .- Where is the analogy ? Mr. MASSEY said the honourable member for Bruce was quoting from statements made by people who came over in the "Tagus "- the analogy was near enough. The honourable member should remember he was Minister of Justice, and act accordingly. The point that he was making was that the Hon. Mr. Rolleston was charged with a far more serious offence than that with which the Premier had been charged. That charge had neither been apologized for or withdrawn, and it stood to this day in Hansard. Mr. SEDDON .- I was quoting from the official records of the colony, and gave no opinion. Mr. MASSEY did not wish to waste the time of the House. He was sorry so much acrimony had been shown, and so much time wasted over the matter. He wanted to assist the Premier to get his estimates through, and it seemed to him that the only way to facilitate business would be for the Premier to inform the House that he would have an inquiry held into the matter. It could then be dropped for the time being. Mr. STEVENS (Manawatu) said that up to the present he had taken no part in the debate, but he could not listen longer to the ridiculous statements that were being made by the gentlemen on the Opposition benches. The charge made against the Premier by the honourable member for Bruce was one of the most unfounded and most unjust that he had ever heard hurled across the floor of the House. What astonished him most was that every one of that honourable gentleman's supporters had justified his great breach of propriety, and they wished to justify themselves by saying that the Premier had charged the Hon. Mr. Rolleston with being responsible for the massacre in Poverty Bay ; but what were the facts? Why Mr Massey whole of the facts? When he was reading through Hansard, why did he not finish the quotation ? Did not the Hon. Mr. Rolleston charge the Hon. the Premier with being responsible for the unfortunate occurrence at Mahanga and Shelley Bay? It was as a retort that the Premier said that he might as well charge the Hon. Mr. Rolleston with the massacre. The attack was made in the first instance on the Premier by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston. He would ask, How could the reading of that telegram justify the statement made by the honourable member for Bruce? It was only drawing a red herring across the scent to dispute as to whether the troops should go to Dunedin or Invercargill. If the doctor had been explicit- if he had sent a telegram that would have indicated his desire to have the troops kept in a warm climate-they should

have gone from Albany up north, across the Gulf of Carpentaria, thence to Arafura Sea ; from there they should have gone past Thursday Island, through Torres Strait, past the Bramble Key, thence to Auckland. That would have been the northern route, and it would have taken three times as long as coming south-about Australia. Did the honourable gentleman wish the people of this country to believe that there was any difference between the climate of Dunedin and Invercargill ? The thing was a positive absurdity. If the honourable gentleman 1.0. who had made this charge consulted his best feelings and his dignity, and if he wished to be thought as much of as he had been hitherto-he had always had a respect for the honourable gentleman-he would unservedly withdraw the statement and apologize. The charge had been made against the Premier for nothing but political purposes. He felt sorry for the honourable member for Bruce, and he should not like to be in his position until he had acted the manly part and withdrawn the incorrect statement. Now, the honourable gentleman wanted a Committee set up. What did they want a Committee for ? Was this House going to delegate its business to a Committee? Certainly not. They, had power to deal with this question, and it was only right that it should be dealt with by this House. and not relegated to a Committee. The honourable gentleman even suggested how the Committee was to be composed, and would not allow it to be suggested by any one disinterested. However, that mattered not to him, for he would not agree to any Committee being set up to discharge powers that it was the right and duty of Parliament to discharge. He felt that this was one of the greatest crimes-one of the greatest mistakes that had ever been made : and he believed that the charge was designedly made by the honourable member irrespective of any responsibility-because if he had any he had not shown it in this case ; he had made it for the purpose of depreciating the Premier in the eyes of the public, and diverting attention from the excellent speech he had made in reply to the aspersions cast by the Opposition. He hoped the Premier would stick to his resolve to

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have this matter dealt with by the House, and for Bruce, there would have been no complaint at once. Personally, he was prepared to stay until that hour the next night in order that that should be done. Mr. MASSEY said the honourable member had challenged him to quote what the honourable member for Riccarton (Mr. Rolleston) had said with reference to the Premier and the Mahanga Bay disaster. Well, he would quote the remarks. Here they were :- " Sir, let me go further. I am not going into details, but I say that every morning, when one sees occurrences with which the Government is connected, one wonders whether there is not something bad at the back of it. Will any member in this House say, for instance, that the verdict in respect to the Mahanga Bay explosion was in accordance with the evidence ? I will say no more about it, but I say there is a general feeling that there is no hope at the present time of getting verdicts in any inquiry in accordance with the evidence." That was all. There was not another reference to it. Now, he came again to what was said by the Premier with reference to the then member for Riccarton, the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, on that occasion. He would not quote the letter of Mr. Mullooly, but he would take the Premier's own words, - "Shall I tell him there is a grave responsibility resting on him in connection with the Natives of this colony? Shall I tell him that among the widows and the orphans his name is execrated ? Is he not morally responsible for the Te Kooti massacre that occurred in Poverty Bay ? He was the Minister in charge, and he did not keep a proper guard over the Natives who were imprisoned on the Chatham Islands. The guard was not sufficient ; the Maoris got away. They reached Gisborne and the massacre occurred. As a result, many Europeans and Natives were killed, and the cost to the colony was very great-to say nothing of the bloodshed that was occasioned. The man who is responsible for not having a proper guard over the Maoris is the member for Riccarton." That stood to this day against Mr. Rolleston, and the charge which was made by the member for Bruce against the Premier was nothing compared to the charge made by the Premier against the member for Riccarton. The member who last spoke ridiculed the idea of a Parliamentary Committee or a Commission of

inquiry. He cared nothing; it made no difference to him. If the Premier was satisfied, he was quite satisfied, and willing to let the public judge. Sir J. G. WARD said it appeared to him, to judge from the last speaker, that because a charge was made against one honourable member that was justification for another member to make a charge to-night. He wanted to put this to the last speaker, who read from the second speech of the honourable member for Bruce. Mr. MASSEY .- That was in my proof. Sir J. G. WARD .- Yes, it was in the honourable gentleman's proof, but it was the second speech of the member for Bruce. Now, if that was the only statement made by the member ment from this side of the House at all, because no charge was made in the second statement, in which the honourable member referred to a particular telegram. The honourable member for Bruce in his first statement said some one had communicated by cable with the Minister for Defence, and said it would be dangerous for these men to come through a cold climate. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say the Premier was responsible for the death of six men. That was. the charge. If the honourable member had not made the latter statement there would. have been no comment from this side of the House, because the Premier could have explained the circumstances and given all the details in connection with it. If the honourable member for Bruce would hand over his Hansard proofs to the member for Franklin, and he could find no record there of any charge by implication and directly against the Right Hon. the Premier, the whole trouble would cease. But it was the attitude the honourable member for Bruce was taking up that was making: members on his side of the House so persistent. It was a terrible charge the honourable member had made, to make against any man for political purposes. It was quite a different thing for the honourable member in the course of a debate to comment on the actions of an administrator of this colony or any other place which might have led to war. Why, how many honourable members were there who had not heard time and again the late Mr. Gladstone blamed for the murder, as some people were good enough to say, of the British troops in South Africa many years ago. An Hon. MEMBER .- And Gordon of Khar-toum. Sir J. G. WARD said, Very well ; supposing Mr. Gladstone were blamed, would it not mean that at the time he had acted according to his judgment and in accordance with advice, and in what he believed to be the best interests of the nation? Historical records in after years went to show that a great mistake had been made on that occasion, and political opponents converted that into a grave charge against him as an administrator. But it was a different thing to tell a member across the floor of the House that he was responsible for the death of these men for political purposes. It was because he had made the assertion that the Premier was responsible for the death of these six men for political purposes that the seriousness of the charge came in, and he was inclined to think that if some of the other members on the opposite side had been in the House at the time the charge was made they would have advised the honourable member to withdraw such a serious charge against any other member of the House, especially against a member occupying the high position of the Premier. Any member of the House should certainly withdraw such an accusation, in view of the facts that had come to light ; but the honourable member who had made it persisted in the charge. It was a . diabolical charge to make against any man.

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Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable member for Bruce could state, by reading his Hansard proof, what the actual words were. The effect of what he said was this: He could prove that, in consequence of something the Premier had not done, a cable had been received from, he thought the honourable member said, the doctor at Albany, and he further said that the Premier had been advised that it would be dangerous to the lives of the men to The honourable send them by a cold route. member then went on to say that the responsibility of the death of the sick men was on the shoulders of the Premier. It was a terrible charge made against any man; and on what evidence had he made the charge? On the cable the Premier had read from Colonel Davies as to what the doctor had informed him before the steamer left

Albany. The colonel said it would be unwise to send the men to the Bluff. The whole thing summed up meant, at the worst, the difference between the Bluff and Wellington provided, of course, that the Premier had had it in his power to change the destination of the vessel. The fact was, however, that the Premier could not control the movements of the steamer; if he had been able to do so he might, as some members had suggested, have sent the vessel to Auckland. When the steamer left Capetown the instructions from Lord Kitchener were that it was to proceed to the Bluff; but the transport officers, who were independent of the army and controlled the whole business, ordered that the vessel should proceed to Wellington via Albany. At Albany it was found that the instructions had been altered again, and that the vessel was to make for the Bluff. Then, the master of the steamer, and the Admiralty as well, believing that the Bluff was unsafe, cabled Home on the matter, and two days were lost in doing so, and the Premier knew nothing of it. Then, because it was a question between the difference between the Bluff and Dunedin, and as the honourable member had heard something outside that question, he made it the basis of a charge against a man occupying the responsible position held by the Premier, and further said the Premier had so acted for political purposes. He had been in the House for a good many years, and he had seen and taken part in a good many fights, but he had never seen or known anything like the present position before. He regretted that the honourable member for Bruce had not seen fit to withdraw his charge, and express regret at having made it. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) said, Sir, what had been disclosed during the present discussion showed the suitability of Auckland as a port of call for steamers coming from the tropics, and would emphasize its suitability as the port of call for the Frisco mail-steamers. He might state that, with Captain Walker, who was in command of the Auckland contingent, he visited the "Tagus," and, in reply to questions he asked, he ascertained that the ship was not overcrowded—that there were three or four hundred men less on board than were usually carried on that ship; also, that every had no fault to find. It was only fair to the Government to say that. Whether the Health Department was entirely free of blame in their action after the men had landed, that was a different matter; but no blame could be imputed to the Premier, as had been done. It was not fair to impute the sickness to the Government. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) felt that this could not be allowed to stop where it was, and, as members were in doubt as to what actually was said, he would move to report progress, with a view of obtaining from the Hansard reporters the remarks of the honourable member. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN pointed out that there was already a motion before the Committee to report progress. Mr. SEDDON said, Probably the honourable member for Bruce would repeat the exact words, and he might on reflection see that he had gone further than he had intended. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) thought that the honourable member for Bruce might adopt the suggestion of the Premier that he should make the same statement outside the House. Personally, he thought it was a mistake for members to say inside the House what they were not prepared to say outside; but, unfortunately, that rule was not adopted by members, with the exception of himself. Anything he said in the House he was prepared to publish in his own paper and take the consequences. He thought it would be much better if matters of this sort should be dealt with by some outside tribunal, otherwise they would only have personal recrimination and waste of time. He did not for a moment approve of setting up a Committee to deal with this matter, even though it might be an impartial Committee. He did not think the House should deal with any charge against the member that did not arise out of something in the House itself, and he thought it was wrong altogether to make charges against any member on a matter that was not a question of politics or a matter arising in the House. If members were willing to make charges of that sort they should be prepared to take the full consequences. He thought the offer of the Premier to the member for Bruce was perfectly fair and reasonable, because there were practically only two members who were concerned, and that the honourable member for Bruce could take his Hearsay proof and make the charge that was in it outside the House. Mr. BOLLARD (Eden) thought this matter had been laboured too much. He

understood the member for Bruce had accused the Premier of declining to alter the course of the ship to a warmer voyage, and that by not interfering, but letting it go to Dunedin, he had thereby caused the death of those men. An Hon. MEMBER .- He said a great deal more than that. Mr. BOLLARD .- Surely he did not mean more? No common-sense member could doubt that the Premier had deliberately sent these men to their death.

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An Hon. MEMBER .- He said it. Mr. BOLLARD .- Well, he could not have meant it. All that he could have meant was that the Premier was morally responsible for not altering the course of the vessel to a warmer climate. If they compared that statement with the one the Premier had made concerning the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, they would see that the Premier's charge was far more serious, for in the latter case men, women, and children had been slaughtered. He did not think the Premier should be so thin-skinned over this. Mr. SEDDON .- Probably if I had not been able to command myself, notwithstanding the unprovoked attack, Goodness knows what might have happened. Mr. BOLLARD said he was not apologizing for the honourable member for Bruce, but he was sure the accusation could not have been that the Premier had deliberately caused the death of these men. He was sure nothing of the sort could be meant. An Hon. MEMBER .- But it was said. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) said he did not wish the House to misunderstand what he had said, and he was quite prepared to read his uncorrected Hansard proof. He had said :- "He understood that on the first 1.30. item they could discuss the estimates generally. He wished to discuss the portion of the estimates dealing with the troopers sent to South Africa. He would have made these remarks in his speech on the Financial Statement, but the Right Hon. the Premier was not present, and he wished him to hear, because what he wanted to say he desired to say to his face. He (Mr. Allen) had said that the Premier had utilised the troopers from South Africa and the patriotic movement for political purposes, and he intended to prove it absolutely. The Fourth and Fifth Contingents had lately returned from the South African campaign by the 'Tagus.' Those men had gone through the very hardest of the South African campaign. They had gone through Beira, and the wretched climatic influences had affected them, and affected them seriously, and the result had been that nearly every trooper had broken down in his constitution. They were on their road home. They came as far as Albany broken down in constitution completely. When they got to Albany they were ill, nearly every one of them suffering from enteric-from typhoid, which he believed was the same thing. And at Albany the medical officer of the 'Tagus' reported this sickness, and that report was sent to the Premier, as Defence Minister, to this effect: that owing to the constitutions of these men being broken down it would be disastrous to send them by the colder route to Invercargill, and the Defence Minister was asked to authorise that the ship should come by the warmer route." He would stop here to say this was absolutely correct, except the word "disastrous." An Hon. MEMBER .- And "warmer route." Mr. J. ALLEN had said "warmer route." Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable gentleman said now that that report was sent to the Premier. Mr. J. ALLEN had said the medical officer reported there was sickness, and that that report was sent to the Premier as Defence Minister. Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman stated that it was reported to him (Mr. Seddon) that the men's constitutions had broken down, and it would be disastrous to send them by the colder route. This was absolutely incorrect. No such report had ever reached him, and Colonel Davies's telegram said nothing of the kind. Mr. J. ALLEN said the report was "that-owing to the constitutions of these men being broken down it would be disastrous to send them by the colder route to Invercargill." Five or six of these men were now dead. That was proved by the honourable member for Maitland. "Who had the responsibility? The honourable member wanted to know what the political capital was. He (Mr. Allen) would tell him. The political capital was to please the people of Invercargill. The Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill, even though to please them he had to sacrifice the lives of men who had been serving their country." Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- There is the charge. Mr. J. ALLEN .- I said so. Mr.

SEDDON moved, "That those words be taken down ; that was the only way to bring the matter to an issue. An Hon. MEMBER .- This is very unfair. Mr. SEDDON said it was not at all unfair. There was still an opening for the honourable gentleman, and he had now an opportunity of withdrawing them. Mr. MASSEY asked, as a point of order, whether it was in order that the words be taken down now, seeing that the honourable member was not using them in his speech, but merely quoting from another speech. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN thought anything read in the House could be taken exception to, and he must rule it was in order to take exception to words whenever they were uttered. Mr. SEDDON said, to show he was not vindictive, he wished to have the words taken down. to give the honourable gentleman an opportunity, on reflection, of withdrawing. Mr. J. ALLEN said he would show he did not wish to be vindictive. The words the Premier wished taken down were these : "The Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill, even though to please them he had to sacrifice the lives of men who had been serving their country." He was quite willing to withdraw these words and put in their place other words to this effect : that he believed the Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill, and that the voyage of the "Tagus" from Albany to Dunedin or the Bluff by the colder route did, in his opinion, cause increased suffering to the men who came that way. Would that satisfy the Premier ? Mr. SEDDON said the words he wished taken down were much more severe than those words ;

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men's suffering and illness was caused through the "Tagus" going the southern route. Then, he wanted the words he had read taken down. Then the honourable gentleman went further, and said he was responsible for the sacrifice of these six men, and that this was done to please the people of Invercargill. In the one case it was " sacrifice," and in the other he said " responsible," for six men. were dead. He (the Premier) moved, That these words be taken down. Not one of those who died went to Invercargill. Mr. J. ALLEN .- The words, that the Premier objects to are not the words that I have just read. Mr. PIRANI rose to a point of order. He did not know what the proper procedure was in such cases, but he desired to point out that there had been a stranger in the House taking notes of the proceedings. He had never seen such a breach of the rules of the House with the encouragement of Ministers. The Premier had had, he supposed, a Private Secretary behind the Chair taking notes of the proceedings, which notes were now in his (the Premier's) hands. As he had already said, he did not concern himself with the subject at issue, but he did think when they had a rule, which had always been upheld by the Speaker, that nobody but official reporters should be allowed to report the proceedings, it was not right that the Premier should have notes of the proceedings taken by a person who was not an official of the House. He asked that the proper course be taken in regard to the person taking the notes, and in regard to the notes themselves. Mr. SEDDON .- I may say that the words I quoted were written by the Minister for Public Works. Mr. PIRANI .- No. Mr. SEDDON said they were. The honourable gentleman had better come and see them for himself. It had been customary since he had been in the House for Ministers' Private Secretaries to sit behind the Chair. Mr. PIRANI did not object to them being there, but he objected to them taking notes of the proceedings. Mr. SEDDON said, If he wanted his Secretary to take notes of the proceedings he thought he had a right to get him to do so. He was not in the House at all. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN .- I am not aware that any notes are being taken behind the Chair. Mr. MASSEY .- Look behind you, Sir. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said he had not noticed the person referred to; but, if it was one of the Minister's Private Secretaries, he would say that Private Secretaries had always been allowed to sit in that part of the House- namely, behind the Chair. The Premier had stated that the notes he had used were in the handwriting of the Minister for Public Works. Mr. FISHER .- Is a person sitting behind the Chair in the House ? The ACTING-CHAIRMAN .- In one sense he Mr. Seddon's ruling is that whenever their presence is observed, strangers may be ordered to withdraw from the galleries or any part of the Chamber. Mr. SEDDON said the matter before the House was a serious one. It was as to

whether the words of the honourable gentleman, and which were taken exception to, were to be allowed to go on record. Mr. PIRANI. - Why do you not take the Hansard report of the speech ? Mr. SEDDON said that was what he had asked should be done. What he desired to be taken down was the part in which the honourable member charged him with being responsible for the sacrifice of life. Would the honourable member give the report of his speech to the Chair? If he did so it would save trouble, because they were entitled to it as a whole. He wanted to give the honourable member a chance of withdrawing the objection- able words. Mr. J. ALLEN asked which remarks the honourable gentleman referred to. Mr. SEDDON asked if the honourable mem- ber would read that portion of the speech that referred to his (Mr. Seddon's) being responsible for the sacrifice of life. Mr. J. ALLEN said, Certainly, anything the honourable member wanted. His Hansard proof read :- He was going to " Mr. J. ALLEN .- say this, however. The Premier had to take the responsibility of refusing to accept the medical advice which recommended that these men, being broken down in constitution, should not come by the cold southern route, but should come by a warmer one, and he had taken that responsibility ; and he (Mr. Allen) asked the House and the country what that responsibility was? Since the shipment left Albany five or six of those men were dead. Who had the responsi- bility ? The honourable member wanted to know what the political capital was ? He (Mr. Allen) would tell him. The political capital was to please the people of Invercargill. The Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill. even though to please them he had to sacrifice the lives of men serving their country." Those were the words he offered to withdraw, and substitute therefor some other words, which he had no doubt had been recorded, but which he would not quote exactly again. Mr. SEDDON .- You referred to six men. Mr. J. ALLEN said he had read all that. He did not know whether all the words he had spoken were to be taken down. Sir J. G. WARD .- Please read about sacri- ficing the men. Mr. J. ALLEN said he would repeat the words : - "The Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill, even though to please them he had to sacrifice the lives of men serving their country." Mr. SEDDON said he would like the honour- able member to quote the words. He alleged the Premier had been told the men were broken

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down in constitution, and it would be dangerous for them to go South ; he wanted to know more about it. Mr. J. ALLEN asked which were the words the Premier wanted. Mr. SEDDON said he wanted that part of the speech in which he (Mr. Allen) alleged the Premier was told the men were broken down in constitution, and that he (Mr. Seddon) was responsible for sacrificing the lives of six men. Mr. J. ALLEN said that he did not say that. Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable mem- ber stated that the Premier was politically responsible for sacrificing the lives of six men. Mr. J. ALLEN said that he did not say that. He asked the question, Who was responsible ? There were no words there he felt he could withdraw, except the words he had mentioned. He would read on if the Premier wished :- " He accused the Premier of not acceding to the advice given to him by the responsible officer of the ship, who told him it was a dangerous thing to send these men by the cold southern route. The honourable gentleman had taken the responsibility of the lives of these men upon his own shoulders. He had the responsibility of all the sickness and the breakdown in health of all these men in send- ing them by that cold route." He thought these last words " responsible for the sickness and breakdown in health of all these men " were probably too strong, and he was quite willing to withdraw them. He did not know whether he said that ; he was quot- ing from his Hansard proof absolutely without alteration. Sir J. G. WARD .- You ought to withdraw the whole speech. Mr. J. ALLEN said he would not. He would continue to read his speech :- " He (Mr. Allen) was certain of this from knowledge that had been placed in his hands, and not from one source alone: that these men had been injured in constitution by going from Albany to Invercargill to a much greater ex- tent than if they had gone by a warmer route, and the responsibility was the Premier's. He said this was a serious matter for the Premier to face, and he would have to answer to the House and the

colony for sacrificing these men, as he (Mr. Allen) said they had been sacrificed, in order to comply with political exigencies." He was prepared to modify the latter words. Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words as read by the honourable member from his proof should be taken down. He did not want to be unfair, but these words should be withdrawn. He considered he was within his rights in demanding this. According to the Standing Orders a grave reflection had been cast on him as a member of the House, and any reflection on an honourable member by another honourable member must be withdrawn unconditionally, and where the offence was serious the House was entitled to ask that the member who had cast the reflection or made the statement should express his regret. In this case he did not wish to be severe, but he would say that the honourable member had had time to think the matter over, and he should withdraw the words. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Which words ? Mr. SEDDON said he referred to the words that concerned him-from the point at which he started reading to the point at which he stopped. Mr. J. ALLEN said he was willing to withdraw or modify certain words he had used. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said it was his duty to put it to the Committee whether certain words should be withdrawn, but he could not put the question to the Committee until he had the words before him. Mr. SEDDON suggested that the words should be read over again, and the House was entitled to have them taken down by the Hansard reporter, and so put into the possession of the Committee. If that course was not taken, then the honourable member should hand to the Acting-Chairman the portion of the speech he had read. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked the honourable member for Bruce to hand his Hansard proof to the Chair, so that the question might be put from point to point, and thus the mechanical difficulty would be got over. Mr. J. ALLEN said he was willing to do so. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) rose to a point of order. Standing Order No. 146 said :- "In a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman, if it appear to be the pleasure of the Committee, will direct words objected to to be taken down, in order that the same may be reported to the House." And Standing Order No. 147 was :- "Every such objection is to be taken at the time when such words are used, and not after any other member has spoken." He understood that these words were used in the early part of the debate, and that that was the time to have brought the matter up. The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said the words had been used twice. On the first occasion when the honourable member spoke no motion was made to take down the words. But after another honourable member had spoken the Premier suggested that the words be taken down. He immediately pointed out to the honourable member that, under Standing Order No. 147, that could not be done, a member having spoken. The honourable member for Bruce then read from his place in the House the same words, and upon those words being so uttered the Premier asked that they be taken down. It then became the duty of the Chairman to put the question to the Committee as to whether they should or should not be taken down. It was not possible for him to put it until he had got the words identified. When that had been done, it would be for the Committee to say whether those words should be taken down with a view to their being reported to the Deputy-Speaker. Mr. SEDDON said, If the honourable member withdrew the words complained of he thought that would end the matter. Mr. PIRANI pointed out that the words must first be taken down and reported.

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down were merely a quotation from a speech already delivered. Mr. J. ALLEN said, when he was asked to read his Hansard proof, he had no notion that advantage would be taken of his so doing. However, although he believed this proceeding to be against the Standing Orders, he had raised no objections; he felt he must give the Premier every advantage. Mr. SEDDON said his object in getting the honourable member to read the words was to enable the opportunity being given the honourable member to withdraw them. If that were done, that would end the matter so far as he was concerned. Mr. J. ALLEN asked to be informed of the exact words that were objected to. [At the suggestion of Mr. SEDDON, and with the consent of the Committee, the Acting-Chairman left the Chair, in order to permit of a Con-

ference with a view to an agreement as to the words that would be withdrawn.] On resuming, Mr. SEDDON asked leave to withdraw the motion, That the words of the honourable member for Bruce be taken down, seeing the honourable member had promised to withdraw them. Mr. J. ALLEN said the words he withdrew were as follows : "Since that ship left Albany five or six of those men were dead. Who had " the responsibility ? " "The Premier was afraid to offend the people of Invercargill, even though to please them he had to sacrifice the lives of men who had been serving their country." "The honourable gentleman had taken the responsibility of the lives of these men upon his own shoulders. He had the responsibility of all the sickness and the breakdown in health of all these men in sending them by that cold route." He would modify the following words : "and he would have to answer to the House and the colony for sacrificing these men," to read as follows : "He would have to answer to the House and to the colony for declining to accept the advice forwarded from the doctor." He did not know exactly what his position was. Was he now committed to alter his Hansard proof in the direction in which he said he was going to alter it ? The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said he understood the honourable gentleman to be in the position of a person who had used words and who withdrew them. The honourable gentleman had his proof before him, and he presumed he would cross the words out of his proof. Mr. SEDDON said the remarks on what had been said would have been reported in Hansard, and it might be as well that the parts relating to the words that had been withdrawn should be reported. It was only those portions of the speeches referring to the remarks that had been withdrawn. Mr. MASSEY .- I would suggest that members be allowed to do that themselves. Mr. SEDDON said there was a precedent to guide the Committee, in which the Speaker be left to Mr. Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. That was the course he thought should be followed. Mr. McNAB said, Although the very serious charges had been withdrawn, still there was a tremendous suggestion left. He himself had gone into the question as to the cause of the death of the eight men. It was true that they might think that that should be left out. Whoever did the revising would require to be careful in regard to anything struck out, because there was a tremendous lot to answer for. Sir J. G. WARD took it that the revision of the Hansard proofs would be to see that what was struck out was anything that might be considered to be a direct or an indirect reflection on the Premier. He took it that the proper sequence of members' speeches would remain. Mr. McNAB .- Will they be sent to members for revision ? Sir J. G. WARD .- I am agreeable to that. Mr. R. MCKENZIE .- I think it will be better to have no record of these proceedings at all. Mr. SEDDON said he was quite prepared to leave the matter to the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. Each member would, of course, see the proof of his own speech. Words that were withdrawn should not appear in Hansard. He was satisfied to leave the matter now in the hands of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. Mr. HERRIES said he objected to his speech being subjected to any one for revision. He held that every member had a right to correct his own speech. The course suggested might have been taken before, but he would not agree. He would sooner tear up the report of his speech. Mr. McNAB pointed out that the Speaker had a right to look through honourable members' speeches to see that there was nothing objectionable in them. Mr. SEDDON thought there should be no report of the words withdrawn in Hansard at all. Mr. PIRANI .- And start afresh on Tuesday. Mr. SEDDON .- Yes; but I think it would be better to leave the matter to the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. in order that there might not be the slightest cause for saying that he had not acted frankly and quite openly in this matter, and to show that he had been taken by surprise, he would say that he had again gone through all the official and private memoranda, and he had ascertained that he had not sent a reply to the cable from Colonel Davies. The Commandant had, however, cabled to Colonel Davies as follows : "Defence Minister cannot now change port of arrival in colony." At that time he was communicating with the Imperial authorities about the "Tagus " going to the Bluff instead of to Port Chalmers, and accepted the responsibility of the cable sent. The " Tagus " came to Port Chalmers.

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The Committee divided on the motion, ' he would like to say that they were not used to "That the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again." AYES, 18. Allen, J. Monk Heke Hutcheson Pirani Arnold Kaihau Barclay Rhodes. Bollard Lang Tellers. Ell Massey Atkinson Fowlds Millar Herries. Haselden NOES, 28. Parata Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Bennet Hanan Seddon Carncross Houston Stevens Carroll Laurenson Symes . Ward Collins Lawry Witheford. Colvin McGowan Mckenzie, R. Field Fisher Tellers. McNab Fraser, A. L. D. O'Meara Hogg Gilfedder Palmer Hornsby. PAIRS. For. Against. Mills Fraser, W. Lethbridge Hall Thomson, J. W. Thompson, R. Majority against, 10. Motion to report progress negatived. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) said, In continua- tion of remarks that had been made on the treatment of our colonial troops, he wished to refer to the movements of the Volunteers, and also to the treatment the military had received in the colony during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. He did not intend to use any language to which exception could be taken by the House ; but if he only used the language contained in letters sent to him by parents whose children had suffered, and whose children had died through being sent down to Christchurch in the winter time, just for the sake of display or to create a fallacious impres- sion of our military resources, he thought it would make the Premier even more angry than the statement made by Mr. Allen, for five or six of the school cadets had died through the ex- posure they had suffered. He was not 3.0. going to blame the Premier for that, but he would say that the display was abso- lutely unnecessary, and that it was indiscreet to send them. Any parent knew that mere boys were not fit at that season of the year to endure hardships that they would only be subjected to in time of war. Then there was also the scandal at Newtown Park, which was altogether uncalled for, and which should never have taken place. The country was paying men to look after the Volunteer troops, and had they done their duty the scandal would never have taken place. In- stead, the responsible officers went about en- joying themselves in the fêtes that were given by the public and the Government, and the troops were subjected to hardships they should not have suffered. As for the colonial troops, VOL. CXVIII .- 36. the punctiliousness practised among the Im- perial forces ; but at the same time they were most valuable for fighting purposes. They were men who must be handled according to their idiosyncracies, or the free and easy sociology of our colonial life, and not treated as one of the orderlies at the entrance-doors of this building had been treated lately by one of the members of this House, who, entering dressed in uni- form, reported the orderly because he did not salute him as he expected. For himself, he would be ashamed to subject any member of the colonial forces to such treatment for so trivial an offence. It was a good spirit in the men. It was the sort of spirit that had made the New-Zealanders and the other colonials specially valuable. They had not been taught to cringe and be on the unceasing salute before their officers. They were ready to do actual hard work when required, but were indifferent to the formalities that form a large part of the concern of an Imperial private. While they talked about democracy, he thought that, in the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, they altogether forgot the spirit of democracy, and practised a toadyism that, for himself, he would say was bordering on the contemptible. If they had met the Duke and Duchess with the warm- hearted feeling of free men who had not been trained to the conventional obsequiousness rendered in Old World usages to wealth and rank, the reception would have been sincere and impressive; and there was really no need to try and outrival the display and expenditure of cities much richer than we were. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) said, Last year, when they came to this item, he had moved to reduce the vote by £1, and it was carried, with a direction from the Committee that there should in future be given details of the Legis- lative Council vote. Sir J. G. Ward, who was in the chair at the time, agreed to the proposi- tion. This year, again, no details of this vote of £1,870 were given, although the details of the House of Representatives vote were given. He thought it only right they should know exactly what was to be done with the people's money. He was commencing on the first item and he would continue it right through the estimates. Mr.

HOGG (Masterton) said the honourable member, in referring to what was done on the occasion of the Royal visit as "toadyism," was not very complimentary to the people of Auckland. He considered the arches erected in Auckland were of a most creditable character, and not miserable little arches as he had described them. He had seen them, and they were a credit to the northern city. With regard to the young people who had travelled from the North Island to the South Island to make a display befitting the occasion, he wondered what the honourable gentleman's loyalty consisted of that he should object to what was done. He had not heard of the mortality that was now said to have resulted from this visit, and he believed that if there had been any

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tainly due to some other cause than to the visit South. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) said the member for Wairarapa had stated that the reason he objected to the first item being passed was that in the estimates-the honourable member referred more particularly to the Legislative Council-there were large sums of money hidden away under the title of "Miscellaneous." Now, if they passed the first item of these estimates without any motion such as the honourable member suggested they would forego any chance they might have of getting the details they wanted. Just imagine the thousand and one things that were snugged away under the title of "Miscellaneous." Where was the salary of the Special Commissioner in connection with the Royal visit, which was rumoured to be £100 a month? Then, there was another thing. Comparing the Auckland and Wellington prisons, there was a most remarkable state of affairs. The daily average number of prisoners in Auckland was 154 males and 11 females; Wellington, 125 males and 13 females. The daily average on the sick-list was: Auckland, 1.8 males and 0.18 females; Wellington, 0.8 males and 0.7 females. The cost of medical comforts and medicines in Auckland was £84, while in Wellington it was £209-three times as much, for one-third the number. There was something wrong 3.30. in connection with that matter, and honourable members should be told what it was. A good many things required to be cleared up in connection with the estimates, and, in view of what had happened that night, he thought that a fresh start should be made when members were fresh. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) said, in reply to the honourable member for Wairarapa, that he would give the details of the Legislative Council vote. They were: Clerk of the Council, £400, and Clerk of Parliaments, who acted in the dual capacity, \$200. The salary was a combined one, and it had not been increased for some time. Clerk Assistant, £350, which was the same as before; another clerk, £250; interpreter, £200; extra clerks, £200, but that amount might be £190 or £210. He was not quite sure which was correct. Cleaning and ordinary contingencies amounted to £270. The total vote was the same as that of last year, of which £1,827 had been expended. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said that it was unfortunate that the Minister of Defence was absent just then from the Chamber, for one of his (Mr. Massey's) grievances was that when he wrote official letters to the Minister he hardly ever got an answer to them; and he had hoped that he would have been able to get replies to those letters now, by asking questions across the Chamber. However, seeing that the Postmaster-General was in charge of the estimates, he would like to say that there were various parts of his district that were exceedingly anxious for telephonic communication. Every year there was a large surplus in this department, but for all that it was almost impossible to get telephonic communication in many places in this colony. The worst case he knew of was the Island of Waiheke, in Auckland Harbour, with a population of between three and four hundred people, and which was also used as a watering-place in summer by the people of Auckland City. They had never had a shilling of public money spent on the island, and they asked for a telephone connection, and were met with the positively unreasonable request by the department for a guarantee of £71 a year for five years. He took it upon himself to offer the department a guarantee of \$50 a year for five years, but this was refused. He now repeated the offer, and sincerely hoped the Postmaster General would see his way to accept it. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttelton) said the explanation of the Minister for Railways showed that it was necessary

they should have details of every item of the estimates, and he hoped they would get them as each successive department came up for consideration. He thought, when one compared one highly-paid official with another, that it was quite wrong that the Clerk of the Legislative Council, occupying a position to a large extent ornamental, and only working about four months in the year, should receive £600 a year, while men occupying hard-worked and highly responsible positions, like the Secretary for Customs and the Secretary for Agriculture, were receiving £650 and \$600 respectively. The Secretary for the Department of Agriculture had charge of one of the most important departments of State, while the Secretary for Customs had the task of collecting some two million pounds of revenue, and these two gentlemen were getting, one the same and the other £50 a year more than the Clerk to the Council. Why, the thing was preposterous, and he wished to enter his strong protest against it. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) said that, regarding the telephone communication referred to by the member for Franklin, he might say that the honourable member had brought it under his notice by letter, and also personally when he was in Auckland. In the past the difficulty had been the paucity of population in the district, but it was a matter on which he would like to confer with the honourable member, and perhaps they would be able to meet half-way. Regarding the officer of the Legislative Council, spoken of by the member for Lyttelton, there was no increase in his salary, and he was an officer who had been some thirty-eight years in the service. Mr. HORNSBY (Wairarapa) recognised that the Clerk of Parliaments had been in his position a long time, but \$600 a year was a very large sum to pay to a person who occupied somewhat ornamental position. He did not object to a man on account of his being possessed of a little of this world's goods : but it did seem to him an anomaly in a country like this that another officer, who was in receipt of £250 a year as Assistant Clerk in the Legislative Council, should also be a large landed proprietor. This officer drew £250 a year for three or four months' work, and the work was really done for

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him by the extra clerks. He objected to keeping a man in a sinecure position when it might be given to a poorer and more deserving man who needed it. He moved, That the vote, " Legislative Council, #1,870," be reduced by £70, as an indication to the Government that there was a necessity for reform. Sir J. G. WARD pointed out, in reply to the member for Lyttelton, that the Clerk of Parliaments had been thirty-eight years in the service. The whole of the work of Parliament focussed through him. He had to see that all Bills and other business were in correct order. His position was far from being a sinecure. As to the other officer referred to by the honourable member for Wairarapa, he did not think it was the duty of the Government to inquire what the private position of any member of the service was if he did his work well. If he was fortunate enough to have some of the good things of the world, he was surely not to be condemned for it. The salary had been fixed for a number of years at \$250, and, unless there were good and sufficient reasons shown, it was not fair to reduce it. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) said that last year a promise had been made that the salary of the Second Assistant Librarian would be increased. Sir J. G. WARD said he understood himself an increase was to be given. By some mistake it was not included in the copy of the estimates before the House. Mr. HOGG said he should support the amendment. He did so without any feeling against the officer, and solely on account of the anomalous position he held as a sheep-farmer for the greater portion of the year, and as Clerk of the Legislative Council for the smaller portion of it. It seemed to be unfair that this officer should be able during a part of the year to leave his farm and earn a salary, which would maintain some other man with a wife and family. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) said, If the honourable member for Wairarapa laid it down as a principle that because a man had other means he was not worthy of other occupation, because there was somebody else who had got nothing, it might be extended to react on some of the honourable gentleman's friends. Mr. LAWRY (Parnell) said that he had never seen any advantage gained by taking the estimates in detail. He was one of the "Skin-flint " party that asked Sir Harry Atkinson to reduce his

estimates by £50,000. Sir Robert Stout had said that every Government was responsible for its own finance, and he would, therefore, vote against every motion for reduction of the estimates. If the Premier could not dismiss this officer because he was a parliamentary officer, why move to reduce his salary? Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) said the member for Wairarapa stated that because one of the clerks in the Legislative Council was a landed proprietor he should not hold the office. But if his services were dispensed with he would, of course, take up the management of the property himself, and discharge the man at present in charge. Mr. HORNSBY.-- His son is in charge. Mr. PIRANI said, Well, his son would have to go to South Africa. The fact was that this official was one of the best in Parliament. He had not always means outside his salary, and it was ridiculous to say that, because he had been fortunate enough to acquire property, he was any the less a good official. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the Government intended to stand by their estimates, and they intended to vote against the amendment of the member for Wairarapa. The rule generally was to give full consideration to the advice of the Speakers of both Houses in reference to the officers of Parliament. No increase was proposed in this case. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) could not vote for the amendment, because he did not hold with the principle of cutting down salaries. Mr. MONK (Waitemata) did not consider the amendment of the honourable member for Wairarapa was worth voting on. The consideration should not be whether they were paying too much or too little in salaries, but whether they had in the service of the State too many for its resources. The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, 'Legislative Council, £1,870,' be reduced by the sum of £70." AYES, 5. Tellers. Barclay Ell Hogg Hornsby. Laurensen. NOES, 26. Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Palmer Heke Seddon Arnold Stevens Herries Bennet Kaihau Symes Carncross Ward Lawry Carroll Witheford. Massey Collins Tellers. Field McGowan Fraser, A. L. D. McKenzie, R. Atkinson McNab Pirani. Guinness Majority against, 21. Amendment negatived. Mr. ELL moved that progress be reported. The Committee divided. AYES, 12. Herries Pirani. Arnold Tellers. Hornsby Atkinson Ell Hutcheson Barclay Bollard Massey. Monk Collins NOES, 21. Stevens Allen, E. G. Laurensen Symes Lawry Bennet Ward Carncross McGowan Witheford. McKenzie, R. Carroll Tellers. McNab Hall-Jones Field Palmer Heke Fraser, A. L. D. Seddon Hogg Kaihau

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PAIRS. For. Against. Mills Fraser, W. Hall Lethbridge Thomson, J. W. Thompson, R. Majority against, 9. Motion to report progress negatived. Mr. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) said that last session the Postmaster-General gave a promise to him in connection with the wages of messengers, which promise he had fairly well carried out. He noticed, however, there was one messenger in Auckland who received only 6s. a day, and the Premier had said that that was not a living-wage. Mr. SEDDON said if there was a case of that kind it had been an oversight. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) said, In reference to the Deaf and Dumb Institution at Sumner, he had last year called the attention of the Minister to the danger of housing the inmates in a wooden building - the danger through fire. A section of land had been purchased for the purpose of erecting a new building, and the Minister had said that plans were being prepared. Up to the present time nothing had been done, and if anything in the nature of a fire occurred the results would be very serious. He wanted an assurance that something would be accomplished in order to put this building upon a proper footing. He also desired to draw attention to the fact that the Wellington Gaol was old, greatly crowded, and most unsuitable. He hoped the Minister would speedily remove the present inadequate and insanitary premises. Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) replied that it had been considered desirable to obtain information regarding such buildings elsewhere, and this had caused delay. As to the Wellington Gaol, he did not think it could be so crowded as had been represented, and he was quite satisfied it was not in an insanitary state. He would have to consult his colleagues as to what was most desirable to be done in this matter. Mr. ELL (Christchurch City) was not by any means satisfied. The same promise that was now made as to the Institute at Sumner had

been given last session ; but, though land had been obtained, everything was in readiness, and the money voted, nothing had been done. He complained that there had been an unwarrantable delay in the establishment of the Inebriates' Home, for which \$5,000 had been voted last year and £1,000 the year before. All that had been done was the appointment of a Master and Matron and the securing of a site in the neighbourhood of Dunedin. He suggested that the Government should subsidise the societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) would like to know whether those suffering from forms of defective speech would be admitted for training to the Sumner Institute. A gentleman in his constituency had applied for admission for his boy, but he was unsuccessful, because the child simply wanted to have him admitted for training, and was quite willing to pay. Mr. HALL-JONES did not think the institution was being used for the purpose of curing those suffering from stammering, stuttering, et cetera. There were those in the colony who took in hand cases like that. He would ascertain as to where cases such as those mentioned in the letter handed to him by the honourable gentleman could be treated. Mr. ARNOLD (Dunedin City) referred to the hours of labour and the rates of pay of the warders in the gaols of the colony. The warders in all the gaols, he considered, had good ground for complaint. Mr. PIRANI moved. That the vote, "Legislative Council, \$1,870," be reduced by \$50. Last year the expenditure was only £1,822. The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £50." AYES, 5. Bollard Tellers. Hutcheson Ell Hornsby. Pirani. NOES, 30. Palmer Allen, E. G. Hall-Jones Seddon Arnold Heke Herries Stevens Atkinson Barclay Houston Symes Bennet Kaihau Ward Witheford. Carroll Lawry Colvin Massey Duncan Tellers. McGowan Field McKenzie, R. Carncross Fraser, A. L. D. McNab Laurensen. Guinness Millar Majority against, 25. Amendment negatived. Mr. ELL moved, That progress be reported. AYES, 8. Arnold Herries Tellers. Atkinson Collins Massey Monk. Ell Hutcheson. NOES, 27. Heke Allen, E. G. Seddon Hogg Barclay Stevens Hornsby Bennet Symes Carroll Ward Houston Witheford. Colvin Lawry Duncan McGowan Field McKenzie, R. Tellers. Fisher Carncross McNab Fraser, A. L. D. Millar Laurensen. Hall-Jones Palmer PAIRS. For. Against. Fraser, W. Mills Lethbridge Hall Thomson, J. W. Thomson, R. Majority against, 19. Motion negatived. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) hoped the Premier would supply the House with information with regard to the Cook Islands. They

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portion, which called for explanation. Further, ought to know what Colonel Gudgeon's instructions were when he was first appointed as Resident; expenses in connection with the Royal visit, as desired; what laws were in force there ; whether the Court of the High Commissioner had jurisdiction; the estimates did not afford these particulars. In the colony of New Zealand ; and by what law certain persons had been appointed as Justices of the Peace in those Islands. He also desired to see laid on the table of the House eight o'clock a.m. (Saturday). information as to mail communication with those Islands ; also the Gazette, which he thought ought to be incorporated in the New Zealand Gazette. Mr. SEDDON said the suggestion with regard to the Gazette was a very good one, and would have the consideration of the late Mr. M. J. S. have consideration. Mr. HERRIES thought the House should have full information with regard to the contingents at the front. Mr. SEDDON said it was not in accordance with military etiquette to publish the full reports of commanding officers ; but he did not see any reason why Colonel Porter's report, which reached him a day or two ago, should not be laid on the table of the House. He promised to do that on Tuesday. He would give the fullest information possible on the various subjects when they came to the Defence vote. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) said that he had written to the Premier, in his capacity of Minister of Defence, six weeks ago, about Trooper Robinson of the Fourth Contingent, and had not received any reply. This young fellow went away with the Fourth Contingent, and he took a horse worth £20 with him. He was seriously wounded whilst out scouting, and was invalided home, and the probabilities were that he was disabled for life. He had written to the Defence Minister asking if anything could be done for this young

fellow, but no reply had been received. Mr. SEDDON said letters sent to him addressed to the Minister of Defence went to the Defence Office, and frequently did not get to him for weeks, or until such time as the Defence Office put them before him. In the case stated by the honourable gentleman he might say that, if the horse was procured in South Africa, he would certify to the account for it as correct. If the trooper was wounded and was disabled he was entitled to the pension. If he was suffering from his wounds he would not hesitate a moment in saying that he must be paid until he was well, and if unable to do anything he would come under the pension list. Mr. ATKINSON (Wellington City) said that Sergeant Love, of the Seventh Contingent, who was killed in South Africa, left a widow and three children, and, on his widow applying to the Defence Office, she received the answer that there was a possibility of her not getting a pension. Mr. SEDDON said, If any communication had been made to a poor woman to that effect- he did not care who the officer was- he would be careful before he sent another like it. Mr. ATKINSON could assure the honourable gentleman that that was the answer. He had also to point out that the daily averages of expenses in connection with the prisons at the Vote, £1,870, agreed to. Progress reported. The House adjourned at twenty minutes to