

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Friday, 5th July, 1901. Checking Railway Luggage-Grand Hotel Fire, Auckland-Shops and Offices Bill-Checking Passengers' Luggage. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock. PRAYERS. CHECKING RAILWAY LUGGAGE. The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK asked the Government, If the present system of checking luggage could be so extended as to enable passengers travelling on the Bluff to Lyttelton Railway to check their luggage through to Wellington ? He knew he was asking the Railway Department to do something that would involve negotiations between themselves and the shipping companies, but there should be no difficulty, he thought, in the matter. It was a change that would be a great convenience to the general public. Any person coming from, say, Dunedin to Wellington had now to go, on the arrival of the train at Christchurch, to see that his luggage was taken from the guard's van and sent on to another " intermediate " van for Lyttelton. Just the other week, when he was going to Napier, he checked his luggage, and the result was very satisfactory. When he arrived at Napier he handed his luggage-ticket to a friend to present at the railway-station, and the next he saw of it was when it was in his bedroom at his hotel. If the honourable gentleman could see his way to comply with the request, it would give general satisfaction to the travelling public. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER quite admitted that the system of checking passengers' luggage was not what it should be, and checking it, as suggested by the honourable gentleman, would, no doubt, be of great advantage to the public. The public, however, had not reached that stage when a system of check would be of much use to them. A check system had actually been in operation in New Zealand for nearly two years, and so far had not been taken advantage of to any extent, although, as a matter of fact, all the machinery was provided for checking between all stations. The existing regulations provided that passengers by steamer could have their luggage checked and sent right to steamer's side on advising the railway officers to whom the luggage was handed that it was for steamer. Special labels had been provided for use in such cases, and the railway officer entered thereon the name of steamer and the number of the passenger's berth, if

furnished with the necessary particulars ; and on the pas-

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senger handing over his check at the steamer's | able members were fully aware of the disastrous side the luggage was put on board for him. He desired to say that the Minister for Railways was only too anxious to make the check system as perfect a success as it was in other countries, and he would do everything in his power to get the co-operation of the steam- ship companies in order to carry it out in as perfect a state as it was elsewhere. The fact remained, however, that the travelling public in New Zealand had not yet risen to that amount of experience to see the benefits of the check system. Any one who travelled under the check system in other countries knew what a perfect system it was, and how enormously it saved the worry of passengers en route and at the point of arrival and departure. The desire of the Minister was that the system should be made as abso- lutely perfect as it was anywhere else, and as far as the conditions in New Zealand enabled it to be made. The Hon. Mr. REEVES asked if the regula- tions had been gazetted. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER replied that the regulations had been in existence for nearly two years, and he felt sure that they were printed in the Railway Guide. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH would move, if necessary, the adjournment of the Council. He would like to observe, in answer to what the honourable gentleman had stated, that in his opinion the carrying-out of the check system was about as faulty as it could possibly be. He happened to have had experience of this a few days ago. He was travelling with his luggage from Dunedin to Christchurch, and it chanced that he required to have one of the parcels put into the compartment he was tra- velling in. Well, he had the greatest possible difficulty in getting that done. The officials told him that, as the parcels were booked to Christchurch, they must all go there ; and it was only by the greatest intercession and the utmost pressure that he could get possession of the particular package he required. The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honour- al le gentleman could not be heard without the Suspension of the Standing Orders. The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK would move that the honourable gentleman be heard. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON would move the adjournment of the Council for that pur- pose. The Hon. the SPEAKER said that practice had never been adopted in the Council. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH said that, so far as he was concerned, he had said all he had to Fav. Subsequently, this question was further de- bated on the motion for adjournment.] GRAND HOTEL FIRE, AUCKLAND. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI asked the Minister of Education, If the Government had offered, or intend to offer, a reward and a free pardon to any person who will give such evidence as will lead to the conviction of any one who has been guilty of setting fire, or assisting to set fire, to the Grand Hotel at Auckland ? Honour- fire that took place last month in Auckland, by which five precious lives were lost, and three young women were now, he believed, in the Hospital, and were likely to be maimed for life as a result of the injuries they received on that occasion. Rumours had been afloat that the place had not been accidentally burned, but that some persons had been guilty of the crime of setting fire to it. He knew nothing about this, however, but from the evidence which was adduced at the inquest one was led to be- lieve that it was not an accidental fire, but that the building was wilfully set on fire by some one. However unfortunate the thing was at the time, it might have been much more serious if it had occurred a week later, because the hotel for that time was entirely engaged for the Royal suite. He was sorry to say that lives were lost as it was, but it might have been more serious if the fire had taken place a week later. He therefore thought some action should be taken by the Government to insure, if this hotel had been set on fire by some person, that it should be sheeted home, because the fact of so many fires happening, especially in the Auck- land District, had become a very serious thing. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER begged to say that as yet no reward had been offered, and whether or not the Government would later on offer a reward and free pardon might depend very largely on the result of the inquest now proceeding. SHOPS AND OFFICES BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, this is a

Bill that was before the Council last year, and it has not succeeded, up to the present time, in coming into law by reason of the time not being sufficient for its consideration by the other branch of the Legislature. Last year I proposed the second reading pro forma, and the Council was good enough to grant my request, with the view of the Bill going to the Labour Bills Committee. I propose to take a similar step to-day if the Council will allow me. I may point out that the Bill is pretty well the same Bill that passed this Council last year. There are one or two points which are different. They are marked in the margin, and I do not think I am asking very much in suggesting that the Council should allow it to proceed to the Labour Bills Committee. If there is to be a debate on the subject, I think it may very well be taken when the report of the Committee comes down to the Council. I therefore move, That the Shops and Offices Bill be now read the second time pro forma. Bill read the second time. CHECKING PASSENGERS' LUGGAGE. On the question, That the Council do now adjourn. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON said he wanted to make one or two statements, and he would have to go back to the question of carrying passengers' luggage on the railway. He presumed he would be in order in doing that. They had had some grievances in Dunedin with

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reference to the carriage of passengers' luggage on the trains. The Stationmaster down there was a small man, but at the same time one who was very much too big for his job. They had had no end of complaints about the management and carriage of passengers' luggage, and he did not know that it was always wise to take these things into consideration without having some proof for what they were going to say. Now, he thought it would be admitted he had got the necessary proof when he told them of the particular experience which befell himself and two others on a recent Saturday when they were leaving Dunedin for Kingston by rail. It was a very big train and a very crowded platform. He told his friends to take their seats, and promised to look after their tickets and luggage. After getting the tickets and pasting labels on the luggage, he had it taken alongside one of the three vans fully fifteen minutes before the time the train started. He certainly did not wish to interfere with the porters or guards placing luggage in the vans, because he recognised that they knew better than any one else where to put it, so that it might be discharged at the various stations along the line. As most people knew, on the southern lines luggage must be shifted at Gore to go to Queenstown. He said nothing until he heard the Stationmaster give orders that no more luggage should be taken in the van. At this time his friends were on board the train, and he told the Stationmaster it would be very awkward if their luggage was left on the platform when they arrived at Gore. The Stationmaster's reply was, "I do not care. No more luggage goes on that train; it must go by the ten o'clock train." There was a special leaving at ten o'clock, which he (Mr. Pinkerton) believed would reach Gore just in time to be too late for any one going on to Queenstown. Therefore he (Mr. Pinkerton) said the luggage could not go by the ten o'clock train. The Stationmaster said, "They must go by the ten o'clock train." He replied, "There is no must about it; so far as I am concerned, it will not go. It may as well be left in Dunedin as stranded at Gore or left somewhere else." The Stationmaster was very indignant and his manner very offensive. He said, "I do not care who you are. These things must go by the ten o'clock train." His (Mr. Pinkerton's) reply was, "I do not suppose you care who I am, and it is not a question of who I am. It is a question of passengers travelling on this train who will not receive their luggage when they arrive at their destination, and will not understand what has become of it. I think that luggage ought to be carried by this train." The Stationmaster said, "You must go by the ten o'clock train;" and he (Mr. Pinkerton) replied, "You repeat that so often I may tell you I am not going. The passengers who are going are now on board the train, and their luggage is here on the platform." The Stationmaster turned round and said, "I do not care." He (Mr. Pinkerton) replied, "It is very obvious you do not care; but I care, and a great many others will care." Now, he (Mr. Pinkerton) thought the officers of the Railway Department should not be allowed to take up that attitude. The officers should be men who understood

how to treat the travelling public with consideration and courtesy- men who would consult the convenience of passengers and endeavour to secure the safety of their luggage. Before going further he might say that the porter-who seemed to have more sense and consideration than the Stationmaster -put the luggage on the van and it was carried all right ; but if they were to be told by Station- masters or others in authority that they did not care what became of passengers or passengers' luggage, the sooner that condition of things was altered the better. He took it to be his duty to bring this matter before the Council. Perhaps some might be of opinion that he should have brought it before the department. Well, that was a matter of opinion ; but he had brought it before the House so as to make it public, so that the public might know what to expect. Had the train he had referred to gone on without that luggage, the chances were that it would have had to be taken by dray or wagon, and that it would have taken a fortnight or more to reach Cromwell, the destination of one of his friends. This luggage had not exceeded half a hundredweight, and the fact that it was carried in one of the vans showed that they had not been overloaded. The Stationmaster had said positively that it should not be allowed to go, but, fortunately, there had been at the Dunedin Station a man with more sense than the Stationmaster. Other Stationmasters he had always found obliging, and porters and other officials were also considerate and obliging; but he thought it his duty to tell the House and the country that such a man as the Stationmaster at Dunedin was far too big for his position, and that he ought to be at some station away back in the country, where there were only two trains a day, and then the public might have some security as to the safe carrying of their luggage. The Hon. Mr. BOLT wished to add a few words to what had been said on this subject. Some two years ago, and before the check system was introduced, he, along with a few others, had brought the matter before the Minister, and then this so-called check system was brought in. He referred to it as a "so-called " system, because no sane reasoning man could say that it was an effective system, and if the public had not taken advantage of it that was a consequence of its non-efficiency. He understood that on the Continent of Europe a man on leaving any particular town and going to any other town got a check for his luggage, and then he need have no further anxiety on its account, but had simply to claim his luggage at his destination-to whatever hotel he was going. That appeared to him to be a thorough system of check, and that was what was required here : a person should be in a position to deposit his luggage with the Railway Department and find it at its destination. If that were done the public would gladly take advantage of the system. The small amount of luggage he had when travelling to Wellington was not of much account ; but he

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would point out that there were travellers going on the van and left the rest of it on the platform all over New Zealand, engaged in commerce and other matters, who must have an enormous amount of luggage; and it would not only be for the convenience of the general public, but in the interests of trade and commerce, that we should have a thoroughly good system of check- ; be found that these mistakes, which were a thing of the past. He trusted the Minister's promise would be carried out, and that at no distant date, so that the next time honourable members came to Wellington all they would have to do ' would be to put their luggage in the hands of the Railway Department at the point of departure and claim it at their lodgings in Wellington without further trouble or anxiety. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said the system was necessarily very different here from what it was on the other side, because there the trade was mostly from one part of the colony to the other, running all the way on land, while here, in order to come from Dunedin to Wellington, there had to be a change. The railway system changed at Lyttelton, and the department could not be responsible for what took place on board the steamers. With reference to the complaint of the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton, he might say that this was the first time since the railway system had been in vogue that he had heard of such a charge being made against a public official. For his own part, he might state that he travelled as often as any one, and that he had always received the greatest courtesy and attention at the

hands of the railway officials. Sometimes on arrival by train or steamer luggage was left behind, but the officers were always very obliging in forwarding anything that had been left. He was sorry that the Stationmaster at Dunedin should have been so offensive to his honourable friend. The man was for a time stationed at Oamaru, and while there was civil and obliging. The Hon. Mr. Pinkerton had perhaps exaggerated the position. The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON .- No. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI could not help thinking the honourable gentleman had done so. For himself, he considered that, taking the Railway Department and the whole of the Civil servants, there was no better class of officers in New Zealand or anywhere. He was sorry his honourable friend had attacked a man who had really no chance to reply and defend himself. The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND thought there was occasionally great carelessness shown at railway-stations with regard to passengers' luggage. It was caused, perhaps, by the Stationmasters not sufficiently looking after the porters to see that they did their duty. Once, when travelling from Helensville to Auckland, his portmanteaux were put out of the train at Newmarket. Fortunately there was another train following, so that he was not for any length of time without his luggage. Only last Tuesday he left New Plymouth in company with his wife for Wellington. At New Plymouth all his luggage was labelled "Wellington," but just as the train was moving off his wife noticed two of their boxes standing on the platform. One of the porters had actually put half of the luggage form. As a result he had to wait for the two articles until Wednesday evening. He thought Stationmasters should be bound to look after the railway-porters a little more than they did at present ; and, if they did, he thought it would greatly be a great inconvenience to the public, would be avoided. The Hon. Mr. A. LEE SMITH wished to add to what he had previously said that he did not find fault with the staff, but with the regulations. He supposed the Stationmaster and the staff generally were doing their duty in refusing to do what he asked them to do, but it was surely ridiculous that, if goods had been labelled for a certain town and were wanted on the way, they could not be obtained from the van by the owner on giving up the checks corresponding with those on the parcels, simply because they were labelled for a particular place. That was what happened in his case. He wanted a bundle of rugs for the journey, and he was told that it was labelled for Christchurch, and that it could be delivered to him only in Christchurch. It was only as a great privilege and as a great concession that he was at length allowed to get these rugs from the van. He believed the Stationmaster at Dunedin was a bit of a martinet, but at the same time he had not had the same experience as the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton had had. Such a way of carrying on was very unbusinesslike, and not what was required at all. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY thought passengers were themselves largely to blame for what was done with regard to their luggage. Many of them simply threw their goods on the platform and left the porters to find out the destination for themselves. He had some experience in Dunedin lately, perhaps with the same officer as the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton had alluded to. At any rate, the self-assertion of the individual was surprising. For himself, if he had had such an experience as the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton he would have considered it his duty, in the public interest, to have reported it at once to the General Manager, in order to remedy such unreasonable action. He considered that in a case of gross neglect of passengers' luggage, or passengers' convenience in travelling it was one's duty to report to the head of the department, so that anything of the kind might be remedied. Generally, however, he had received the most courteous treatment on the railways from officials of all grades. The Hon. Mr. JONES said the Hon. Mr. Shrimski had remarked that he had always been treated with the greatest courtesy by the railway officials. He (Mr. Jones) had also met with exactly the same experience. They, however, were notorious. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI .- Speak for yourself. The Hon. Mr. JONES said, he would say that the Hon. Mr. Shrimski was a notable character. Every one knew he was a member of the Legislative Council, and that was, perhaps, why he was treated with courtesy.

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The Stationmaster at Dunedin, however, did not know the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton. He only met the

honourable gentleman as one of the public ; and the question was, Was the treatment meted out to the honourable gentleman the treatment generally meted out to the public? It was all very well for members of the Council to say they had always been well treated by the railway officials. That might only mean that railway officials paid deference to men who occupied a high position, though he believed they were alike courteous to all. With regard to the system of luggage transport on the railways, he considered it was most imperfect and unsatisfactory. First of all, they wanted a perfect check system. He did not know how to devise it; but any gentleman who was capable of holding a high position in the service should be able to do it. Then, when they had a check system, the people should know it was in existence. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said it was set out in the Railway Guide. The Hon. Mr. JONES said that might be so, but how many people got the Railway Guide. They had to procure the Railway Guide before they knew the check system was in existence. If the people knew of the system they would get the Guide to find out what it was. The public should be made aware of it, and if the Government would only send out a slip to the newspapers they, he thought, would be glad to print the information free of charge. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON said the fact that the check system was in existence in New Zealand should certainly be known to the people of New Zealand. At the same time he would point out that a notice was put up in every railway-station in the colony intimating that such a system was in existence, and he did not know that the Hon. Mr. Jones or any other honourable gentleman who was growling about the transport of luggage could devise a better system. It was about as good as any one could hope to bring into force. As the Hon. Mr. Feldwick had said, there was a difficulty when luggage had to be carried from the train to the steamer : but he thought if the honourable gentleman had checked his luggage at Invercargill it was possible that, under the existing regulations, it would have gone on to Lyttelton and then to Wellington, and the honourable gentleman would have found it in his rooms in Wellington. It had been said by several speakers that very often luggage was lost. But that did not prove that the system was wrong. Luggage would be lost, and would continue to be lost, it did not matter what system was in vogue. Every member would bear him out in saying that not only members of the Legislature, but travellers in general, were treated with uniform kindness and consideration by the railway servants. So much so, indeed, that travellers had assured him that they got more attention, civility, and courtesy from the railway servants in New Zealand than they had experienced the whole world over. There were isolated cases, he admitted, where a Stationmaster got too big for his boots. An example of that had been given by one honourable gentleman this afternoon. He himself knew of one or two instances in the North Island where he had had to complain of the discourtesy which some persons had received from a Stationmaster. It was a strange thing to him that while the ordinary run of railway servants - the porters, clerks, and guards-were kindness itself, yet that directly a man became Stationmaster and got a little bit of gold lace on his hat rare instances occurred where he got too big for his boots. In isolated cases, where he had complained of a Stationmaster who he thought had transgressed, the matter had gone before either Mr. Hudson or the General Manager, and he thought on these occasions the Stationmaster received a hint, and he would not be likely to transgress again. He had had occasion to complain of a Stationmaster lately, and he thought the rebuke this officer received from the General Manager would do him good, and also would result in advantage to the travelling public. There was a matter that he would like to bring under the notice of the Minister and the Council. He was assured by a member who had just landed from Australia that in travelling over the Australian railway-lines his New Zealand railway-pass was not recognised. He understood that in New Zealand members of the Australian Legislatures, and also their wives, were given free passes over New Zealand lines. In the case he mentioned the honourable member to whom he referred had been travelling from Melbourne to Sydney, and he was allowed to travel over the Victorian line on showing his railway-pass. When he got on the New South Wales line, however, travelling on to Sydney, the ticket - inspector assured him that his railway-pass could not be recognised in New South

Wales, and he would have to pay his fare. Therefore, to save trouble, he did pay the fare. He (Mr. Jenkinson) thought this circumstance should be brought under the notice of the Government, because if we were going to have reciprocity we should have it in regard to railway-passes as well as other things. He had suggested to the gentleman that he should communicate with Sir Joseph Ward on the matter, and that it would be dealt with satisfactorily. He himself and some friends had the same trouble about passes over the New South Wales railways, but, being invited guests to the Commonwealth festivities, they just managed to get through by the skin of their teeth. Reverting to the subject with which this discussion started, he just wished further to say that he hoped it would not go forth, merely because there had been isolated instances of Stationmasters being discourteous, and having trodden upon the corns of some one, that therefore the railway servants of New Zealand were not a most courteous, intelligent, and attentive lot of men. The Hon. Colonel PITT would like to know whether such a debate as this was in order. It was true that in another place it was usual, when a subject had been dealt with in the form of question and answer, that immediately afterwards, or some time thereafter, the adjourn-
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ment of the House might be moved and a discussion follow, in which not only that subject but the subjects of other questions not been checked; and, more than that, the answer might be referred to. In this case, porter would hand over his (Mr. Feldwick's) on the motion for the adjournment of the portmanteau to a thief with as much courtesy as to himself. Council upon the conclusion of business, a matter previously dealt with was being reverted porter would hand it over to him with all due to by members, and a general debate was being courtesy. His honourable friend Mr. Jenkinson indulged in. He would like, therefore, the Hon. had said that if a person had checked his luggage the Speaker to consider for their future guidance from Invercargill to Lyttelton it would be ance whether this was in order or not. As the all right, and that at the end of his journey present debate had not been checked, and was he would find it all right. Well, when he was. apparently in order, he would like to say some- on his way up, the fast steamer " Tarawera " thing with reference to the matter which had was blowing her whistle just as they came been before the Council. He thought, unless out of the tunnel at Lyttelton. Instead of there being any check on the luggage coming the Government provided that all luggage must through from Dunedin, they had to claim their be checked, and that people should take out checks on their luggage, losses would continue luggage at Christchurch and look after it them- to occur; and the wonder was that greater losses selves. If they checked their luggage through did not happen, because when the train arrived at to Lyttelton and claimed it at the port station, a station the luggage was put out and any one who the chances were that they would either lose it chose to claim it got it. Therefore, under this or their boat. If they checked to Christchurch, condition of things, it was an astonishing thing they must either leave it to its fate or person- ally see it moved from the guard's van at the to him that there was no further loss than there was. As regarded the civility of the railway rear of the train to the intermediate van. If it happened to be on a Saturday night-when the servants, he, for one, would like to join in say- ing that his experience had been that they were people of Lyttelton came on to do their shop- uniformly civil and courteous ; and he would ping at Christchurch-the train might be an eighth of a mile long, and they would have to be sorry to think that they were civil to mem- bers of the Legislature simply because they struggle from one end of the train to the other were members of the Legislature. Now, with in order to see that their luggage was right .. The thing that was really necessary, whether reference to what had fallen from the Hon. there was any check or not, was that an inter- Mr. Jenkinson, he thought it was only fair to mediate van should be put on every day at Dun- say that he had had the pleasure of travelling edin, and if the luggage was labelled properly, over the Australian railways lately, where he had been travelling in a somewhat representa- and the van went right alongside the steamer, tive capacity. The members of the Federation all would be right. That was the position. He Commission, and the wives and daughters of was sorry he had raised the debate, for he had

not intended anything of the kind in asking those members who accompanied the party, the question on the Order Paper. However, he were allowed to travel free on the State railways hoped the discussion would prove beneficial. there. That was a privilege which was not accorded to the wives and daughters of the Com- few words on the subject. The majority of the missionaries in this colony, and therefore, so far remarks made by honourable members of the as they were concerned, the concessions were Council appeared to him to indicate that honour- greater in Australia than they were in New able members were hardly capable of travelling Zealand. The Hon. Mr. JONES wished to say, by way by themselves and taking care of their own luggage. He believed he could truthfully say that of explanation, that he would not like it to go few members travelled more than he did, and forth that he had meant that railway servants he generally carried a full share of luggage, but were civil to members of Parliament because they knew them as such. What he wished to he had never yet experienced the slightest inconvenience was that there might be an instance in convenience or incivility from any railway servant. He had always managed to get his luggage which a railway official would be courteous to carry on board the steamer, and if he was unable because he knew the object of his attentions to get a porter he carried it himself. He did not was a member of Parliament. see any reason why honourable gentlemen should The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK also wanted to cry out so much about the inconvenience. There make a short explanation in regard to a remark was no reason for it when they looked after their made by the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson about the check system in New Zealand. The system luggage ; and, so far as the railway servants of was all right. In America it was carried out the colony were concerned, he might say that, from Mr. Ronayne, the head of the Railway by means of a brass check or token; in New Department, to the lowest servant in the department, he had never met with anything but attached to the luggage and the other half was the greatest possible civility. There might torn off and given to the proprietor of the luggage have been an exception; but the exception was rare. There was no particular benefit, of course, only proved the rule. He thought that, so far as the brass; but, as regarded the safety of the far as the Railway Department was concerned, person's luggage, any one could claim any one everything was done that could be done for the benefit of the travelling public. else's things either in Christchurch or in Dunedin. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not without a check. The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK said, If they had If the thief asked for it, the The Hon. Mr. REEVES would like to say a

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The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER thought he | past. Of course, the difficulties raised that might be excused if he said a word or two with reference to the question of order raised by the Hon. Colonel Pitt. Judging from the practice of the other House, certainly a debate on a motion for adjournment, as had been ruled, was completely out of order; but, the subject having been mentioned during the afternoon in a question, he thought they might perfectly well follow the precedent in the other House which allowed of such discussion. He thought, therefore, that the discussion was perfectly regular. With regard to the check system, it seemed very unfortunate, if it was the great boon some of them knew it to be in countries where it flourished, that it should be so little taken advantage of by the inhabitants of this country. If it had been otherwise, he felt certain that the railway officials would have been encouraged to carry the system on to perfection. How many honourable members were there who knew that there was a page of regulations in the Railway Guide affecting this matter ? And, again, only one gentleman had stated that he had seen a notice in a railway-station drawing attention to it. Other honourable gentlemen were prepared to say they had never seen such a notice. An Hon. MEMBER .- Not one in ten. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said that was exactly so, and it showed how little appreciated the system was-how little anxiety there was in this country for a decent check system for the conveyance of luggage being adopted. He remembered this system in operation in 1867 in a very insignificant State in South America, and there the system was carried to perfection. As he had pointed out in his answer to the question, the difficulty was that the

Railway Department did not carry the luggage across the sea. When the luggage came to a seaport there was a break in the chain-the railway responsibility ceased and some other responsibility came in. This was got over in other countries by putting the matter into the hands of transport companies, who took the luggage from the room in which a man was living and placed it in the room in another hotel in some other part of the country that he was going to, and all the traveller had to do was to receive and to give up his brass checks, the whole responsibility being taken over from him. It only needed that further encouragement should be given by the public to the Railway Department, and then the department would go a good deal further than it had done, and would, no doubt, make arrangements with the steam- ship companies to carry the luggage from point to point instead, of as now, merely from station to station. In order that it might be any- thing like a complete system it was necessary that it should go from point to point, whether water intervened or not, and he believed the Railway Department would be only too glad to arrange for this. At all events, he could see no reason why we should not have as complete a check system for luggage in this country as in any other country ; but, if it was complete, it ought to be patronised by a great many more people than it had been patronised by in the afternoon were of an exceptional character. He did not know whether the official the Hon. Mr. Pinkerton had had a difficulty with had "got out of the wrong side of his bed " on the morn- ing in question, but he had never met a railway official who, under any conditions, had so mis- behaved himself to any one. He trusted this was very exceptional, and that it might be re- garded in that way. His invariable experience for all the years we had had railways in New Zealand was that the officials were universally courteous, not only to himself but to all and sundry. He had seen the most wonderful patience exhibited by railway porters and by guards to people who really were very trying, and might almost have been turned out of the carriage for misbehaviour, but still the patience of the officials came in and rounded the difficult corners to the satisfaction of all concerned. He did not think there was any class of officials who should be held in higher respect in this country than the railway officials for their universal courtesy and tact, especially if they recognised that in this country they had not the temptation of differentiating between man and man. In other countries they received tips, but here that was not done. In other countries the railway officials would attend to one man more than another, because they said it was likely they would get a tip out of one; but here that was not the rule, and he thought it was very much to the credit of the service and to the honour of the railway servants that it was not done. As regarded reciprocity of parliamentary railway- passes between this colony and Australia, it was very much to be regretted that there had not been complete reciprocity in this matter. He would mention it to his colleagues. Certainly when Sir Joseph Ward and he were in Australia lately they thought they had put that matter on a perfectly good footing with the authorities in New South Wales. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON .- This has hap- pened since. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said that the matter would be mentioned to the Minister for Railways, and every effort would be made to get it settled in a way that would be reciprocal and satisfactory. It was not a fair thing for a mem- ber of Parliament to be put in such a position that he might claim a right that would be denied to him, and therefore the matter should be put straight and all difficulty on that point obviated. As regarded the difficulty raised by the Hon. Mr. Lee Smith, he was not at all sure that, under any system, once luggage was re- ceived and checked an official could break the seal during the journey. The Hon. Mr. LEE SMITH said his luggage was not sealed. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said that, at any rate, he was sure the desire of his colleague was to make the check system and every other point connected with the railways as convenient to every one as possible. Motion agreed to. The Council adjourned at half-past three o'clock p.m.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. | experience shows that a titled aristocracy is not an unmixed blessing-is, in fact, anything but Friday, 5th July, 1901. a blessing at all in the Old Country. The fact

Address in Reply. country has been shown plainly more than once. I need hardly refer to a celebrated Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past instance which must be in the memory of two o'clock. most members of this House-the case of Sir Robert Stout. It will be remembered that PRAYERS. when that honourable gentleman was Premier of the colony he accepted a knighthood, and ADDRESS IN REPLY. his own constituency, he was defeated by a ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. BARCLAY (Dunedin City) .- It is with gentleman who had not set foot on a political mingled feelings of pleasure and regret that I platform before in his life. A striking instance rise to speak on the present occasion. I say my occurred also just within the last day or two in feelings are mingled, because I have much to a neighbouring colony. Members may have congratulate the Government upon -and I re- seen in the telegrams that Sir J. C. Graham has gret to say that it is with extreme reluctance in- been defeated in New South Wales by a gentle- deed I have something to say which may not be man well known to many members in this House, agreeable or pleasant to them. It is an exceed- Mr. Eden George, who was, I believe, on more than one occasion an unsuccessful candidate ingly difficult and hard position for one who has been a consistent supporter of the Government, for a seat in this House. Sir J. C. Graham is who was returned to the House to support the the Mayor of Sydney, and one of the gentlemen Government, and who has been extremely well who were lately knighted during the visit of the satisfied with the measures they have passed, Duke of York, and. that is the fate which has and with their administration-it is an ex- overtaken him almost immediately after he has tremely hard and difficult thing for any one accepted that titular distinction. Sir, what I contend is this: that the creation and the in that position to say, if he can avoid it, anything to give the members of the Govern- granting of titles tends to the growth of class ment pain, or which tends to reflect in any way and social distinctions in the country. The titled class are a class separated by their titles on their policy or conduct. Nevertheless it is absolutely necessary that I should say something and surroundings from the mass of the people. Of all the great names in the long roll of British of this character. My colleagues and myself in statesmen there are none greater than those of Dunedin on a late occasion sent a telegram, regretting his acceptance of a title, to the Hon. William Pitt and William Gladstone, and these the Minister for Railways, which was published men died as they lived, identified with and un- throughout the colony, and which occasioned divided from the people whose destinies they some remark. From a reply which we received guided and controlled ; and I say that their from the honourable gentleman it would appear example is good enough for colonial statesmen, and statesmen in any part of the world, to that we alone amongst all from whom he re ceived telegrams did not offer him congratula- follow. I need hardly say that it is on broad tions upon the fact that he had received the grounds of that kind that I, for one, joined in honour of knighthood. It would be thought, sending the telegram to the Hon. the Minister perhaps, that we did not care, if we were silent to which I referred. I do not recede from that on this occasion, to defend that proceeding on position at all. I say that it ought to be a afterthought. It might be thought that the plank in the Liberal platform of this country that we should set our faces like a stone wall telegram was sent hurriedly and in haste, and that feelings of regret had entered our minds against the granting of titles in New Zealand. That is my opinion and my belief. I have said since it was done. For my part, I am unable to recede from the position which, along with my sufficient to make my position clear in re- gard to this matter, and now I would just like colleagues, I then took up. The position I take to emphasize the fact that my objections are on up is this : We in this country are, I take it, a democratic people. I take it that almost broad grounds of party principle, and it is plea- sant to be able to add that, if there is any man the most Conservative of us would be classed among English Liberals, and I say that it is in this country to whom the granting of a title is an honour that ought to be given, if it is an contrary to the feelings, and views, and ideas of the Liberal party in this country that there honour acceptable to the bulk of the people-if should be a distribution in New Zealand of there is any man in this country who deserves titular distinctions. It is greatly to the credit it for his ability and for his great

natural gifts of the present Administration that during their of head and heart, it is the Hon. Sir Joseph long term of office titular distinctions have Ward. But, Sir, I still regret that he should have seen fit to accept such a title, and I would not been bestowed on many persons in the colony. So far as I understand the matter, the have preferred to have seen him for many years, while he continues to be a leader of the Liberal Cabinet has set its face against anything of the party, known under his plain title of " Mr. sort. We who live in this country have come Ward." There is another matter to which I out - those of us who came from Home-have come out to avoid as far as possible the evils of am also obliged to refer with great regret in- the Old Country ; and I say that history and | deed, but, still, it is a duty which devolves upon that it is not palatable to the people of this the result was that at the very next election, in

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me, and I feel that it must be done. I refer to the tendency of late in some respects of the policy advocated and adopted by the Right Hon. the Premier. I do so with pain and regret. I understand that the Right Hon. the Premier, when at Christchurch, referred disparagingly to the great Liberal statesmen at Home who do not and cannot agree to the policy which is now being adopted by the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain and those with whom he is associated. Many appeals have been made to us by the Hon. the Premier of late to be loyal -to be patriotic. He has asked us for loyalty, and he has asked us for patriotism. There was little need to ask us for loyalty or patriotism. Loyalty and patriotism we have in plenty, and to spare. Who in this country is not loyal ? Who in this country is not patriotic ? But, to my mind, the Premier is going further : he is asking us not only to be loyal and patriotic, he is asking us to tie our- selves to the chariot-wheels of Mr. Chamberlain and of the Conservative party in England. I say that the policy which has been adopted by Mr. Chamberlain and that party in England - in spite of the beating of the big drums we have heard lately-in spite of the flag-waving, and the bawling and the shouting-in spite of all that-that policy is not acceptable to the bulk of the Liberals or Radicals in England or in this country. An Hon. MEMBER. - Yes. Mr. BARCLAY .- Well, I know that there has been a great noise throughout the country. I know that it is easy for men to deceive them- selves, on that account, that the people are in favour of their policy ; but the tide is receding even in England, and I say that the discontent with Mr. Chamberlain's policy is increasing day by day, as more and more light is being shed upon it. An Hon. MEMBER .- What are you referring to ? Mr. BARCLAY .- To Mr. Chamberlain's war policy. And I say that as more and more light is being shed upon that policy day by day so discontent with it is daily growing. What are the signs of the times? The time was when no moderate man in England cared to adversely criticize that policy. The time was when that great Liberal organ the Daily News offered no opposition to that policy ; but what is the policy of that organ now ? It is openly and strongly opposed to the war. And what is the position of the Labour party in England now on the matter? I need hardly tell honourable members, for they are as well aware of the fact as I am, that the great mass of the Labour party are averse to the policy of the Hon. Mr. Chamberlain. The trade-unions of England passed a resolution officially denouncing the war. Mr. SEDDON .- The Radicals and Liberals at Home are not pro-Boers. Mr. BARCLAY .- I do not know what the honourable gentleman exactly means by the term "pro-Boer," but I say this : that the great bulk of the Liberal party in England do not agree with the policy of the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain in respect to the origin or the conduct of that war; nor do I think they will in this country when they come to know the whole truth. What, again, are the signs of the times ? What did we hear the other day ? It was stated in a cablegram that the Battersea Town Council had a discussion as to whether or not they should call a particular street Methuen Street or Joubert Street. One party in the Council wanted to call it Methuen Street, and the other party wanted it named Joubert Street, after the Boer Commander-in-Chief. The latter gained the day, and there in a town which is situated alongside the metropolis you have a street named after the Commander-in- Chief of the enemy's forces, while war was actually going on. Was ever such a thing heard of before in the history of the world ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Where is their patriot- ism ? Mr.

BARCLAY .- The honourable member may talk about his loyalty and his patriotism. but the names of loyalty and patriotism, like that of religion, have been used over and over again to cloak sins and crimes of those who used these terms. What are the signs of the times, Sir? Although at one time the Liberal party in England hesitated to open their mouths with regard to this war, we find that when Sir Alfred Milner came Home the other day from South Africa only one single Liberal attended the banquet to welcome him, and that Sir Henry Campbell - Bannerman and the leaders of the Liberal party in England are now openly and avowedly against this war. It is no use talking about " Little 3.0. England " or anything of that sort. Calling names is useless. Mr. Chamberlain and the Conservative party and the men who are associated with him are engaged in a struggle against truth. For a time they apparently succeeded. But truth is great and in the end comes out triumphant and will prevail, and the truth is becoming better known day by day. I say to honourable members that when the historian of the future comes to write the history of this war he will, in consideration to the fair name and honour of Great Britain, say as little as possible about its origin and conduct. Now, I say that I regret indeed to observe any tendency to obtain what is apparently expressions of approval from this country of the policy of Mr. Chamberlain and the party with whom he is associated. Mr. Chamberlain's history is probably well known to many members of this House. He entered political life as a Radical of the Radicals, and now he winds up as the darling of the Duchesses. He was the political Judas who sold his master. Mr. Gladstone. Perhaps honourable members will pardon me if I relate an incident in the life of the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain which, perhaps, is not very widely known, but which was communicated to me by one who was well acquainted with the facts, and who was interested in what took place at the time. There was a time when Mr. Gladstone was very ill. and when he had gone north to Scotland, and it was anticipated that he would not

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return to power again. At that time Mr. Chamberlain and some of his associates issued a political programme. It was known in history as the "Unauthorised Programme." They spread it all through the country, and they asked the country to indorse this pro- gramme, and put them in power at the coming election. Amongst others whom Mr. Chamber- lain approached was the Irish Home Rule party. He made proposals to them for a grant of Home Rule. It was the first time that the Home Rule party had had any offer made to them from any statesman of prominence, and the bulk of the party desired very greatly to accept these pro- posals and throw in their lot with Mr. Cham- berlain. There was almost one only against it, and that was the leader of the party at that time, Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell said, " No, we will not accept these proposals. Mr. Gladstone will come back and will sweep the country, and by-and-by we shall obtain Mr. Gladstone's ad- herence to our proposals." Mr. Chamberlain was waiting to hear the result of the meet- ing. He was told that they did not accept his proposals; and from that moment he became a bitter opponent of the Home Rule movement ; and he himself, who had been the very first man to put these proposals forward, and to offer to the party almost all that they wanted if they would join him, was the one to turn and help to deprive the Liberals of office and power, and afterwards to ally himself with the Conserva- It tives whom he had so bitterly opposed. seems to me that that is not the kind of states- man whom we as Liberals and Radicals in this country can have trust and confidence in ; and I. for my part, do not care to express any approval whatever of that honourable gentleman's policy or conduct. Now, Sir, there is little that I have to say further, except to express very general approval of the proposals in the Governor's Specch, although I cannot help saying that I noted with some regret the suggestion of the Premier last night that the time has now come when we must go considerably slower in the direction of social and labour legislation. Now, Sir, I agree that the workers are not the whole community. There are others than they that have to be considered, and legislation must be for the whole of the country. But I do say this : that of all classes in the com- munity the workers are those which stand most in need of beneficial and remedial legisla- tion. They form the class which has suffered most in the past, and they

are the class that require and ought to have the most consideration of all the classes in the community. I trust that the honourable gentleman who is at the head of the Government will see no necessity for holding his hand for any lengthened or extended period. I feel greatly relieved, Sir, at having said what I was obliged to say and what I have said. I am glad to have it said, and it is much more pleasant to turn to the congenial task of offering my congratulations to the Government on their administration, which almost as a whole is exceedingly satisfactory to the country, and also on the legislation which they propose to provide. If the measures suggested in the Governor's Speech are to a considerable extent carried out and placed on the statute-book I think there will not be reason to complain of the work which will have been done, provided these things are, for the most part, accomplished during the present session of Parliament. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) .- It is not my intention to weary the House with a lengthy address, but some honourable members who have preceded me have spoken of some of the subjects dealt with in His Excellency's Address, and I cannot withstand the temptation now of saying a word or two in answer to them. I would like to congratulate the honourable members who proposed and seconded the Address in Reply. Of course, both of them are experienced speakers in this House, and we were quite prepared to hear full justice done to the Address. In regard to the question, which was raised by the last speaker, as to members of this House or the people of this country receiving honours at the hands of the Sovereign, and the expression of his opinion that we, as residents of this colony, ought to disapprove of that, I must frankly own that I do not agree with that honourable member in one single word that he said. I think if there is one kind of honour that we may heartily approve of it is the dignity given to our people and to ourselves, and when it is an honour given only to the person who has earned it. I could have understood the honourable member if his eloquence had been directed against those honours which descend to persons on account of some great work done by a predecessor. An Hon. MEMBER .- What about those who have bought them ? Mr. McNAB .- I have nothing to do with any who have bought their honours. It may be that persons in other walks of life have got into positions and into society, when, if we knew their innermost history, we would know that they do not deserve any credit at all. But I do not think a case of that kind ought to be brought forward to diminish the lustre of the honour in a case where it cannot be suggested that the honour has never been won; and I think, in the case of the two knights recently created in this colony, if ever there were gentlemen in this House or the country who earned such a reward for their services it is the two gentlemen who have had the honour of knighthood conferred on them recently. In regard to the other great events in the history of our country and the Empire which are referred to in His Excellency's Speech, I do not intend to detain the House by speaking about them at great length. There is no doubt that the era which has just passed - known as the Victorian era - was an era unparalleled in our history, and in that of the Empire. And, though under our present reigning Sovereign we cannot expect to see such an extension of the boundaries of our Empire as there has been during the reign which has just closed, still, there is much to be accomplished ; and I hope, during the years to come, that as part of the great British Empire we shall extend our boundaries in the Southern Pacific Ocean,

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as well as improve the social position of the people in our colony. One honourable member who preceded me referred to the question of the Frisco mail-service ; and I would like to say a word under that heading. I was rather disappointed when I heard the member for Auckland City referring to that service. When I heard that, owing to the conduct of the service at the present time, a great deal of dissatisfaction was being expressed in connection with the carrying of our mails, I hoped that the member for Wellington Suburbs had rather incorrectly stated the position. But when I heard the member for Auckland City reply to him I could not but admit that he had made a very good case. And in looking at this question of the Frisco mail service, I am free to confess that I do not see well how we would be able to

improve on the present condition of matters. It was rather unfortunate that the Union Company did not find itself in a position that it could take part in that service. I think I was one of the first in this colony who publicly called attention to the fact that when Honolulu became an American possession it would be impossible for us any longer to have a share in the carrying of the San Francisco mails. That has turned out just as was anticipated at the time ; and, so long as the legislation of the United States in regard to the introduction of foreign vessels into American ports prevails, I do not see that we can hope that the Union Company, or any other New Zealand company, will be able to compete with the American liners between Auckland, Wellington, and San Francisco. The position has been complicated of late years by the American Government giving large grants to their own vessels, and, although an attempt has been made to induce the American Government to forego that provision of their law, I do not think we can look forward reasonably in the future to getting any concession from them. The policy of the American Government has been a policy of isolation since it first became an independent State. The Monroe doctrine indicated to the world that the Americans were going to play a lone hand ; and they are a nation sufficiently great and wealthy to be able to play a lone hand. At the present time they have a population of something like eighty millions of our own race gathered together on one continent, and by both wealth and power they are in such a position that I do not suppose there is a single European Power, or a combination of European Powers, which could successfully carry on a war against the United States. They have such enormous resources that they could practically defy any single European Power or any combination of Powers. And, with that enormous power, backed up by the great wealth which they possess, I do not see that they have anything to gain by conceding a pound or two to a colony or colonies in the Southern Pacific: Therefore we have only got to sit down and face the position of having the traffic between Auckland and Frisco for ever under the American flag. I think we should direct our attention rather to see whether we cannot devote our energies in | the question of conservation, there is also the other directions with equally good results ; and I would like our Postmaster-General, before he is much older, to see if he cannot revive the old line which connected us with Canada, and perhaps, vidi Australia, or, at any rate, a line with Canada, with Wellington as the trading centre. An Hon. Mr. MBKR . - Why Wellington ? Mr. McNAB . - I would like to remind the honourable gentleman who has just interrupted me that you cannot carry on all traffic through Auckland. I have always admitted, in connection with our postal arrangements with America, that the first port of call should be Auckland, and I have advocated the pushing-on of the railway between Auckland and the South ; but I think the honourable member will be the last to admit that heavy traffic between New Zealand and America could best come via Auckland as a distributing centre. It cannot be done. Wellington is the best distributing centre for the colony. I would like to see the energies of the Government directed towards the preservation of our forests. I come from a district where there are extensive forests, and I think I come from a district where we may claim that we have made the most economical use of the forests that have been made in any part of the colony. In the southern part of New Zealand we have a forest called the Seaward Bush Forest, extending for about twenty miles along the east coast ; and since 1860 right down to the present time we have had sawmills in that bush, and they have brought out millions and millions of feet of timber. I do not suppose that if we got the statistics in regard to that forest we would find that there are two hundred acres of that immense forest that had been burned down, or absolutely destroyed, in the sense in which the forests of the North Island have been destroyed. Now, during that long period of forty years that forest has given employment to hundreds and hundreds of men, and even at the present time, with all the mills at present in operation, I suppose it will take something like fifteen years before that forest is cut out. There is one of our railways at the present time which is rendered one of the most profitable railways in the colony because it is going right through the heart of that bush, and the immense loads of timber which come out of that bush every week is the most paying kind of traffic the railways can get. When I have gone through that forest by rail-

through the most distant parts of my constituency-and have compared it with what has taken place in the North Island, where -- you ride in trains for miles and miles through immense forests that a few years ago contained magnificent timber, which has all been dissipated away to the heavens in smoke, we cannot but regret the wanton destruction of a national asset that has taken place in this colony. I do not say it could well have been prevented. I do not profess to know what the circumstances were at the time the destruction took place ; I only know it is a matter of extreme regret that it ever had to be done. I hope the Government will not lose sight of the fact that, apart from

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question of the planting and creating of forests for the next generation ; and, looking through last year's Lands Report, I find one of the most valuable pieces of information that I suppose has ever been published in the Lands Report, regarding the planting and the various kinds of timber that are suitable for the different parts of the country. Sir, I only regret that the Minister had seen fit to bury that very valuable information away in the Crown Lands Report, instead of taking it out and publishing it for the use of the people generally in a separate form. I hope this year, when the report of the Forestry Department is brought down, if it contains such very valuable matter as it did last year, the honourable gentleman will go to a little more expense in connection with it, and will publish it, just the same as he publishes the reports in connection with the stock and the dairy industry of this colony. The railways, I am very pleased to see, have had the attention of the Government during this last two years, and I am also pleased to see it is their intention to prosecute the work even more vigorously. I look upon expenditure in connection with the public railways of the colony as the most valuable expenditure of all the loan-money we have had during the last thirty years, and there are many directions in which the amount of money expended in this direction could be increased. I hope the North Island members will not rest content until they have pushed on the railway connecting us with Auckland. I have never yet been in Auckland, and I want to go and see it. Then, there is the East and West Coast Railway and the Otago Central Railway, and I trust there will be a vigorous prosecution of those lines. Honourable members must not suppose that I think the smaller railways should be neglected. There is a railway which I myself, as representing the district of Maitua, am interested in ; and in connection with this question of the forests of the colony I would direct the attention of the Government to that railway-that is, the prosecution of the Seaward Bush Railway extension right through to Catlins. I suppose that is one of the largest areas of natural timber country remaining in this colony. If that railway were pushed on, we have over thirty miles of continuous forest along the route of the railway, which means there is an immense asset lying there. I hope the Government will push on railways of that description, and when furnishing them with rolling stock I hope the Minister will take a lesson from the recent experiments in placing American-built carriages on our lines. I had the misfortune to travel up from Dunedin to Christchurch the other day in a recently imported American carriage, and perhaps it would be as well to tell the Hon. the Minister my experience. In the first place, we were smoked out of the carriages in going through the tunnels; and, in regard to the carriage itself, it seemed as though no door was made to shut, and the windows appeared to be made never to open. We had to tell off one of our number in one of those little bird-cage carriages to keep the door closed. Fortunately we had an honourable gentleman from another place with us, and we told him off for this duty. But you cannot always be so fortunate when travelling on the Government railways. Then, looking at the carriage as a whole, the general verdict was that the interior fittings were infinitely inferior to those in the carriages manufactured in this colony. Altogether the carriage itself and its fittings had anything but the appearance of the New Zealand or English made carriages. I have no doubt myself that the Government found themselves in the position of having to get those carriages on our railways at the earliest possible moment, and therefore everything had to be sacrificed to getting the necessary rolling-stock to meet existing wants. Previous to this passage from Dunedin to Christchurch I had always

been an advocate of sending Home for our carriages, believing that we got a better class of material, and that we got it for less money; but after seeing what the American carriage recently purchased is, I do not see how you could compare the carriage built in this colony, even on the basis of expense, because no amount of expense on the building of the carriage would compensate for the inferior class of carriage which has been supplied to this colony ; and for the future I shall always be an advocate for enlarging our own workshops in this colony, and endeavouring to get our own men taught to build a proper class of carriage at a reasonable cost. Now, Sir, the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) seemed to think that the action of the late leader of the Opposition, in declaring that the Opposition as a party no longer existed, had some considerable significance in the politics of the country. I differ very much from that honourable gentleman in the opinion he expressed. I do not look upon it that the Opposition exists as an Opposition on account of any organization which it may have in the House under a leadership, nor do I hold that the Opposition ceases to exist simply because they do away with the organization that they utilised in the past. It was, as a matter of policy, the very best thing which they as an Opposition could have done. And speaking of the question of an organized Opposition raises the question of the criticism which may take place in regard to Government measures. The country, as a rule, considers that with a strong Opposition numerically you get the maximum amount of criticism. My experience as a member of this Chamber is that the stronger the Opposition organized against the Government the less effective is the criticism you get of measures ; for this reason : that, as long as the Opposition is strong and organized, no Government party will allow the Opposition to alter the policy measures of the Government. The question of the necessity of the existence of the Government is too serious a question to allow an organized and powerful Opposition to have any say in the policy measures of the Government ; and, while the organization of the Opposition itself provides that every single

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member of the Opposition opposes the Government measures whether they believe in them or not, that very same reason causes the members who are supporters of the Government to support the proposals of the Government whether they believe in them or not ; and the result is that the measures, as they are brought down to the House, are put through the House in the form in which they have been introduced. But when you have got an Opposition which is numerically weak you have no longer a struggle in the House for the existence of the Government. When you have an Opposition that is not organized you have no longer an organized force in this House opposed to the members of the Government, and those who are opposed to a measure honestly oppose it in their speeches, and those who are honestly in favour of a measure honestly support it in their speeches ; while members on the Government side do exactly the same thing. Those who are opposed to a measure can freely criticize it, and the result is that the weaker and weaker the Opposition is numerically the more criticism you get of the Government measures, and the more these measures are allowed to be altered when they are in Committee. Therefore, instead of an Opposition that is not organized this year leading to an absence of criticism of the Government measures, and causing those measures not to be altered in Committee, I venture to say that this year there will be more criticism of the Government measures than has taken place at times when those honourable gentlemen were organized ; and you will find that the measures themselves, when in Committee, will undergo a greater amount of change than they would have undergone had these honourable gentlemen been organized and double the strength they are at the present time. In regard to the local government measure which has been brought down this year, apparently, from the proposals which have been submitted to us, the original scheme of recasting the local authorities of the colonies has been largely departed from, and we are going to have a consolidating measure, practically dealing with the County Councils, and perhaps extending their jurisdiction, and doing away with a lot of smaller bodies. I think, on the whole, that this is an improvement on the original proposals. In the South we have

found the county system work very well ; and in the North there is a tendency to go in more for Road Boards than County Councils, and to cut up the very large areas which are now under their control. I am not, myself, certain what the reason is which causes Road Boards to be so popular in the North and the County Councils in the South. Our Road Boards in Southland and in the southern districts are gradually being reduced in number, and their places are being taken by the County Councils. But even in connection with the existence of the counties themselves a great number of improvements could be made. Where you have a large county which covers an immense area of country you have ridings which in many cases are very much larger than some of our northern counties, and I think it would be a very wise thing if, in connection with these very large ridings, we had more than one representative. It is too much to ask a man to look after a riding - especially where there are no Road Boards - that may be forty or fifty miles long by ten or fifteen miles wide, or perhaps eight or nine miles wide. That is far too great an area of country to be covered ; and it would be a great improvement, I think, with regard to our County Council system, if, in connection with the large counties, at any rate, the number of representatives of the ridings was very materially increased. Then, there is the question to consider as to whether the County Councils are taking upon themselves increased functions or the reverse. From our experience in the past we know that our local bodies failed in a great number of different directions. The Legislature of the country has had to take from them slaughtering and inspection, owing to the deplorable condition in which the slaughter-houses all over the colony had fallen when inspected by the local authorities. Then, there is the important question of the public health. I venture to say that the administration of the public health throughout the colony with regard to the local authorities has mainly caused the alteration in our policy in that direction last year, and the centralising of it at the Empire City. There is no doubt that that applies to the boroughs and to the local bodies generally ; and I think, when we find that these abuses have cropped up in the administration of the local authorities, this House might well inquire whether there may not be some cause underlying all this. Is it because that under the present system of election of representatives to these local bodies the greatest qualification of a candidate for election is that he will pledge himself to keep down the rates? That is what I believe, myself. is largely the cause of this weakness on the part of the local bodies. You will see, when the local bodies in my district send up their objections to the Counties Bill, that they desire that the local bodies should be shorn of every function which they have at the present time, except the solitary duty of making roads and bridges. And even in regard to the making of roads and bridges they will be very pleased indeed if the Government collected all the money necessary for the construction, and handed it over to the local bodies to expend. Well, it is very important for the House to consider whether this difficulty might not be met by altering the franchise in connection with these local bodies, by doing away with the plural voting and by extending the electors within their boundaries. There is no reason, for instance, why local bodies which have had to do with the question of public health should depend for their election upon one-fifth or one-tenth of the people in the district. Every person is interested in the question of public health, and there are many duties which local bodies still carry out that you may say affect the interests of every person inside their districts.

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Yet we find that only a small proportion indeed of the population have any say in their election. Well, I think, when the Bill dealing with the County Councils is brought down before us, honourable members would do well if they looked into the question and saw if the failure of local bodies to carry out the administration of their affairs was not due to some weakness in that direction. I do not propose to detain the House at any greater length in dealing with the question of the Address in Reply. There will be ample opportunity when the measures themselves come up for discussion. and I only rose because I jotted down a few facts while honourable members were speaking, and I wanted to direct the attention of the House to them for a few moments. I desire to thank honourable members for the patience with

which they have listened to me during the time I have occupied their attention. Mr. LAURENSEN (Lyttleton). - Sir, before saying anything on the Address in Reply I would like to join with other honourable members in expressing my admiration for the very capable way in which the mover and seconder of that Address delivered their speeches in introducing it to the House. I think the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins) especially dealt with it in a very fair and impartial manner, and gave the Address in Reply very capable criticism. I could not help being struck with something that fell from the honourable member for the Suburbs in speaking of the mail-services. He was very severe on the Spreckels line, and he condemned that contract in no measured terms, and referred in anything but complimentary terms to the great Republic across the Pacific. Well, I am not here to defend the Spreckels Company or their contract, but I think it is to be deplored that we should say anything here that is disrespectful to our brothers across the Pacific. I believe, after all, the more far-seeing of us look forward to the time which is going to be some day or other-perhaps after we ourselves have passed away, but I believe it is coming - when there is going to be a union of the English-speaking race ; and I believe when it does come along it will be for the good not only of these people, but for the good of the whole earth. We should do all that in us lies to promote a friendly feeling with the great Republic, and not an unfriendly feeling. That being so, I think the honourable gentleman made a mistake in speaking of them and their shipping laws in the way he did. He also referred to the noble part our sons and relatives had played in South Africa in upholding the honour of the Empire, and he said we all knew they would acquit themselves well. Well, I do not think we all did know that they would acquit themselves well : and it was with a great deal of anxiety that we saw our connections in this part of the world going to what was an entirely new experience to them - namely, to fight on the field of battle. It was with no slight anxiety. I say, that we saw our connections going away, and it was with no slight anxiety we waited to see how they were going to acquit themselves; and it must have given us a sense of relief, as well as pleasure, to see that they did not discredit the race from which they came. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay delivered a speech to which I listened with extreme pleasure; I should also like to express my regret that he should have ceased to occupy the prominent position in the Opposition that he has so long and honourably held. In this connection I think many of his supporters will bear with me if I draw attention to what strikes me as a very peculiar thing. We are never done, day in and day out, hearing those honourable gentlemen denouncing Ministers in the present Administration ; we are told the truth is not in them ; that they have harried and brought the country into a state that is going to end in national ruin ; and that, politically speaking, they are dishonest. Now, either these statements are true or they are untrue. If they are true, and those men are the true patriots we understand they are -- most of them are men of means, which most of us are not-why do they not stump the country from the Three Kings to the Bluff and denounce the Government? If I believed one-half of what those honourable gentlemen state to be true I would never cease night and day exposing the iniquitous state of things throughout the country, and would never rest till I got those honourable gentlemen off the Government benches. But, instead of that, what do we see ? We see the Opposition taking their rest, and we see some of them resigning their seats. Is that the action of patriots? Is that what we might expect from patriots ? Nothing of the sort. So I really believe that they do not believe half of what they state about the Government. I believe their statements are caused by the present system of party warfare in the House, and I excuse these honourable gentlemen, because I am convinced in my own mind that they do not believe half of what they say about the Government. The next gentleman who gave us a criticism on the Speech was the honourable member for Riccarton, who, when he rose to speak, nearly took the place of the Minister of Customs. I hope it is no indication of what he intends to do in connection with that honourable gentleman. The honourable member for Riccarton was very unsparing in his denunciation of a Bill the leading features in which I voted against last year-namely, the Public Revenues Bill. But the Premier has already referred to

the fact that that honourable gentleman who denounced the Bill with such ability voted for the Bill and took what it produced. The honourable member for Ashburton referred to the fact that the Government had bought sections of land to settle with working-people in the immediate neighbourhood of Christchurch, and said the Government had cut them up into quarter-acre sections, and that the greater portion was still unoccupied. I believe there are few members who are so reliable authorities on the land question in the House as the honourable member for Ashburton (Mr. McLachlan) is ; and I am struck with the fact that he does not see that the reason the land is not taken up is just

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because it is cut in quarter-acre sections. We all know that if men want to go to settle some little distance away from their work they do not want a quarter-acre section ; they want And I believe a three, four, or five acres. great mistake is made, in cutting up these lands for settlement, in not cutting them up into larger blocks. If these sections had been cut up into two-, three-, or four-acre blocks every one would have been taken up, and more to boot. The honourable gentleman also referred in any- thing but complimentary terms to the railway employés. I know that it is a very easy thing for a country member to speak disparagingly of railway employés ; but it is not fair to these employés, all the same. There is no reason that I should appear here as a champion of the railway employes, and I am not going to do it. am told there is a deluge of applications for every vacancy that occurs in the railway service, and I am often surprised at men of fair ability and education striving to get into a position in which, when they rise to the highest rung of the ladder, they can only get 9s. or 10s. a day. But, on the other hand, numbers are anxious to know that their bread-and-butter is sure, and they are quite content with that, and that explains why such large numbers apply for these situations; and I think we may say, without flattering the employes, that they carry out their duties in a creditable manner, and earn every red cent they get. The honourable member for Masterton referred to the treatment of the cadets at Christchurch. Now, I went to the Normal School and interviewed the boys and their officers, and one and all told me that they were warm at nights, that there was plenty of food, and that the food was good, although it was served in a rough way ; and I think, if we realise that there were crowded into one building nearly two thousand cadets in the depth of winter, there was not a great deal to complain about. But, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating ; and the fact that so many boys were taken down there and went through all those ceremonies and parades in the depth of winter, and that there were only two cases of illness, reflects, I think, credit on The honourable member the whole concern. for Christchurch City (Mr. Ell) was the next speaker, and he gave us a long list of needed reforms. I know what a sincere and ardent reformer he is ; he is in deadly earnest about all he undertakes. But I hope he will bear with me if I draw his attention to the fact that if he attempts too much he is apt to get nothing ; and if, out of the long list of reforms he gave us last night, he would devote his energy and his earnestness to one or two of them he would accomplish more than by spreading his energies over a score of reforms, each one of which might be good of itself. After all, you can have too much of a good thing. I remember reading of a negro gentleman who believed he could only satisfy his religious aspirations by i that can befall any civilised country is to have public immersion, and he got some one to immerse him in a river before a large con- ; to unduly increase the number of military men gregation ; and as he emerged from the river in a half-drowned condition, spluttering and . ing of the Maori, and I am pleased to hear blowing, he remarked, with a good deal of as- perity, that " some day some gentleman nigger was going to get drowned with such hanged foolishness as this." I believe it is a mistake to try and force too many reforms on the House. At the same time, I believe the honourable gentleman is in earnest, and I only wish he would confine his efforts to two or three of the reforms he advocates, and, if he did, they would soon be brought to pass. The Address in Reply dealt first and foremost with the death of the Queen. Sir, we all revere the Queen's memory, but we know that in the course of nature she was bound to die, and having reached a ripe old

age, and passed away with little pain and full of years and honour, it is not a cause for lamentation, but a cause for rejoicing ; and we only trust that those who I succeed her will keep their Court as clean and leave as great a name behind them as she did. The next thing in the Address is the reference to the military forces ; and here I would like to impress upon this House the undesirability of fostering the military spirit more than is necessary. I believe, if there is one class and one thing that will retard any country it is the military class, and the fostering of the spirit of militarism. I had the pleasure of seeing the representatives of the British army who marched through our country, and most of them were good specimens of men; but, with regard to many of the officers we came into contact with down South, I am afraid that they did not improve on acquaintance. My experience of them was that they treated the men under them as if they were an inferior stamp of being entirely. In Canterbury they sent us word that the committees were to remember that they were not going to dine under the same roof as their men ; and when that sort of thing takes place in a country where most men are equal I do not think it is calculated to raise those men in our estimation ; and, on the whole, as regards their courtesy and general bearing, I do not think those officers impressed any of us. I do not believe in militarism, and I think we are beginning to get too much of it, and that it would be as well to set our faces against any increase of our military expenditure. It was said that at the burial of the late Queen one of the greatest sights was the galaxy of be-medalled, furbelowed princes and officers who rode behind her funeral car. They were resplendent with beautiful uniforms and feathers; but amongst them all there was one gentleman dressed in plain black, and yet he had the honour of representing one of the greatest nations on earth, because he represented the Republic of America; while beside and around him marched the representatives of Bulgaria, Servia, Roumania, and other Courts, dressed in military grandeur, gew-gaws, and splendour. As far as I am concerned, I only hope that we shall realise that the worst thing an undue accession of the military spirit and around you. The Address refers to the awaken-

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it. It also mentions the success of the penny post, and in this connection I might refer to some remarks which fell from the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Barclay). He spoke in very scathing terms of the Post-master-General, Sir Joseph Ward, for having accepted a distinction at the hands of his Sovereign ; but, after all, what we have to face is the fact that we are living in a country that is ruled over by a King, and one of the ways in which that country gives honour to those who deserve it is by conferring some titular distinction upon them ; and if any gentleman has deserved it at the hands of the King, and chooses to take a title, it is not our business to condemn him, any more than we would condemn him for being a vegetarian. As far as I am concerned, I heartily congratulate Sir Joseph Ward, and I hope he may live long. and that he will continue to do as much good for the colony in the days to come as he has done in the past ; and I heartily congratulate the honourable gentleman and the country on the success of the penny-postage scheme. In reference to this question the senior member for Wellington City referred to the fact that Sir Thomas Lipton had accepted distinction, and he sneeringly stated that he had practically bought it. Now, the honourable member for Wellington City is a sailor, and Sir Thomas Lipton has also strong sailor instincts. Sir Thomas Lipton, at an estimated cost of \$30,000, gave a free treat to the poor of London. He bears an unblemished character ; he has worked his way up from the ranks of the people to his present high position ; and he is now making a gallant and desperate attempt to bring home to England the American Yachting Cup, which was wrested from her by the Americans in 1851 ; and, as far as I am concerned, if he succeeds in bringing back that cup. and if it pleases him to be called a duke, I would give him the title with all my heart and soul. Every one who is a sailor, and who wishes to see England regain that trophy, should have the same sentiment. The next matter referred to is the question of having a colonial scale of teachers' salaries, and I only trust that we shall soon have the pleasure of having a colonial scale submitted to the House, and that those who have the drawing-up of this scale will

draw it up in no niggard fashion. I hope they will be liberal with our teachers, because if there is one department of the State where you cannot afford to pay poor salaries it is in the Education Department. There is no department, indeed, where it is worse policy to have poor salaries than in the department that controls our education system ; and, that being so, I trust the scale of teachers' salaries will be a liberal one, and on such a basis as will attract the best young men and young women in our midst to the ranks of the teaching profession. The census returns and birth-rate are also referred to in the Address, and this is the fly in the pot of ointment. It is the one great blot in connection with our progress at the present time. We are prospering financially, extending our boundaries, increasing our educational facilities, reducing our pauper population ; but in the midst of all this progress there is the one bad spot—that our birth-rate is falling at a tremendous rate. For instance, in 1880 our birth-rate was forty per thousand per annum ; to-day it is twenty-five per thousand per annum. New Zealand is now the second lowest to France in regard to birth-rate, and France is a decaying nation; and there is also the fact that this falling is not so much among the poorer classes as it is among the so-called well-to-do and wealthy classes, who are confining their families to "one or two." Women who are not deserving the name of women boast that after marriage they will confine their families to one or two, and the result is that the birth-rate is falling until the average family is only three and a decimal per family. A few years ago it was nearly six ; and if this question of the falling birth-rate were to engage the serious attention of this House for a month it would be labour well spent. An Hon. MEMBER .- Bring in a Bill. Mr. LAURENSEN .- An honourable gentleman suggests bringing in a Bill. When does he or his side ever bring in a good Bill? The only object some honourable gentlemen seem to have in view is to destroy ; they criticize and destroy, but they do not construct. I would like to see a Bill brought in -- a Bill to prevent chemists selling certain medicines and apparatus which it is notorious they do sell. I would like to see a Bill brought in to prevent men going from house to house selling such medicines and articles. A few years ago our fathers would have clapped such people into gaol for life for attempting to sell such medicines, and if these evils are not soon swept away we shall soon cease to exist as a nation. It is one of the most alarming and degrading features in connection with our country to find a so-called civilised people boasting that they will limit their families, and thinking it a subject for congratulation if they see the birth-rate coming down. There is reference made to cheap money 4.0. to settlers, and I trust that not only the country settlers will have the benefit of the cheap money of the Government, but town settlers also. Then, reference is made to the earth-hunger that exists at present. Sir, at present, as far as Canterbury is concerned, it is not earth-hunger, but earth starvation. Some time ago the Government threw open some land in North Canterbury, and a friend of mine went in for a section, and I asked him if he had got it. "Got it," he said ; " I had as much chance of getting it as I had of getting a \$1,000 prize in the Melbourne Cup." There were from one to two hundred applications for every section. The Government are standing in their own light in not throwing open more land for settlement. There is already a clamour down South that will grow to a roar of dissatisfaction, which will cause great trouble to the Government and the country. I would like to refer to a remark made by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds). He said a land boom was coming on us. Sir, it is not coming on, but it has come. In Canterbury

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I know of instances where land is being sold at three times its productive value, with the object of selling it again at fictitious prices. A short time ago the Government land valuers for Selwyn told me that they had valued a farm on Banks Peninsula. They added up everything the farm could produce, both as a dairy farm and for producing cocksfoot, and they estimated the value at £11 5s. per acre; and, would you believe it, that land was sold the next week for #23 per acre. As certain as that land boom has come, so certainly will the crash come. After all, what does the economic greatness of the colony rest upon ? It rests upon the land. It is like a pyramid which has for its base the land and farming community and

interests, and above that come all the professional and other classes. If the value of land is raised to a fictitious price, then the people in the lower part of the pyramid, who draw their sustenance from the soil, are forced up into the other classes, and the pyramid, instead of resting as it should do on its base, rests, as it were, on its apex. What is the result when that takes place ? Banks burst, people go bankrupt, and distress sets in. That can be traced at regular intervals right through the history of the English-speaking people. That being the case, then, what is the cure for it, or, rather, what is the preventive for it ? The only cure is to increase the land-tax on large estates, and to keep on increasing it ; and, as the honourable member for Auckland City said, a line of demarcation will be effectually drawn between those in favour of that and those who are in opposition to it. We will then know who are the true Liberals and who are the imitation ones. As far as I am concerned, I would like to see a great increase in the land-tax. If we do not the present prosperity will soon vanish into thin air. Before I pass from this I think it is only right I should refer to a Bill that was passed last year -that is, the Bill to give a 10-per-cent. rebate to Crown tenants. I know the agreement that was made by the Prime Minister and those of us who were opposed to that measure, and I only trust that agreement has not been broken. If it has it will be one of the worst things that could possibly have been done. I believe the measure was not called for, and it will bear bad fruit for this country in a very short time ; and, as far as I myself am concerned, I will do my best to get it repealed and swept off the statute-" book altogether.

An Hon. MEMBER .- What is the agreement ? Mr. LAURENSEN .- I will not say what it was. I only regret that the honourable gentleman who represents Bruce, as he professes to be so great an opponent of dishonesty, was not with us in opposing that measure. Mr. J. ALLEN .- I was not there. Mr. LAURENSEN .- Then, I withdraw my condemnation of him. I forgot that he was absent at the time. The Speech also says that the Government are going to introduce a super- annuation scheme for railway servants. It is very easy to find fault and criticize, but it is very difficult to find a remedy. The present system of promotion on the railway is that men are raised not by merit, but by length of service, and I think that a system more productive of evil could not well be invented. I see that in England they are beginning to rouse themselves to the evils of that system. I say that promotion should not be by length of service, but by ability, and that the best men should be promoted, irrespective of how many years they have been in the service; and I trust I will live to see the day when some such system as that will be introduced. Reference in this connection has been made to the system of making appointments by accepting the recommendations of members of Parliament. I believe that the ideal way of making appointments would be by having a Civil Service Board to make appointments irrespective of creed or colour, and irrespective of the recommendation of any member of Parliament ; and if Ministers rise to the occasion, and wash their hands of the whole business, they would find their labours lighter and their worries less; and I believe also that it would be a very much better thing for members. But I think it is only fair to say that, as far as my experience has gone, I can bear testimony that Ministers have distributed the positions they have had at their disposal in a very fair and impartial manner. An Hon. MEMBER .- Among their own crowd. Mr. LAURENSEN .- " Among their own crowd," the honourable member for Wellington City says. I have been in New Zealand for over twenty years, and at one time I took a notion that I would like to enter the Civil Service. I went up for the examination, and was first for Canterbury. I sent up my application and fee to Wellington to get an appointment, and I might have been waiting yet. A friend of mine asked me if I had got an appointment. I said "No." He asked me whose support I had got, and I said that I had got no one's. He laughed, and said I had no chance unless I had a member working for me. Who was in power then? The so-called party of purity - Sir John Hall, Sir Harry Atkinson, and Co. Just as now, they gave the positions to those recommended by their friends, with this difference: that the present Government give them to the one selected, whether the son of a rich man or a poor man, whereas the former one gave them only to the sons of the wealthy. It ill becomes those who took such a prominent part in distributing the billets in those days to criticize the

Government for distributing the billets as they do. But, as I say, two blacks do not make a white, and if we are to have a proper system we should have a Civil Service Board that would make appointments by ability. Then, there is provision made here for regulating the hours worked by employ  s in shops and banks, and I hope that that Bill will soon be brought before us. In this connection I think it would be desirable to fix some minimum rate of pay for men who have the handling of large sums of money. I know men in banks who are handling large sums of money every day, and are getting \$120 a year. I knew of one man who had been eighteen years in a bank, and was sentenced for

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embezzlement. He was handling tens of thousands of pounds, and had a salary of £160 a year, out of which he had to keep himself well dressed and support a wife and family. I do not say he was justified in robbing the bank, but I say that a bank or institution that pays its men salaries of that kind, and expect them to keep up a style and appearance, have nothing else than dishonesty to expect. There is also a proposal with regard to the reorganization of fire-brigades, and I may say that I regret to see that there is no proposal for the introduction of State fire insurance. There is no doubt the Government could insure much more cheaply than the companies charge at present. Thousands of pounds are spent in paying managers of insurance offices in all the large towns in the colony. The Government could run a State fire insurance department which could insure at something approximating the rates in the Old Country. In this connection I regret to see that the Government Accident Insurance Department has only started taking risks recently at the ordinary ruling rates. I have every reason to believe that they could take the risks at very much less than the ruling rates. I believe if the department had gone into the matter properly they would have seen that they could take risks very much cheaper than they are taking them at present. One of the offices doing business in New Zealand commenced with a paid-up capital of \$5,000, and at the end of the first twelve months they placed \$6,000 to the credit of the reserve fund, and paid a dividend of 15 per cent., and gave 50 per cent. to the men who secured risks for them. And that company did that on similar rates to those now being charged by the Government Accident Insurance Department. I trust the Government will see their way clear to materially reduce the rates, and I maintain they ought to be doing the whole of the business instead of only a small portion of it. I am very sorry to see that the Government have not seen fit to suggest something in the way of law reform. I know that a large number of members of this House are members of the legal profession, and I mean nothing personal when I say that it is high time there was something drastic in the way of law reform. Our present legal procedure is a relic of the "dark ages," and it is high time that we had further law reform. Scandinavia has set us an estimable example in this respect. They have a public arbitrator. When a man has a case against another he has a right to call him before the arbitrator, and they present their cases to him without the assistance of lawyers. The parties give their evidence, and each side calls his witnesses, and the arbitrator gives his decision. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision he may appeal to the law-courts, but in the large majority of cases the decision of the arbitrator is accepted by both the parties. I think something of that sort would be a step in the right direction. In the Governor's Speech reference is made to the general prosperity of the country, and it is my hope that that state of prosperity will long continue. We should further adjust taxation, so as to place it on the shoulders of those best able to bear it. We should pursue the present policy of settling the people on the lands, only with greater vigour ; and if we fulfil our duty in these two respects I think that the present prosperity will abide with us for many years to come. Mr. E. G. ALLEN (Waikouaiti) .- I desire to claim the indulgence of the House for just a few minutes. I should like to refer to a few of the subjects mentioned in His Excellency's Address. So many honourable members have already spoken during this debate that one might be pardoned if, in referring to some of the subjects contained in His Excellency's Speech, I of necessity travel over some ground that has been traversed by other honourable members. I wish to reiterate what has been said by many previous speakers in this

debate, and add my testimony to the excellent way in which the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply performed their duty. Before proceeding any further I desire to express my regret that the Opposition has not seen fit to be represented at this session by a leader. I consider that the confidence of a people in a Government is always greatly increased when there is a strong Opposition party, but to have an Opposition without a leader is very much like having a ship's crew without a captain - it is apt to lead to confusion. Sir, I hope that the honourable and courteous Captain Russell will yet become the recognised leader of His Majesty's Opposition. I desire to congratulate Sir Joseph Ward, and also Sir John Mckenzie, upon the honours conferred upon them by His Majesty. I think those honours are well merited. I certainly could not agree with the remarks which fell from the member for Dun-edin City (Mr. Barclay). I cannot see why a person should be less liberal in his principles because he holds a title. I wish also to congratulate the Hon. the Minister of Education upon the honour which has been conferred upon him, and I desire, further, to express my pleasure that the Hon. the Native Minister, although he did not have a title conferred upon him, received a very great honour : he has been invited Home with Mrs. Carroll, to be guests of our future King. Any one who knows Sir Joseph Ward will realise that his Liberalism and his progressiveness will not be affected because he has a title. I think we have reason to be proud of the distinctions that are conferred upon our public men. The honour is not given to the individual solely ; it is an honour to the country, and as such we should appreciate it. The recognition of the great services performed by Sir Joseph Ward to the colony, not only in connection with the penny postage, but of his work on postal conferences in Australia when he was a comparative youth, is well merited. The honourable gentleman then won for himself a high position as an administrator and reformer in postal and electric cable affairs. Now, Sir, I should like to say a few words upon the Royal visit. The cost to the colony of that visit has been great, but I believe every penny of that money has been well spent. The two great

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events that have occurred lately have done more than anything else that has occurred during the last twenty years to bring this colony into prominence. These events are the war in South Africa and the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Sir, the fact of three thousand men volunteering their services for South Africa has been a surprise to the world, and the noble manner in which they acquitted themselves has brought this colony very prominently not only before the Old Country but also before every civilised nation. The visit of their Royal Highnesses will also be a very great factor in this country's future prosperity. I understand that what impressed their Royal Highnesses more than anything else was the great loyalty and demonstrations of affection that was shown by the Native race of this colony. I believe that the visit of these illustrious personages will promote an enormous increase in our tourist trade. It will encourage the class of wealthy people we want to come here and spend their money, and recommend the beauties of our country to their friends. The Press representatives that accompanied the Royal party were gentlemen of great commercial influence. I am perfectly certain, after the very admirable manner in which the Government gave them facilities to see for themselves the advantages of the colony, and the information supplied to them, that it will have the effect of inducing them, when they reach Home, to write and speak very favourably towards this country. Sir, the Speech from the Throne refers to the extension of commerce. Well, this country, we must all admit, is largely a producing one, and it is of the most vital importance to its prosperity that new markets should be provided for the surplus produce of the land. The Government has very wisely appointed a Commerce Commissioner, whose duty it will be to seek out those markets. In the Agricultural Department that was instituted by Sir John Mckenzie there are many very great changes for the better. The condition of our agriculturists in many ways has been improved. Looking at the dairying industry, what do we find ? We find that since the Dairying Industry Act came into force our exports of butter have increased by more than half a million, and

if we take the export of butter and cheese together for the year ending 31st March last we find that it amounts to over a million of money. That is going on, and it will go on increasing, and it is just possible it will become the greatest item of export from this colony in the near future. Now, as to the question of vessels being provided for taking our produce away to new markets: I do not know that I could support the Government in a proposal to purchase vessels to take produce to South Africa ; but I say that, if necessary, the Government should subsidise vessels handsomely. If you look at the position of the trade to South Africa you will find there is very little back cargo, and if you were to purchase vessels you would have to go into a general shipping trade and go to the Old Country, so as to bring back imports and make the venture pay. Well, I do not think the Government would care about doing that. or about entering into competition with so many powerful shipping companies. But I do say, without fear of contradiction, that it is the duty of this colony to subsidise vessels, if necessary. in order to get our produce away to profitable markets, either in South Africa or anywhere else, and the Government is evidently fully alive to this matter. There is another thing I would ask them to take up, and that is the condition of the frozen-meat trade. Now, there is a screw loose with regard to this business somewhere. We find that English and Scotch mutton is being sold wholesale in the Old Country at from 5s. 4d. to 5s. 8d. per 8 lb .. while the best New Zealand mutton is sold at from 2s. 8d. to 2s. 10d. Now, where does the difference come in? It is a fact that our mutton is often sold for home-bred, and therefore that is proof that it is as good as the home-bred article. Now, here is a question that I think the Government should take up, and it is a big question, for there are powerful combinations at Home that will have to be fought, and it can only be done by erecting cool-stores in the old Country, and possibly by opening retail shops. If such a scheme would be too large to be undertaken by this colony alone it might very well co-operate with some of the State Governments in Australia. There is another thing with regard to this question of frozen meat, which is a very important one to producers. I think that all meat exported should be subject to a system of Government grading. Fortunately, at present shippers and those who have control of the trade are very careful not to export anything but the very best of carcasses(.. Well, now, there is a certain class of sheep - old ewes-that are very properly not accepted for exportation ; but, if there was a system of Government grading, there is no reason why that class of sheep should not be sent Home and sold under their proper grading. That would mean that there would be two classes, and that the inferior mutton could be sent Home and sold at a reduced rate as second grade, but still at a price that would leave a fair margin of profit to the producer. Then, with regard to the proposal to open a State coal-mine : Of course, we all admit that it is a very healthy sign of the prosperity of a country when there is a great demand for coal. The difficulty in coping with the demand, especially for the railways or for other State purposes, is a question that the Government might fairly take up. I do not think that any good would be done by purchasing mines that are already in full operation, because that would not relieve the pressure ; but if the Government opens up a new mine, then there would be an advantage, and the pressure of demand would be relieved, and the Government would be perfectly independent of outside mines for the requirements of the State. The demand for coal has been very great, and it has been partly on account of the great impetus that has taken place in the dredging industry in the South, and also in the carriage of timber and stock, and in various

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other ways; and the cost of coal to private | was pleased to notice that, in the near future, individuals on account of the great demand the supply is likely to equal the demand. The has, of course, risen. Now, that is a question country has suffered a great deal from want of rolling-stock at various times-trucks, car-that might be taken up. I remember that there was a Coal Committee set up two years ago, and engines. I further congratulate years ago, and some very useful information the Minister on finding himself in the position,-having regard to the present amount was laid before the House by that Committee. Well, it

was proved there that the profits of rolling-stock that has been ordered, when that arrives - of saying that he will then be of the mine-owners were not excessively great, and it was also proved that the Union Steam-ship Company, who carried the greater portion of the coal in the country itself. That is as it is of this coal, did not receive excessive freight. should be. There is no doubt that we have The freight from the West Coast to Wellington proved by actual experience that the rolling-stock for coal was 5s. 6d. per ton, to Lyttelton 6s. 6d. stock made here is equal, if not superior, to per ton. and to Dunedin 7s. 6d. per ton. Now, that which is imported, and, although the cost those prices do not seem at all excessive, and may be a little more, still it is the duty of the the price of the coal at the ship's side on the Government, if it can be done, to manufacture . coast was 11s. per ton. Well, now we are pay- ing its rolling-stock in the colony. It is very un- ing a very large price for coal, and where is the fair to lay any blame upon the department for difference between the actual cost of the coal this shortage in rolling-stock, because no one landed, we will say, in Wellington, and the coal as could foresee-no matter how far-sighted he it is landed at the consumers' houses. There is might be-the marvellous demand that we have a great leakage somewhere, and I think it should had for rolling-stock during the last few years. be inquired into. I, with other honourable Who knew anything about the enormous de- mand that gold-dredging has created, or of our members, was very pleased to notice that it is proposed to create a superannuation and rabbit-freezing industry for export, which has occupied hundreds of trucks ? And while all classification scheme for State servants. I think that is worthy of all praise. At the this has been going on I think those in charge of the department-the Hon. Mr. Cadman and present time the State servants are not uniformly paid in the different departments. Sir Joseph Ward-may be excused for not being For instance, take a Stationmaster on a country able to grasp this contingency, and the abnormal line. We find his hours exceedingly long and demand for rolling-stock that we have fortu- his duties very heavy ; and, in addition to the lately experienced. And one of the great causes ordinary duties of Stationmaster, he has the in regard to the demand for carriages bas. been the manner in which the railways have postal arrangements to look after, and to act been appreciated-the system of taking the as telegraphist, and take charge of the money- order business, and to distribute the old age school - children from the country into the towns, and vice versa, and the cheap excursion pensions fund, as well as other duties, and they do not get, if I am right in saying so, above fares-the whole combination of circumstances \$140 to \$160 a year. Well, that is too little. which have been for the good of the country, I have heard the Minister for Railways say that this matter was going to be looked into, and I believe last year an alteration would have been made if there had been time to have under- taken this classification scheme. We recognise the necessity of a retiring-allowance or super. annuation scheme to reward these old and faithful servants in the State service. 1 re- member, last year, the case of an old man who had been twenty - seven years on the railway -he was one of the first to join the Rail- way service. He became stiff through an acci- dent, and was not able to continue his duties as shunter. He was taken into some other branch of the department- as porter, or storeman, or something of that sort-but at last he was anxious to give up the service and retire to his little home, and there end his days. I tried to get him a little compensation from the depart- ment ; but, however willing the department might have been to give some compensation, they had not the power to do it. I believe \$25 is the amount I could have obtained for this man : but what was the good of \$25 for a man who had, perhaps, twenty years to live, and was not in a position to earn any money. Under the new proposal that will all be altered, and I hope the Minister will put it through the House without delay. With regard to rolling-stock, 1 and has all tended to make a great demand en the rolling-stock. But I believe the Minister for Railways has now grasped the situation, and I do not think the shortage will occur again. In regard to the land-for-settlement. proposals, I think one and all must congratulate the Government on the intention of still further vigorously prosecuting this most appreciated and desirable scheme. There is no doubt it has been a very great factor in the prosperity of

the country, this and the kindred Act -- the Advances to Settlers Act. I think, notwithstanding what some people say-that this legislation has had nothing to do with the prosperity of the colony-we all must admit that these two Acts have had a great deal to do with it. The County Councils Bill affects more than half of the population of this colony, and it is a question that I do not think should be hurried through. It is doubtful whether it will be prudent to pass the Bill this session. The conference on the County Councils Bill will meet in Wellington some time this month, and no doubt the new Bill -I have not yet seen it, but I presume it is very much like that presented to the House last year - will be discussed by the conference ; and it will be necessary. in my opinion, that they should report to the various Councils before the Bill is finally dealt,

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with by this House. A discussion on the Bill in the House is desirable; but seeing it is so far-reaching, and interests so many, I think it would be wise that it should be circulated to the Councils before it is adopted by the House. It is a progressive measure, and should receive every consideration and encouragement. With regard to the mail arrangements, I have some sympathy with the remarks of the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, when he spoke on this question the other night. It is undoubtedly the duty of this colony to patronise the local company-the Union Steamship Company. That is a company which has done an enormous amount of good here, and, while they themselves have done very well, they have not sent their money out of the colony-only for the purpose of building new ships with the profits of the company-and we are getting the benefit of an honest, well-kept line of steamers. The amount of wages paid, and the amount of produce of our soil consumed by this company, are very great, and are surely factors that should induce every consideration being given to this company. My honourable friend the member for Auckland City, Mr. Napier, being an Auckland member, would naturally like to see the San Francisco service patronised. But what benefit would a foreign line be to Auckland ? It would expend little money, and take very small supplies. The ships would not refit at Auckland, neither would the families of their crews reside there. I noticed the other day with regard to the mail contract that the Commonwealth Parliament has absolutely refused to subsidise the San Francisco mail-service, but is willing to subsidise the Vancouver service. Now, I wish to say, as I have said before on the floor of this House, that the Federal Government and the New Zealand Government together could afford to give a handsome subsidy to a fast line of steamers to carry New Zealand mails to Vancouver vid Sydney. It would be an all-red service. I thank the House for listening to my remarks. In conclusion, I wish to express pleasure at the general tenor of the political programme laid down in the Governor's Speech. It is one of progression, and there are very few references in it that I cannot support. One or two I cannot promise to support fully, but, generally speaking, the business of the session, as foreshadowed in the Speech, will have my cordial support. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) .- Sir, I should like to preface the few remarks I am about to make with a quotation from "Julius Caesar," slightly altered. The lines are applicable to the present position of the Opposition party : "There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent against Seddon. If thou be'est not immortal, look about you : Security gives way to conspiracy." It causes me great sorrow, Sir, when I look at the Opposition benches, and miss many of the notable characters in the persons of the honourable gentlemen who took part in the debates of previous sessions. Where is my old friend the member for Waitemata, who was so often filled with indignation when he rose to speak against the Government ? Where are the others who should be in their places on that side of the House? Their absence, and the presence of others, downcast and dispirited members, reminds me of a picture I once saw in the Bulletin. In a certain town the price of beer had been raised to 3d. a glass, owing to increased duty. The boozers decided to go out on strike, and not drink until their demands were satisfied. They stretched themselves on the grass, and, said Jack to Jim, "If we can only hold out for an hour the publicans will have to give in." The position of the Opposition party at the present time is very similar. They say, " If we

keep quiet we will cause disruption and disorganization in the Government ranks; we shall then put them out of power." Sir, I warn the followers of the Liberal party to be careful. I warn the members who have associated themselves with the Farmers' Union to inquire carefully into every platform and not be misled by platitudes. If not, that union will try by every means in its power to dislodge the present Liberal party in power from the Ministerial benches; but they will not succeed. This new and aspiring party has been originated by a few Auckland members. An Hon. MEMBER .- North of Auckland. Mr. O'MEARA .- Yes, perhaps they are from the North of Auckland. If the member for Waitemata, the member for Franklin, and the member for the Bay of Plenty only state their minds on the floor of the House to-day, they will say they are the originators of the New Zealand Farmers' Union. A man has been travelling about my district calling himself the representative of the Farmers' Union - I should say self-appointed, or probably by "the dead Ass."-and although I have been in the colony many years I have never before come across such a philanthropic man as this one is. He says that all he has to live on is the pitance he receives from the members of the union -6d., I think, from every member. He held a meeting at Pahiatua, and about fifteen persons attended it. A branch of the union was formed, and some business was done. Then he went to another part of the district. Here he tried to engage a sub-emissary. He said to him, " You go out into the back blocks and gather in all and sundry and make them members of the association and I will pay your expenses and the expenses of your horse." He was, indeed, a true philanthropist; but what are his interests -- what his object? Sir, I ask the members of the Opposition-I ask the member for Franklin-who will pay the expenses of this man? Who is it, I ask, that is so good to the settlers in the bush districts, far, far away Whoever from the seat of the organization? he may be, Sir, I tell members that unless the Government pay more attention to the country districts the Opposition, with their tactics of intrigue and misrepresentation, will mislead the small farmers and will make headway, and the Government, unless they adopt precautionary measures, may be put off these benches, and a gradual reversion will take place-perhaps

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gradually, but surely-to the old Tory régime. Sir, I consider that in the past the Government has paid too much attention to labour administration, to the neglect of the country districts. The country districts can progress even without the industries of the colony, and ship, if necessary, their products from any part of New Zealand without the aid of a large city. Mr. MORRISON .- With Government assistance. Mr. O'MEARA .- No; without the assistance of the Government, by a little arrangement. At any rate, I wish to warn the Government that, unless more attention is paid to the wants of country districts, these districts will assert themselves and insist on receiving more attention than they are getting now. One town member who spoke in this debate suggested an increase in the land-tax. Sir, if I had my way I would like to put that honourable member on a 200-acre farm to-morrow, and if he were put on it he might carry on for twelve months, and then, having lost his capital, he would go back to the business from which he came. Sir, I desire to congratulate the Minister for Railways not only on his successful administration of the Railway Department, but also on his administration of the Postal Department. Our labour members come here and condemn the Minister for importing carriages from America, yet they were the very men who the man's own personality. Do you mean to denounce the Minister last year for not providing sufficient rolling-stock. They said they wanted it at once. It could not be manufactured in the colony, could not be done in Great Britain, and the Minister was compelled to send wherever he could get them built; and, now that he has complied with the demands of the public, these men are condemning him for doing what they themselves actually asked him to do last session. With respect to the Liberal, and will be admired and returned to old-age pensions, which is another subject mentioned in the Speech, I wish to say that I deprecate the names of the old-age pensioners being published in the public Press when the pensions are granted by the Magistrate. I think make him blush, and I do not think it is unfair

that that should be done. These old people are advertised quite sufficiently as it is, and it is only advertising their poverty. I sin- tentative, a man who will do good work in this House, and I hope his constituents will knock cerely hope this will be altered. The less 5.0. publicity we can give these old people this House over and over again. With respect to the better. As it is now, every old pensioner in the country districts and in the the proposer of the Address in Reply, his change largest centres of population is known to the of tone as compared with his utterance of last residents, and I say it is unfair and improper session is astonishing, and I do not understand that those who apply for their pensions should what has come over him since last session, when have their names disclosed by publication in the I thought from his speeches at that time he had severed his connection with the party newspapers. I listened very attentively to the little member for Dunedin City, and he said he altogether. He then acted-as the leader of and his colleagues were blamed for not sending the Opposition declared the other night-as a congratulatory message to Sir Joseph Ward. though he were an Oppositionist, and de- I do not think Sir Joseph Ward wanted that nounced the Premier of this colony. fact, I can assure the senior member for message, and they were not blamed for that ; but he certainly protested against the message Christchurch City that I was very much that was sent to him, which, in my opinion, surprised at his attitude; but we were pleased to get him back into the fold once more, was a most insulting one. If they could not congratulate him let them leave him alone. and I congratulate the honourable member on Why, the honourable member spoke as though the tone of his speech in proposing the Address he represented the Liberal party in this coun- in Reply, and on his reversion to the Liberal try. What a jolly diminutive representative he would make! I should be very sorry indeed to follow such a representative, and I deprecate and disapprove of the labour members of Dun- edin sending such a telegram. If they could not congratulate the honourable gentleman, the least they could have done was to have kept silence. I think I am safe in stating that 90 per cent. of the Liberal party in New Zealand are overjoyed at the high distinction that has been conferred on Sir Joseph Ward by His Majesty the King, and no one feels more pleased of it than I do. If a man, though he be a Liberal, takes office as a Minister of the Crown, is he to be condemned for accepting an honour that has been conferred upon him by his Sove- reign ? I say, if that is the case, the one who objects is not a loyal subject. If we are all to do that what will be the result ? Why, in the course of a few years the chances are that our King would be deposed, and we would have King Barclay in his stead reign- ing over our great Empire. The honourable member made reference to an election which took place in New South Wales the other day, when he said a well - known New-Zealander, Mr. Eden George, had defeated Sir John Gra- ham at a State election. We saw that in the paper also, but it was not his titular distinction that caused Sir John's defeat. It was probably tell me that Sir George Grey lost the confidence of the Liberals of this country because he was Sir George Grey? Did it affect him in the slightest degree? Would the honourable mem- ber condemn him for being Sir George Grey ? I advise the honourable gentleman to read the late honourable gentleman's speeches, and follow in his footsteps as closely as he possibly can. If he does that, I feel sure he will become a true this House time after time as a consistent follower of the Liberal party. An Hon. MEMBER .- You make him blush. Mr. O'MEARA. - No, I have no desire to power to do it. At the same time I recognise that the honourable gentleman is a good repre- the rough corners off him and return him to In

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ranks once more. With respect to the seconder of the Address, he certainly spoke in a very able way, but I think we got a little too much from him on shipping matters. If he had devoted himself to matters affecting the colony's interests, and given shipping its proper propor- tion in his speech, I think he would have more decidedly distinguished himself. In the Address which was delivered by His Excellency I notice reference has been made to the death of the Queen. Her death was deplored by all her sub- jects, irrespective of colour, race, or creed, for she was undoubtedly a good woman, whose qua- lities were

appreciated by her subjects all through the length and breadth of the Empire. Great rejoicings took place on the accession of King Edward VII., and he will no doubt follow in the footsteps of his revered mother. We also had demonstrations to welcome the Duke and Duchess of York to our colony ; but, in my opinion, the great celebration that is unique in the history of celebrations was that which took place at Rotorua, given principally by the Natives of this colony. I do not suppose we shall ever see its like again. There, Sir, we saw the Natives dressed in modern dress, with belltopper and frock coat, by the side of the Native dressed as he appeared in former times-the modern civilisation side by side with the primitive Native-and I predict that in twenty years the Native race, judging by the evidence which we saw there, will become assimilated with ourselves, and will lose their identity altogether. Looking at these events, and the preparations made by the Government, and the money spent on the ceremonies and illuminations, et cetera, I think, from a commercial point of view, the money expended will prove the best advertisement that the colony could possibly get, and I am very pleased to see that the Government carried out the duties appertaining to those events exceedingly well. The whole ceremony passed off without any unpleasantness, and very satisfactorily indeed. There was probably a little friction with the officials, but as far as the general public are concerned I have reason to think that, from Auckland to Dunedin, every person in the colony was satisfied with the arrangements and with the treatment they received. In this Address I regret to state that there is only one meagre reference to the farming industry of this colony. It reads as follows :- " The roading and settlement of the people on the lands of the colony is of paramount importance. My Ministers are giving this matter every attention. Proposals furthering this object will be placed before you. The energy of our sturdy settlers has in no small degree contributed to the largely increased exports of last year, which formed a record, and the trade returns warrant me in believing that our prosperity is based on a solid foundation, which I hope will be lasting and for the good of the people." That is well. It reads very nicely in print ; but every year we have these statements iterated and reiterated, but unfortunately that attention is not given to the back blocks of New Zealand that they deserve. In respect to the proposed operation of the Land Act, I would ask the Minister to consider the various clauses contained in that Act, which require much alteration. In Part III., clause 137, we have occupation with right of purchase, lease in perpetuity, and purchase for cash. Now, the lease in perpetuity has no doubt answered its purpose, but it is surprising how its intention can be evaded by a settler who is desirous of so doing. The Act says that the lessee shall reside on the land for ten years, after which residence he can sell the product of that land to whomsoever he likes. For instance, supposing I have a lease in perpetuity of 100 acres : there are two others. one on each side of me, who also hold leases of 100 acres each. We have resided on that land for ten years. There is nothing to prevent my neighbours removing their buildings and granting to me, at a fixed sum, the right of grazing on their leaseholds. They let me the lease and the Government cannot interfere. I think that should be prevented, and the Government should see that a clause is inserted in the lease to prevent selling the grass to any one who holds a lease in perpetuity without the consent of the Government. Another question is that in respect to the surrender of leases. We find that when any settler becomes dissatisfied with the rent he is paying he may apply to the Land Board to surrender his holding, and at times he is allowed to surrender it and it is again offered. If there is no other applicant. he is allowed to retake possession at a rent fixed by the Board. But he may take it up either as a lease in perpetuity or may purchase it for cash. What is the result ? I have in my district-a closely settled one too. which is nearly all held under the lease in perpetuity-and in the midst of this land are freehold sections. The result is that the freeholder, owing to having the money to pay for his land, can do just as he likes. He can leave it and go to any part of the world ; but the unfortunate lessee has to reside on his land, and unless he does this he is threatened with forfeiture or cancellation of his lease. The fact of having freehold and leasehold land contiguous causes dissatisfaction. City members have referred to the matter of the rebate to Crown

tenants. It was a very clumsy Bill, because in my district there are many tenants who could afford to pay more rent than they are paying at the present time-their land is worth more. But there are others who are paying excessive rentals, and it was the duty of the Government to step in and relieve these men. The Act makes it discretionary on two officers of the Crown to remit the rent where they think the case deserving. An Hon. MEMBER .- It makes it imperative on them. Mr. O'MEARA .- I was instrumental in getting the clause inserted, and I think I ought to know all about it. You are wrong. With respect to our commerce, mention has been made in the House to-night that the Government should acquire a line of steamers 60 as to take our produce to the markets which, no

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doubt, will be opened up by the gentleman who is representing the Department of Commerce of this colony. I am pleased to hear that ; and I am glad that many members think as I do, and have given expression to that opinion on the floor of this House, for it is a movement I thoroughly believe in. If the Government were to acquire a line of steamers-I would not say buy steamers, but charter them - and send the farmers' produce to the markets, it would be a good thing for the farming community, enabling them to ship regularly and meet the markets. The Government, in my opinion, should go a little further, and, instead of allowing the middleman-the freezing companies in the North and South Islands, wool-buvers, et cetera-to acquire sheep and other products at their own prices, they should step in and say to these settlers who have mutton or wool or any other products to send Home, " We will advance you a certain sum of money. we will prepare cool-stores here for you, and will arrange for agents and markets in the Home-country and dispose of your produce." By this means, instead of the producer getting only a fourth of the value of his produce, he would pay a reasonable proportion of the sum he received for the sale of his products in the way of commission to the agent or the Government for the disposal of it, and would receive a considerably larger proportion of the price realised than he does at present. That method, I think, should be carried out. The Minister in charge of the Department of Commerce might very easily communicate with the Commonwealth of Australia, and probably also the Argentine Republic, and ask them to join with New Zealand in endeavouring to get a fair price for wool. We find now that the wool sent Home is bringing from 4d. to 5d. per pound. Well, if the countries I have mentioned were to combine and say that the wool from these countries will not be sold under a fair price 1r pound, I feel it could be done, because they are the only producing portions of the world that have a surplus. If you take the Continent and if you take the Old Country, you will find that they have no surplus of wool ; they consume themselves all they can grow. I hope the Government will move in this matter. If they do not I will bring it forward again and again until something is done. At all events, cargo-boats, cool-stores, and selling agents should be arranged at once, so as to allow the farmers of this colony to live, and not be robbed by the middleman as at present. If you take the price of wool at the present time, and compare that with the selling-price obtained by the retailer for a pair of blankets, you will find that 10lb. of wool-I think that is the weight of wool put into a double blanket-at 53d. a pound, gives 4. 2d. to the producer as his share in an article for which the last man who has to handle it receives \$1 2s. 6d. That shows how the profit goes to those who handle the products between the producer and the retail purchaser. The Government have to be congratulated on the effective steps they took to stamp out the plague in this colony. We remember at the time the plague existed in Auckland what the behaviour of the Auckland members was in this House. They were simply furious at the idea of the plague existing in Auckland, yet they must have known that it was there perfectly well. They tried to disabuse their minds of the fact, but I understand it has been proved beyond a doubt that the plague did exist in Auckland, and were it not for the action of Dr. Mason, Mr. Gilruth, and the Government we would have no doubt had it all over the colony, owing to the carelessness and neglect of some of the Auckland people. In one portion of the Speech it says,- " On the 31st March last the people of this colony were enumerated. The returns

disclose a substantial, increase as compared with the census of 1896, and a considerable increase as compared with the census of 1891. The increase on the whole is not unsatisfactory, yet in a young country like this, so favourably circumstanced, there is room for improvement, especially in respect to the natural increase, and the falling-off in the birth-rate gives ground for reflection and anxiety. The most pleasing feature in the late enumerating of the people is that there is a marked increase in the number of those of the Maori race, and the outlook in this respect is cheering in the extreme, and exceptional in regard to aboriginals when surrounded by and brought into close contact with other races, their customs, and environments." Well, if the Government are anxious to remedy the falling-off in the birth-rate I think I could easily propound a scheme to increase the population of our colony, and that is to make a provision similar to the old-age pensions. For instance, there are many men in my district who have large families to keep, and there are many others who would probably have large families, but they are unable to maintain them. I would suggest that every man who has a family of over six children should be entitled to a pension. Mr. HORNSBY .- Give them grants of land. Mr. O'MEARA .- I do not care in what way you assist them so long as they are assisted in some way. I think if that were done it would be a good thing, and it would, at all events, assist those who have large families to bring up, and who find a difficulty in properly keeping and educating their children. I have little more to say. There are many matters which I would like to speak upon, but I shall take another opportunity when the Financial Statement comes down. I would merely warn honourable members of the Liberal party that they should study Liberal principles, and, instead of criticizing the personal character of the leaders of their own party, they should faithfully support the leader they were elected to follow in carrying out the true principles of Liberalism. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) .- It was not my intention to have added my meed of commendation to that of the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, or other members who have spoken. Members of the Liberal party, at any

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rate, must, speaking generally, be perfectly satisfied with the statements made in the Speech and with the policy therein enunciated. It was not my intention, as I have said, to have spoken but for some words used by the Premier in the course of his speech last night. Those words I will, however, refer to later. To my mind, one of the most important references in the Speech is that of the establishment of the penny postage, and if Sir Joseph Ward had done nothing else for the colony than initiate the penny post he would well have deserved the honour which the King has conferred upon him. It has been proved, and I have no doubt he will make a definite statement on the point later on, that we have recouped the loss which, of course, we naturally expected to make at the beginning of this innovation. The fact that the people of the colony are writing more letters under the penny-postage system must have a beneficial effect, for not only does it indicate an increase of commerce and industry, but also an increase of our communication with other parts of the world, and, with that, an increase of education to the people. Another very satisfactory statement in the Governor's Speech is that the census shows the Native race to be I would take second increasing in number. place to no one in respect to my admiration for the Native race, and it has always been to me a matter to be deplored that their numbers were decreasing. It has been suggested that, owing to the previous census being inaccurate, the last census cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of the increase. I think it would be well to have a confirmation of the census returns-and I think this matter should be attended to by the Government-with respect to the population of the Natives. The next question referred to is that of cheap money. The benefit to the settlers of the introduction of cheap money has been admitted over and over again, in this House and out of it. The amendment of the Act extending its operation to urban and suburban properties has also been a benefit to the people. But, to my knowledge, there are still very great defects in the working of the system. It may seem paradoxical, perhaps, to say so, but one defect of the system seems to be that it is worked on too business-like a method. Settlers in my district have applied for loans and have been entitled to them, but

the loans have not been granted, although the settlers have been put to the expense of having valuations made. The Board seems to have a certain sum of money to invest and a certain number of applications before them. They make a selection of those which they consider to offer the best investments, and these applications are granted, whereas other applications which are equally entitled to be granted are refused. I trust the Minister will endeavour to remove such complaints in the future. Turning to the question of the Land for Settlements Act, there is a defect in the working of the Act, as I have good reason to discover in two cases in my own district. The owners of certain blocks of land which the Government had selected as being necessary and suitable to be taken, and with respect to the acquisition of which negotiations had been entered into, led the Government to believe that they were willing to negotiate, but took advantage of the delay afforded by the negotiations and a defect in the statute to divide their land among their relatives, and so evaded the law. In the cases I have referred to the land was urgently needed for close settlement purposes. but by the means I have stated the object of the Act was frustrated. The Act certainly needs amendment in this direction, so as to prevent a recurrence of these evils. On the question of land-settlement, I should not pass on without referring to the statement made by the honourable member for Riccarton on the subject of the Right Hon. the Premier being the Minister in charge of the Land for Settlements Department, whereas he said it should be a department under the charge of the Minister of Lands. Well. the Premier has already satisfactorily explained the matter. But I wish to say, further, that the purchase of land is a very important branch of the department indeed, apart from the cutting-up of lands and disposing of them. It is only right and proper that it should form a department under a separate Minister. An Hon. MEMBER .- Under what Act ? Mr. FIELD .- I am not referring to any Act. Mr. J. ALLEN .- It is specified by Act how it shall be done. Mr. FIELD .- That may be so. There is no objection whatever to one Minister taking charge of the purchase of land, and another administering the statute on the question of disposing of the land, which appears to be the most important part of it. The great trouble is really the question of value, and too much care could not possibly be exercised in scrutinising the prices it is proposed to pay for the land which the Government takes for this purpose. I may also say that I know of my own knowledge that if the Minister of Lands carries out his duties satisfactorily as Minister of Lands proper, and as Minister for Agriculture, his time will be very well filled. Another very satisfactory portion of the Governor's Speech is that which indicates that a superannuation scheme is in progress for the railway servants. It is within our recollection, Sir, that great hardships have arisen through the absence of such a scheme as this in the past. There are a number of railway servants resident in my district by whom this hardship has been very keenly felt, and had it not been for the extreme pressure of work on the Minister for Railways last session he would, I think, have endeavoured to bring this scheme into operation at least a year earlier. However, it is better late than never. and if it is done now I am sure the great benefit of it will be felt by every member of the Railway service. Further on in the Speech we have reference to the price which is likely to be paid for lands taken up for settlement by the Government on the North Island Main Trunk line. We have it there stated that probably if the land is taken within five years from date the prices to be paid for it shall be the

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prices ruling for it at the present time. That, abnormal rates for the purchase and sale of Sir, is an application of the betterment principle, and one which is very desirable from a colonial point of view. Now, Sir, I come to a portion of the Speech which is particularly striking and satisfactory to me as a member representing a farming constituency. I refer to that part of it which deals with the question of the extension of our commerce and markets for our produce. This is a question upon which I have already had a good deal to say both inside the House and outside of it, and I venture to repeat there is no question before the country at the present time which is fraught with so much importance, as affecting the prosperity of the producers of this colony, as this one. I agree entirely, with those honourable members

who have previously spoken, that the time has come when the Government, if they do not own ships of their own, at any rate should charter or subsidise ships for the purpose of carrying this country's produce, so that we may be certain that our produce will be regularly carried, and also at the lowest possible freights. I hear a good deal in the City of Wellington on this point, and many complaints have been made amongst tradesmen recently on the subject of the irregular running of the lines of steamers trading between New Zealand and the Old Country. Only recently I was talking to one of Wellington's most prominent tradesmen, and he was complaining bitterly that goods which he had ordered in the Old Country, and had shipped at London in time to arrive here at a certain date, did not arrive until something like a fortnight after the due time of arrival. This, Sir, one can easily see, is a matter which means a considerable loss to the tradesman importing. For instance, suppose a tradesman imports Christmas goods to arrive here for Christmas, and, instead of arriving before Christmas, they reach him after the New Year, it will be seen that great and serious loss will accrue to the tradesman. Similarly, and more important to the colony still, if our produce be carried in lines of steamers which arrive in the Old Country at irregular dates, we must not be surprised if at one time there is a glut in the Home market and that at another time there is a famine. One of the ruling principles in regard to the export of our produce should be regularity of supplies. As I could be obtained, not only for wool but meat said before, I would not have got up to speak on the Governor's Speech at all if it had not been for some very satisfactory words uttered by the Premier in the course of his speech last indications go to show that it is likely to fall evening. Sir, two or three years ago we had the Premier speaking at Pahiatua, and pro- still lower - it is all the more reason for us to mising that if it was shown that the farmers attend to the market for the meat, particularly of this country, and particularly the meat-pro- ducers, were not getting fair prices for their great deal was said last session on this sub- produce, the Government would step in and ject, and it is not my intention to go into establish freezing-works of their own, and cool- it to-night; probably there will be another storage works in the Old Country. I read in opportunity of dealing more fully with this the Governor's Speech the following :- matter later on in the session. But I am "Recent developments in other countries entirely in accord with those members who and in our own colony, in the formation of advocate the establishment of cool-storage in the Old Country for our produce ; and I am also trusts or combinations with a view of fixing products within the colony, are worthy of attention, and my Advisers are of opinion that the Legislature should, if the evil continues and grows, pass, as a precautinary measure, a law making it illegal for persons, corporations, or companies to enter into contracts or agree- ments fixing an abnormal price at which food- stuffs or coal within the colony should be sold." I draw the attention of the House to the words "if the evil continues and grows" the inevi- table " if." We all know the evil will continue and grow unless the Government steps in. In the Premier's speech, however, we had some- thing of a more definite nature, laying down the policy that it is the absolute intention of the Government to deal with this great and im- portant matter, the markets for the produce of the colony. This must be particularly satisfac- tory to the country members, many of whom, I am pleased to say, have addressed the House on the subject, and shown the Government the necessities of the case, and that they are deter- mined that something shall be done in this matter. The small producers of this colony- the small farmers - are those who lead the hardest lives of any of the inhabitants of the colony. I should recommend any of those members who are talking so glibly about in- creasing the land-tax to visit some of the settlers in the country districts and see how they live. They will find the settlers half the year up to their knees in mud, experiencing every discomfort, working with their wives and families, slaving from morning to night, and barely making both ends meet. With this state of things before us, surely it is improper for us to be calling out for an increase in the land-tax. I was particularly interested with the words that fell from the honourable mem- ber for Pahiatua on the subject of the produce markets. He laid down what I have already dealt with outside the House recently-the desirability of some kind of combination be- tween this colony and the Commonwealth

of Australia, and possibly the Argentine, for the purpose of fixing the price that should rule for the produce of all those countries. I am not so sanguine as the honourable gentleman ; I do not think our wool could be expected to realise 1s., not that we could get that price if we asked it ; but I am certain a largely increased price and other produce, if some such scheme as that were carried into effect. With the price of wool as low as it is at the present time - it was never lower in the history of the colony, and recent the mutton, which the colony produces. A

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in agreement with them in thinking that the Government should at once take steps to bring the producer and consumer closer together, so that the price paid by the consumer may be as nearly as possible that paid to the producer - that is, the elimination of the enormous number of middlemen who are at present exploiting our produce at this end and in the Old Country. It seems to me there should be no difficulty not only in establishing cool-stores in the Old Country, where our produce can be stored until the proper time for remarketing arises, but also of effecting the sale of produce as nearly as possible direct to the consumer in the Old Country. Coming nearer home, to the question of other produce, particularly garden produce, it is within my knowledge that in my own district many small settlers have taken up small areas with a view to market-gardening and fruit-growing, and in nearly every instance they have had to give up the project, because they found that the profits of the middleman and the freights were so high that they could not make a living out of their small areas. I know an instance where men on small areas not very far from the City of Wellington have been at great expense and toil to put in crops of vegetables and other small produce for the purpose of supplying the City of Wellington. I know cases where men have sent down sacks of cabbages to the auction-rooms here, hoping to make a livelihood thereby, and the result has been in some cases no returns at all from the sale, and in other cases a return of only 6d. a sack, and out of that they have had to pay for the sacks. These things should not be in such a progressive country as this if they can possibly be avoided, and I strongly urge the Government to see to this matter, and remedy this condition of things as far as it is practicable to do so. Wherever we see the producer putting his products on the market, whether in this colony or elsewhere, we find the same complaint prevailing-that some middleman is reaping the profits, and that the sums charged in commission, rebates, freights, and discounts, and the other innumerable charges, go to swell the profits of the men who do not work to produce the goods, but live in the towns. They simply reap all the profits which the producers should get as the result of their toil. I have here, for instance, certain flax returns which bear out this fact. And the flax industry, let me say, is likely to become a very much larger industry than it is at the present time, and the time is not far distant when we shall find the Phormion tenox grown in larger quantities on suitable land, mills established for its manufacture, and altogether a better and more extensive state of things existing concerning this industry than we find to be the case now. But before that can come about we must have the attention of the Government directed to this question of the freights and the other charges on flax. I have here a return from a merchant for the sale of sixteen bales of hemp in the Old Country, realising from \$19 10s. to \$20 a ton. The total price realised in the Old Country for that flax was \$65, and the charges here, including freight, amounted to £24 15s. Now, had that flax been sold, as it very often is, at as low a price as £15 a ton, then nearly one-half of the total price realised in London would have been eaten up by freights and other charges, and out of the other half which comes to him the miller has to pay interest on the capital he has sunk in land, buildings, and plant, and he has to pay flax-cutters, and carters, and mill hands, and has to pay freight, railage, and the hundred and one expenses which have to be met in getting his produce to market. If the flax industry is to prosper it should receive more encouragement at the hands of the Government, and I hope, Sir, it will receive that encouragement at an early date. I do not want to croak or take a pessimistic view of things, but I will call the attention of the Government to the fact that, at any rate in this part of the colony, wool-growers have

drawn on their wool during this season sums in almost every case very largely in advance of the net amount realised from sales in the Old Country. In many cases advances have been made on wool at the rate of 53d. and 6d. per pound ; while the net return to the wool-grower in this country has not been more than 44d. per pound. In many cases one-third of the actual advance will have to be refunded by the wool-grower who has received the advance. That is a very serious state of things. There are plenty of small farmers who are absolutely unable to pay the excess they have borrowed over the amount they have actually realised. On this question of wool I would also call the attention of the Government to the desirability of appointing a wool expert, or wool experts, for the purpose of teaching the sheep-farmers of the colony more of their business than they understand at the present time. It may not be within the knowledge of many members, particularly town members, that a great want of knowledge exists among sheep-farmers as to the preparing of their wool for the market. For instance, there is a case within my own knowledge in which a farmer in this district sheared a flock of something like a thousand sheep, including about a hundred log-stained fleeces. Though he was an old sheep-farmer, he was actually guilty of the ignorance of dividing those stained fleeces pretty evenly among all the bales. His next door neighbour had also about a thousand sheep of an exactly similar class, and about a hundred log-stained fleeces, but, quite by chance. this man put these fleeces in a separate bale. The result was that the latter farmer got 1d. a pound more than the other for his wool. Sir, I am thoroughly of opinion that if a wool expert, or wool experts, were appointed to go round the colony as the Poultry Expert does at the present time, and attended at the shearing-sheds to inspect and improve the methods adopted there for shearing and sorting the wool, and to teach the men to skirt and fold their fleeces, and generally to prepare the wool for the market, at least 1d. per pound more would be realised by our wool-growers than they receive at the present time. This is an

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important matter, particularly just now, when wool is so lamentably low in price, and I confidently recommend it to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture. In conclusion, Sir, I wish to repeat that this question of markets is the most important for the Government at the present time. It is a truism, which cannot be contradicted, that the cities cannot live and prosper unless the country folk prosper, and the country folk cannot prosper unless they get a fair price for their products; and if this matter receives the proper attention of the Government I am certain the time is not far distant when this colony, with its fertility and climate, and all its natural advantages and progressive people, will soon outstrip all other colonies in prosperity, and become the brightest spot in the King's dominions. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) .- Sir. I think honourable members will agree with me in saying that the debate so far has been very singular in one respect, inasmuch as the only member who has so far spoken on the other side is the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, and who formed a portion of the old Opposition party. It is in that respect a record, I think, in connection with a debate on important proposals such as are contained in the Address from the Throne. I take it that in a case like this, if there are other honourable members on that side of the House who are desirous of criticizing any faults in the actions or policy of the Government, they would have taken the opportunity to at least put their views on record, so that Ministers might have had the chance of replying to them. An Hon. MEMBER .- We may do it yet. Sir J. G. WARD .- Well, I am only pointing out that, so far, only one member of the late Opposition has spoken, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, Captain Russell. I think I am right in deducing from such a position either one of two things: that the honourable members do not want to criticize the administration of the Government, or that our acts have been so faultless that there is nothing for them to say against us. Hon. MEMBERS .- Hear, hear. Sir J. G. WARD .- I am very glad, from the chorus of "Hear, hears," to find that my natural assumption that that is the true view of it is correct, and is assented to by honourable members opposite. If, however, as they have all hung back, they should now criticize any of my

departments, they cannot blame me for not replying to them. I propose to-night, in the first instance, to deal with what I might call one of the business or trading concerns of the in order that some of the misrepresentations-some of the very incorrect statements made by honourable members, particularly the honourable member for Riccarton-so far as railways are concerned may be removed, and so that honourable members should have an opportunity at least of knowing the official position from the responsible administrator of that particular department. Honourable gentlemen will agree with me that, if a large estate such as the railways, representing the greatest State asset in the colony, were in a disorganized condition, or if its affairs were such, even in regard to the purchasing or manufacture of rolling-stock, as was indicated by the honourable member for Riccarton, they should at once be seen into, and there naturally would be proper grounds for complaint, not only from members of the House but from the people of the country, and certainly from the working-classes in the colony. I shall, I hope, before I conclude, be able to show the utter fallacy and complete inaccuracy of any such ideas. Although the honourable member for Riccarton was good enough to state that he did not get his information from any one in the department, there was a good deal of information furnished to him which must have come from some very imperfect source in the department itself ; and although he assures us it finally reached him from " the man in the street," nevertheless, as he occupies a responsible position as a member of Parliament, it is desirable that some of these misrepresentations should be dealt with by myself on this occasion, if only to dispel the delusions of "the man in the street." In the first instance, I shall endeavour to make it clear to the House what has been the position of the Railway service during the last four or five years. I intend to refer to the folly in this respect which he said should not be continued, and by the time I have concluded he will agree with me-or. at all events, the people of the country will agree with me-that not only has no folly been continued, but that if the honourable member, or any other honourable member had been in charge of the railways of this country, and they were making the splendid forward progress they have been doing during the period stated, he could not have taken any other course. And it is questionable, if he had taken any other course, whether he would not have brought about disaster to many of the important industries in the colony itself. Before going into details, let me first of all state that the honourable member for Riccarton said that there were 123 cars imported from America and 1,000 wagons ordered from England ; and he went on to state that it was computed that they would have involved a cost of \$400,000, on which about one-third would represent wages had that work been carried out in the country. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- I said I did not know the number of locomotives, but that, including locomotives, the cost would be nearly \$400,000. Sir J. G. WARD .- I do not think that is what the honourable member said, but I will deal with the locomotives later. I will deal with the whole of the matters referred to by the honourable member. Now let the House judge of the reliability of the honourable member's statements relative to the American cars. He said there were 123 cars ordered from America. Well, there were only sixty-three cars ordered from America ; consequently there is a big difference there, as honourable members will see, of, roughly speaking, about \$96,000 in the value alone, to say nothing of the inaccuracy of the figures, which reached him through "the man in the street," as to the number ordered. The information furnished

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to him with regard to the American cars is out to the extent of about \$96,000 . that is in respect to one item only, made up of sixty cars too many. The total cost of the sixty-three cars delivered in New Zealand was \$102,000. With regard to these cars and the railway-wagons, the honourable member for Riccarton -and I also include with him one honourable member opposite who by interjection confirmed his statement-asked, " Was it right that large sums of the money of the people of this colony should be paid away without tenders being first called for ? Now. I desire to tell honourable members that the work was tendered for, both for the cars in America and for the wagons in England, so that upon that point those

honour-able members who appear to me to be unduly anxious about the matter have my assurance with respect to it, and if they desire they can have the records to bear out the statement that that was the case. I may also state 8.0. that a responsible railway officer was sent specially from this colony to America in connection with the building of those cars, not only to invite tenders for them, but to see that the work was properly carried out. The lowest tender was accepted for the sixty-three cars in America. Now, Sir, when I tell the House what the programme was for the railway work-shops in New Zealand for 1899-1900 and 1900-1901, and what the programme of work now being carried out is, they will then be able to realise the absolute inaccuracy and incorrectness, to say nothing of the unfairness, of the assumptions they have, for the want of knowledge or proper information, formed regarding this matter. The programme laid down in 1899-1900 and 1900-1901 made provision for the following work to be carried out in the railway workshops in New Zealand: To be built-Fourteen locomotive engines of the following types: 5 locomotive engines of Class B, 6 Class FB, 3 Class WA; 116 carriages, 55 bogie brake-vans, 1,817 four-wheeled and bogie wagons, and 500 four-wheeled and bogie wagons, if we could get them outside the work-shops in the colony. We also decided to order sixty-three cars from America and 1,000 four-wheeled wagons from Great Britain. Now, Sir, the increase in the number of passengers carried between 1899-1900 and 1900-1901 was 775,309; and I may state as a result of that increase that, if we had not, in addition to the carriages on the lines and those already in order in the work-shops of the colony, also got cars from outside, we could not have coped with the enormous increase of people using our railways in the colony. Some honourable members-the member for Christchurch City (Mr. Eill) and, I think, other honourable members also-have attempted to reflect upon my predecessor in office, inasmuch as they stated that he had not grasped the situation, and had not got ready for the work that was going on. Very well, then, Sir, I say that honourable members who make that statement-while they may make it with the best of intentions-have very little knowledge of what has been going on in the workshops of the colony at all. From 1895-96 up to 31st March, 1901, 3,576 vehicles, including engines, carriages, brake-vans, and wagons rebuilt to replace worn-out and condemned rolling-stock, were made in the railway workshops in New Zealand. During that period there has been made in the railway workshops of the colony 28 locomotive engines, 203 carriages, 77 brake-vans, and 3,268 wagons. that not great work? Does that bear out the statement that we had not grasped the position? Now, I gave honourable members the programme that was laid down at the beginning of the period, 1899-1900. Will any one for a moment dare to say that that was not a big programme of work, or that we are not keeping up to date in this respect? I have indicated what it was we were trying to prepare for. Now, Sir, what is being made in the workshops at the present moment? Before I pass on to that let me give honourable members what were made in the workshops of New Zealand for over five years previous to the railways coming under the direct control of the Government. During that time there were 398 vehicles of all kinds made and 53 rebuilt, as against the numbers I have just given the House of 3,576 vehicles made in the workshops under the administration of the Government-that is, since 1895-and those vehicles were 5 new locomotives and 10 rebuilds, 28 new carriages and 32 conversions, 14 new brake-vans and 11 rebuilds, and 351 new wagons. I merely put that on record because the question has been raised as to the Railway Department not having endeavoured to provide sufficient rolling-stock to meet the requirements of the colony. An honourable member interjects that the Commissioners could not get the money at the date I have given. I say if the growth of traffic warranted it and they had applied for the money they would have got it. I am casting no blame whatever, nor am I finding any fault with the Commissioners. I have no doubt they did their very best. I will show honourable members presently that there were not in the workshops of New Zealand at that time a number of men sufficient to have carried out the increased work required. Now, Sir, I have given honourable members some facts regarding the sixty-three passenger-cars, and the increase in the number of passengers for a brief period only. Now, what about the

wagons? We ordered 1,000 wagons from England. I want to point out to honourable members that time was of the essence of the contract so far as this colony was concerned. The Agent-General was instructed to have these wagons built according to designs furnished by the colony. That was also done in respect to the carriages ordered from America ; they were all from our own designs. We accepted tenders for 1,000 wagons, and spread them over four large manufacturing firms in England ; and, notwithstanding that we took that precaution in order to get the whole 1,000 wagons within a limited period, even then they have not come to hand fast enough to meet the growing requirements of the department. And you may naturally ask, Why did we not get them ? Because there has been such a large demand

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in Great Britain in connection with the iron industry, and in connection with manufactures of all kinds. When we desired in the first instance to obtain rolling-stock from Britain, we could not get our orders taken up unless we extended the time to two, three, and even four years. The order for 1,000 wagons was therefore spread over four firms, entirely so as to insure as early delivery as possible. The firms I will give for the information of honourable members. They were : Brown, Marshall, and Co., 250 wagons. at \$36,254 ; the Ashbury Railway Car and Wagon Company, 250, at \$37.525 : P. and W. MacLellan (Limited). 250, at \$39.025 10s. ; Stableford and Co., 250, at \$37.256 a total of \$150,060 10s. Honourable members will see that, if we had desired to have extended the contract over a longer period, we would have had in the ordinary course to have waited until the pressure that now exists, not only in our own colony, but in Britain and America, had ceased. We would have waited until we could have done the whole of the work in our own colony if it had been possible to do so. There was a clamour for extra wagons everywhere -settlers, coal-miners, traders, general merchants, shipping- in fact, there is not a member of the House but knows that the remarkable prosperity of our country gave an all-round impetus to everything, and our railways had to meet an extraordinary growth of traffic within a short period ; and I say the department has, under many difficulties, done wonderfully well, and I am happy to say that such is generally recognised. We not only ordered these wagons in England, but we spread them over four large manufacturing firms purposely, to get them out quickly to meet the growth of traffic, the nature of which I hope to be able to point out to honourable members presently. Now, Sir, while upon this let me refer for a moment to a statement made by the honourable member for Riccarton about the wagons that were tendered for in this colony. The honourable gentleman, Sir, gave us information which, I take it, referred to the tender of Booth, MacDonald, and Co., of Christchurch. He did not name them, but I have no doubt whatever that the particular firm to which he was referring was the firm of Booth, MacDonald, and Co., of Christchurch. And the honourable gentleman said some wagons were being made by Invercargill firms. That is quite correct. Some were being built in Invercargill, and as he said, at a cost of £106. Some were also being built by an Auckland firm at the same price. Sir, the £106 was only the cost of making the body of the wagons. The department itself has to supply the wheels and axles and draw-gear in every single instance ; and when the honourable gentleman referred to the wagons being taken at a price which he said was too low, he was not aware of the very important fact I am now alluding to. Now, I tell the honourable member that the department, before fixing the price at £106 for the building of the body of the wagons, took into consideration that a living-wage must be fixed before giving out that price-namely, £106- for making the body of the wagons. Every firm in the colony who had tendered for the 500 wagons, or any portion of them, were offered a number of wagons to build at £106 each, the department providing the wheels, axles, and draw-gear at its own cost, and the majority of the firms declined. There were only three who accepted the offer-two at Invercargill and one at Auckland-and they are making 225 That is a very different position from wagons. that put forward by the honourable member for Riccarton, and I think that he will admit it at once. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Your English price is \$150, by your own figures. Sir J. G. WARD .- I am going to deal with the English price and other aspects

of it presently ; but the honourable gentleman gave the impression that we kept the local price down, and that one of the Canterbury firms would therefore not take it up. He did not say that the wheels, axles, and draw-gear had to be supplied by the department in every single instance. That is a very material difference so far as that matter is concerned. Now, Sir, the tenders offered in the colony for 500 wagons in the first instance, excluding the wheels and axles and draw-gear, ran from £115 to \$136; but the time wanted ran from two years and seven months up to three years, excepting the Auckland firm, who offered to make fifty in twelve months ; and those fifty wagons completed with wheels, axles, et cetera, would have cost £178 each. Both the price and time for delivery in the colony were excessive. The whole of the 225 wagons we gave to outside shops in the colony are to be in service by the 31st December next. Now, just a word while upon this matter, first of all, about the number of vehicles-which I had intended to allude to before-that are now on order in the railway workshops of New Zealand. There are 965 wagons, and 76 carriages, inclusive of 23 carriages which are being built to replace worn-out and condemned cars. Then 24 new brake-vans, also 16 locomotives, inclusive of 3 complete rebuilding, are actually now on the programme, to be proceeded with at once in the railway workshops, considerable progress having been made with these orders. The new carriages which are being built in the railway workshops are all of the long double-bogie type, and the worn-out and condemned carriages were of the old-fashioned short type, which are thus being replaced by much more up-to-date and comfortable vehicles of an average capacity of fully one-third more; in many cases the new stock being more than double the length of that which it replaces. Taking into consideration the present prices of material and wages, the actual cost of making our own wagons in our own railway workshops averages \$120 for 74-ton all-iron high-siders, Class L ; \$100 for iron and wood framed low-siders, Class M ; £220 for bogie iron and wood-framed platform wagons, Class U. No four-wheeled 12-ton wagons have been made in our workshops. Now I want to refer to the cost of these imported wagons, and

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also the American carriages, which were referred to by the honourable member. The honourable gentleman stated that the imported American carriages cost £1,700, and that the carriages could be built in the colony itself for \$1,400. Sir, the honourable gentleman is wrong in both instances. The cost of the American imported carriages is £1,619 : that is rather more than the actual cost. There have never been built in the colony cars similar in size to the American cars, or with similar lavatory accommodation for both ladies and gentlemen, and there has never been an estimate furnished by the department until those cars arrived as to what it would cost to build a carriage of similar size and capacity in our own workshops ; and I may say that the estimate of the department is that we could build these carriages in the colony itself with our own material, and importing the wheels and axles as usual, and putting on the Westinghouse brakes, for £1,500. It is a difference the honourable gentleman will see, in favour of our own carriages, and that has always been the case so far as building our own carriages are concerned. I was anxious from the very start to do the whole of the work in the colony if we could have done it. There has been a question submitted by some honourable members as to the value of the work done in the colony by comparison with that made in outside places. Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that the work done in the colony itself is equal, if not superior, to that which we have imported, or can import, from anywhere else. There is no doubt about it. In the case of locomotive engines, wagons, cars, and everything else turned out by the railway workshops in the colony, there is no doubt whatever that our work is equal, if not better, than any of the work imported. I make that statement upon information furnished since I have been Minister for Railways by men who have come to this colony engineers and practical men connected with railways of the other parts of the world -and who have gone through the various workshops in the colony, and also of our own experienced men, who have visited other parts of the world and seen the work turned out elsewhere. It is not a statement made on my own knowledge at

all, but on information furnished by men of great experience, who have gone over the workshops in New Zealand. Why should it not be so? We get the very best material that can be obtained, and our engineers, mechanics, and workmen are as intelligent and as honest as can, I venture to affirm, be found anywhere. Now, Sir, regarding the cost of the wagons. The honourable member for Riccarton, when he got that information from the "man in the street," did not know that the whole of the 1,000 wagons imported are of exactly double tonnage to any of the wagons made in the colony itself. I venture to say that the honourable gentleman did not know that, and yet he made that comparison of prices. He said also that wagons could be made in this colony from £120 to \$130 - I think that is the statement the honourable member made - whereas, he said, these imported wagons cost £150. In fact, they cost more than \$150 delivered in the colony ; but they are 12-ton wagons, every one of them, and just double the size of any four-wheeled wagons made in the colony. And they have been made double the size purposely, in order to get double the accommodation, with a view to assist in getting over the congested traffic that from time to time arises in different portions of the colony. The honourable member in respect to these wagons was entirely wrong, because four-wheeled wagons, as I say, have for the first time been made double the ordinary size. There have never been turned out of the New Zealand workshops in any portion of the colony 12-ton four-wheeled wagons since the colony has been a colony. The change has been made now, and I hope, so far as New Zealand is concerned, that we shall adopt the 12-ton wagons in our New Zealand workshops, because honourable members will see that very heavy traffic must go on increasing here in the shape of produce, et cetera, and we ought to have wagons carrying a greater tonnage without increasing their length, so that we may be able to use them on the existing turntables in the different portions of the colony. It means heavier wheels and axles, but the change to 12-ton wagons is a wise one. Well, on a minor point in connection with this matter I would like to clear up a statement made by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Napier), and which was confirmed, I believe, or met with the approval of the honourable member for Avon. The statement was that, if this work required to be sent out of the colony, how is it that retrenchment is taking place in the Newmarket and Addington Workshops. Now, Sir, that is a very fair question to put, and I think it only right it should be answered. Now, from the 29th April, 1899, up to the 22nd June of this year in the Newmarket Workshops the increase in the number of men has been from 148 steadily up to 168; in addition to which there have been day-to-day casuals latterly put on in Auckland to the number of sixteen. Now, in the Addington Workshops, during the same period, the number of men has increased from 413 to 491, and there have been put on during the last five or six months sixty-six day-to-day casuals. Those are the actual records from the two workshops that have been mentioned by both honourable members. Mr. TANNER .- But how many have received notice of suspension at Addington since that date ? Sir J. G. WARD .- I am going to tell the honourable gentleman about that. That is exactly what I want to explain to him, and every other honourable gentleman who has a right to know all about it. Why were these sixteen men put on at Newmarket and sixty-six at Addington during that period ? Principally to fit up the new American cars, locomotives, and work necessary to provide for the greatly increased traffic which was the natural corollary of the visit of the Royal party to New Zealand. The work was only temporary, and as soon as they got over their temporary work

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they were no longer required. For instance, at Addington eight of these were engaged in the erection of American cars, ten were temporarily engaged in connection with them, forty were engaged in the erection of new locomotives, and forty-eight were temporarily engaged in connection with the Royal visit, seating wagons for passenger traffic, et cetera. Some of these men, of course, went from one job to another as circumstances required; but the work was, as I say, of a temporary character. Every honourable gentleman knows that, in carrying on the business of the Railway Department, we have to make

provision temporarily for an occasional access of work under special circumstances. So soon as those pass away we should not be doing our duty-and I do not suppose the honourable gentleman would expect us to do so-if we continued to employ these men unless there was work for them to do. We could never carry on the railways or anything else successfully if we employed any one when there was no work for them to do. Honourable members attempt to compare the casual employées who are put on for specific purposes with the number of men who are permanently employed for the erection of rolling-stock, et cetera. It is not a fair or just comparison. When they allow inferences to be deducted from the fact of these men being paid off they are not saying what is in accordance with actual fact so far as the railway workshops are concerned. That is the explanation, I can assure honourable gentlemen, of this matter. Now for a word or two as to the causes -and when the causes became so pronounced that this had to be done-that led to this expansion of work and required the construction of the largest number of wagons and carriages and locomotives ever built in the colony to be undertaken in the workshops of New Zealand as well as outside - as to the causes which rendered it necessary to go beyond the colony for additional rolling-stock. In January, 1895, the total number of men employed on the New Zealand railways was 4,733 ; on the 31st March, 1901, the number was 7,793 -that is, an increase of 3,060 during that period. Since I have been Minister for Railways-and I mention this in order to show what has taken place during the limited period I have been in charge-I have appointed 1,300 employées to the railways of New Zealand, and, as I say, during the short time they have been under my administration. Do honourable members who are talking about getting ready for this enormous expansion of work realise what these figures imply ? Can they grasp the great change that has been brought about in the colony? Do those honourable members say that if they had had the administration of the department they would have come to this House before this extraordinary expansion took place, and have invited the House to give them, say, a million or two of money to get ready for a development of traffic such as the increase in the number of employées I have referred to indicates? If they had done so, there is not a member on either side of the House but sons for asking the colony to commit itself to such an enormous expenditure, in order to make provision for increased traffic, before there were the strongest indications that such an increase of business was coming and was likely to be permanent. That is my answer. Now, what about the revenue? The revenue in 1896-97 on the railways amounted to £1,286,158; in 1900-1901 it was £1,727,236, an increase of £441,078 : that is, after deducting the enormous sum represented by the reductions of rates brought about by the Government. And in order that honourable members may have the value of these from the department itself I asked the General Manager to give me a statement showing the actual value of the concessions made by the Government in reduction of rates during that period. Here it is :--- "The value of the concessions in railway rates granted by Government, January, 1895, to 31st March, 1901, is £369,239. "T. RONAYNE, General Manager." Now, add that £369,239 to the increased revenue, as shown in this return, of £441,078 and what do you get? You get the fact that the increased revenue is £810,317. That is the increase of revenue during that comparatively short period. I say it is a wonderful record, and ought to be gratifying to people of every class in the colony. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- The concessions created the business. Sir J. G. WARD .- Very well; my honourable friend says the concessions that we gave to the public created that increased business. That was exactly why we gave the concessions, so as to enable our people to use them advantageously to themselves and at as low a cost as possible ; and that is our policy still. I say that, if we had not made strenuous exertions and provided for the increased volume of business that has resulted, we should not only have been acting unwisely, but should have been doing a gross injustice to all the industries of our country, and consequently to the workers of New Zealand, and not merely to those employed in the workshops of the colony. I say that if for want of sufficient rolling-stock, if for want of the necessary engine-power, and if for want of enough railway-carriages we could not have conveyed the business that poured upon

us for transport from the interior to the seaboard and from the seaboard to the interior, both of passengers, live-stock, produce, and general goods, we would have materially crippled our industries, and the first to have felt it would have been our workers. Now, Sir, what is the increase in the number of passengers during the period to which I have referred - namely, from 1896-97 to 1900-1901 ? It is simply wonderful. It is not only wonderful, but it ought to be a matter of satisfaction to every member of the House, even if he is anxious to see - and I believe there are one or two anxious to see - the Government turned off the Treasury benches. What does the increase amount to? In 1896-97 the total number of passengers carried over our railways

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carried was 6,243,593, being an increase of | in the colony for the workshops, and we could 1,804,206 passengers carried during the latter period. The increase on tonnage carried for the same period was 960,760, or almost a million tons. The increase in live-stock carried was 473,800, the increase in season tickets was 39,852, and the increase in the number of parcels was 151,786. Now, Sir, I have referred to these increases in order to show honourable members who have been talking of what ought to have been done beforehand, that, even if the whole of the workshops in New Zealand could have been concentrated in one place, and even if we had had the money given us by the House two years ago to do what was required, we could not have got ready the necessary rolling-stock within the time to have enabled us to overcome the increased railway traffic in the colony. And do honourable members mean to tell me that under these circumstances the Government were not only not justified, but that they were not obliged to go outside for a portion of the material with which to cope with that increased traffic ? Do they mean to tell me that the Government were not just as anxious as any honourable member to keep the whole of the money in the colony? I saw, after taking charge of the railways and going carefully into matters, that we must go for a bold and forward policy or there would be a mess. I felt that we should continue to reduce our rates, and that by doing so a great expansion of trade would result. My colleagues agreed with me, and we saw that our plain duty was not to allow the commerce of the colony to be placed at a serious disadvantage for want of rolling-stock, for want of engine-power, and for want of the necessary vehicles to carry the produce that was brought to us for transport, and also to accommodate the travelling public, who relied upon us for meeting their wants. We put into the workshops as much work as it was possible for them to do, and we ordered a reasonable number of wagons and cars from outside. Now, Sir, I want to give one more tell-tale regarding the statement that he made about the workshops and the number of men, to show that we have not been asleep or that there was any want of forethought or watchfulness on the part of the Administration in this particular matter. In the railway workshops, on the 31st December, 1894, before they came over to the Government, the total number of permanent men from one end of the colony to the other was 739, and of casuals there were seventeen, making the full total of 756. On the 25th May of this year the total number was 1,631, which is more than twice the number of men employed in the workshops now that were there before the workshops came over to the Government. That is another nut I offer those honourable members to crack - those who would suggest that we are not anxious to do all the time. The successful tenderer made especial work in the railway workshops that it is possible for the workshops to do. What is more, I will tell honourable members this : that even if it had been possible to extend the workshop - roughly well built, and are the easiest running 8.30. shops and to get the extra machinery required, we could not within the time have procured the additional number of qualified men . running. not have got even a portion of the additional hands for the increased work, unless we had drawn them away from private workshops, which were also being worked as the result largely of the mining developments, to the utmost. It was surely not in the interests of the colony that we were to dislocate other important industries that were all doing our colony good, and were employing a large number of our workmen. An Hon. MEMBER .- You did it in some

cases. Sir J. G. WARD .- Yes. and necessarily so, that will ever be the case under certain conditions. Now, Sir, I wish to refer to the statement made by the honourable member for Riccarton to the effect that these new cars were exceedingly unsatisfactory in many ways. The honourable gentleman said they carried less people, that they cost \$300 more, and generally he condemned them from beginning to end. Now, I desire to inform the House that they hold thirty people. That is the number of people each car is intended to hold, which is the same number as the new colonial cage-cars hold. They each hold thirty people. I will read to honourable members a memorandum by the General Manager of Railways and the Locomotive Superintendent respecting the cars :- " Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister for Railways. " In compliance with your request, we have the honour to furnish, for your information, the following report on the recently imported American passenger-carriages :- " These carriages were specially imported for express services; the reduction of passenger-fares having resulted in such a marked increase in the number of passengers carried, the existing car stock was needed for ordinary and local services, and was altogether inadequate for combined express and ordinary train services. "It was quite impracticable to build the carriages in the colony, or to obtain them from Great Britain, within a reasonable time. "A railway officer was sent to America, where he invited tenders for the supply of carriages, early delivery being an imperative condition. "The lowest tender was accepted, and the contract let to a first-class car-building company. "The American Car and Foundry Company, to whom the work was intrusted, is one of the best firms in the United States, doing a large business in first-class rolling-stock for American and foreign railways. "The designs and specifications were prepared in the colony, and the conditions under which tenders were invited stipulated for first-class work, and delivery in the shortest possible efforts to meet these conditions, and our work was given precedence. "The carriages are very satisfactory, though in the colony, their increased length and weight adding materially to their steadiness and easy

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" In these respects especial encomiums were accorded them by visitors to the colony in connection with the recent Royal tour, notably by members of their Royal Highnesses' suite, and the English journalists, all of whom, as experienced and world-wide travellers, should be qualified to judge of their merits. " We desire to draw attention to the present condition of a number of American railway-carriages which were imported and put to work on the New Zealand railways in 1878. These carriages are still in regular daily service, and are sound and in good condition. " As compared with carriages of similar age imported from Great Britain, the cost of maintenance is largely in favour of the American car, a large number of the British carriages having been worn out and rebuilt, while only ordinary light running repairs have been required by those imported from America. " So far as we can form an opinion, the American carriages recently imported promise to give equal satisfaction. Each car has two lavatories, one being reserved for ladies. " They are fitted with quick-action Westinghouse automatic brakes, are lighted with Pintsch gas, and provided with improved ventilation. " The seating-accommodation is similar to that provided in the latest type of the New Zealand-built gallery cars. The American car is longer, on account of the additional lavatory and the middle cross-gangway, and the weight is 16 tons, as against 14} tons for the New Zealand cars, an increase of 30 cwt. " As compared with carriages of modern design and of similar seating capacity on the Australian railways, with railway-gauges of 5 ft. 3 in. and 4 ft. 8 1/2 in., the New Zealand American carriages are considerably lighter. "To build similar carriages in the colony would, it is estimated, cost \$1,500 each. "T. RONAYNE, General Manager, N.Z. Railways. " A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Superintendent, N.Z. Railways. " Wellington, 5th July, 1901." Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Is \$1,619 the landed cost of the American cars ? Sir J. G. WARD .- Yes; it is their cost delivered in New Zealand. I may also point out to the honourable member that in every case of the manufacture of cars in New Zealand we always have to import the tires and the axles. The whole of the fitting-up, of course, has to be done in the colony. I may say that I have also been on the new railway-cars, and I tell honourable

members, who, like myself, are laymen in respect to these matters, that I naturally looked round to see whether they were as satisfactory and as nice as those already in the colony, and there were some minor details about them that personally I did not like. The arm-rests were, in my opinion, too close together, and I so informed the General Manager, and they are to be removed from the whole of the cars, and that is being done. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Another expense. Sir J. G. WARD .- The honourable member must know that, even with his easily fitting figure, if he gets a new suit of clothes from the very best tailor, sometimes he has to have slight alterations made to them before they fit him or suit his taste, even, as I say, if he goes to the most superior tailor in the place. So it is with other things-even railway-carriages. Those carriages were all built from our own plans and designs, and that some of the minor details may require altering is not a serious matter. With regard to the ventilation, what is the fact : that honourable members, while going through the tunnels, possibly left the upper ventilators open. They are different ventilators from what we have had in the colony ; but, as I say, all these minor details will be got over, because the cars are being carefully watched and the defects noted. I do know this: they are the most comfortable-running passenger-cars in the colony. They are now, and will become more so, popular with the travelling public. Regarding the question of going outside the colony for them, I repeat that we did not want, on the score of either workmanship or price, to go outside the colony at all. It was useless to go to England for these carriages, as speed was the urgent necessity for going outside at all, and experience showed that America was the country to get them with the least delay. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- Why did you not try Canada ? Sir J. G. WARD .- If we had tried Canada the honourable gentleman would probably have asked us why we did not try America. I have already said time was a great desideratum. We know that what we got from America before was a good article ; and we also knew-and honourable members must realise also - that we were bound to consider the time it would take to get them here, in consequence of the extraordinary development of railway traffic in the colony. We naturally went to the tried workshops of America, which had turned us out such good work before, both so far as engine - power and carriages were concerned. They had, on the whole, given us the greatest satisfaction. That is my answer to that question. There was no particular reason in going to America any more than to England, only that we could not have got them from England for probably three years, and unless we had got them at once they would have been perfectly useless to us. While upon this matter let me for a moment refer to what appears to be desirable with regard to the supply of rolling-stock to the New Zealand railways in the future. This session the Government will ask honourable members to give them the necessary money to extend the workshops and to erect additional machinery, in order to enable us to do the whole of the work of construction of locomotive engines, carriages, cars, and everything else in the railway workshops of the colony. Mr. J. ALLEN .- Why did you not do it four or five years ago ? Sir J. G. WARD .- Because you and your friends always said that the outside cost of

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locomotive engines, and other things, was very much cheaper than the cost in the colony ; and I beg to assure my honourable friend that very strong opinions were expressed by honourable members against ordering anything from the people of the colony when it was going to cost more, on account of the protection required to be imposed to enable it to be made in the colony as cheap as it could be imported for ; that was the argument they used against the bolstering-up of our colonial industry. Why, it is a fact that they declaimed against the protection ; that, they said, should not be needed. I hold strongly that we should make all our own rolling-stock -engines included - within the colony. Of course, honourable members have been rather fastidious about this matter of ordering railway-cars from outside the colony, because naturally their constituents are anxious to see such work done in the colony ; but on account of the rapid growth of traffic on our railways, if we had not given the order ahead for a certain number of locomotives, we could not have been able at this time to inform the House definitely that, with a vote to

extend the shops and provide machinery, all the work would in future be done in the colony, including locomotive engines. We require to make proper and thorough provision in the colony for making all our locomotive engines, and for rebuilding existing locomotives. We must make provision for building ten new locomotives every year, and this quite apart from any repairs, or rebuilding existing engines. We intend to do so. That is the principle upon which we are going; but unless we had had sufficient supplies to enable us to commence, we could not have made, for the first time in our colony's history, a complete stoppage of all orders from beyond our colony for the future. We could not up to now run the risk of allowing the railways to be short of locomotive-power, carriages, or wagons, keenly and naturally as we desired to have the work done in the colony itself. Honourable members have seen what has been going on over our railways in the colony during the Royal visit. There was not a single locomotive engine-although we had the increased engine-power-available and fit for work in the colony that was not at work within the three- or four-week period to which I have referred. Upon the Auckland Section of railways there was engine after engine drawing trains over their ordinary capacity, and if we had not made provision with extra engines and cars we could not have successfully coped with the business on the Auckland Section itself. Not only did we have the sixty-three new cars to help to carry the people on the New Zealand railways during the time to which I have referred, not only did we have to use high-sided and low-sided trucks, but for the first time in the history of the colony-and, I think, for the first time in the history of the world-we used frozen-meat trucks for the purpose of carrying human beings. We took off the freezing-doors and put on half-doors, and the people travelled in these cars. It was not the warmest weather either; but fortunately, the Government cannot be accused of using the freezing rolling-stock for the freezing of their own people. I tell honourable members that that was done, and the people who travelled in them were exceedingly comfortable. It gives some idea of the demand for rolling-stock, and will, I feel sure, convince even the most critical that in dealing with a great concern like our railways you require to view the whole surroundings, and not take a narrow view, in order to judge fairly and impartially of the position. The officers of the Railway Department-the General Manager, the Chief Engineer, the Locomotive Superintendent, the Traffic Managers, the District Engineers, the Stationmasters, the drivers, and the rank and file of the railway-men-are deserving of the very highest credit for the manner in which they have managed the railway-work of the last three months. And I say that not as my own opinion alone, but as the expressed opinion of men who have had experience of the carriage of large numbers of people in other parts of the world. Nothing more creditable has been done than was done upon our New Zealand railways during the time to which I refer. Now, Sir, one word about the cost of locomotives. Those that we have got built in the colony run into about \$4,100 each. The cost of those imported from Great Britain was £3,300 each, and those from America £2,400 each. My own belief-and I think I am perhaps not far out in saying it-is that if we get proper appliances, have the proper machinery, and devote ourselves to making the whole of the engines we require in New Zealand, we should be able to reduce the cost by possibly \$500; and it is worth the cost that would be incurred in procuring the necessary machinery and appliances in the keeping in the country of the money that would otherwise go outside the country if we procured foreign-made locomotives and cars. Now, for the information of honourable members-I do not wish to keep anything from the House-I may say that the number of engines that we have on the water, and to arrive within the next eighteen months or two years from the outside, amounts to thirty-five. I tell honourable members that if the House this session gives us the necessary authority we will not require to order any more locomotives, carriages, or rolling-stock from outside. We will do it all ourselves. By increasing the workshops in the different parts of the colony, and by putting on additional men, we shall be able to keep the whole of this work within the colony. But I do take a most decided objection to an assumption on the part of any individual member of this House, or any people outside this House, that they and they alone want to keep the work in the country. The Government has been just as

anxious to keep this work in the country as any honourable member ; but my predecessor would not have been justified in asking the House to provide for fifteen hundred or so of rolling-stock, and twenty-five, or thirty, or forty locomotives. unless he had reasonable grounds for believing that the extraordinary growth of traffic that was then evident, and which he had

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largely provided for, was going to continue to increase. He considered he had no grounds for coming to the House and asking that an extra- ordinary sum of money should be given him. Who will tell what is going to happen in the next five years ? And if I said now that we would require five thousand extra wagons in two years' time, is there any member in this House who will say that, because I came before you and made the statement that it was necessary to provide the money for those wagons, that you would do so? We must, while not afraid of being progressive, be guided by prudence, and rightly so. My own belief, however, is that before another fifteen years are passed by there will be fifty thousand men employed on the railways and in the workshops of the colony itself. That is a sanguine anticipation as to the future to make ; but I make it, realising what is going on now. During the last two years, with a country only partially developed, and with enormous potentialities before it, with State railways in New Zealand we have in five years put on three thousand men ; and I say that the increase of business in the future will be greater than it has been in the past, and the increase of workmen employed, both in the workshops and on the railways, will be much greater in proportion than it has been. Yet, if the Government asked the House to grant three or four millions of money to provide for a programme for five or ten years ahead, there are not many members who would agree to do that. They would ask us to wait for a year or two to see whether the assumption as to the increased traffic was correct. I do not blame them for this. I want to refer now to another matter that was referred to by the honourable member for Riccarton. I want to say one word first with reference to a remark made by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins), to the effect that representations have been made that the whole of the Railway service of the State should be brought under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I think if you attempted to do that you would be doing a very unjust thing to the men who are now classified under the Classification Act ; and, what is more, that should not be done without their consent. They should have an opportunity of saying whether they are willing to give up the position which they now occupy or not. The men in the workshops are to some extent in a different position from the other railway employés. The Government has considered the matter carefully, and, if the men in the workshops would prefer to come entirely out of the classification scheme and be dealt with under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Government have no objection to that. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL .- That is an advance. Sir J. G. WARD .- The honourable member says, " That is an advance"; possibly it may be considered so, but I would advise the men in the workshops to go very carefully into the matter before they decide to change. And I will tell the honourable member why. The honourable member and other members have urged that these men should come under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Let me point out that practically the only employer in the railways in this country is the State. There is no other class of employer for them to make a comparison with as to the rate of wages. In the event of bad times occurring in this country, which even the most sanguine of us fully recognise is possible, what are you going to do in settling the rates of wages, or disputes in this department ? It is most likely that if a fall of wages occurred it would not be in the workshops, but in private employment outside. Well, are the railway men to be subject to the ruling outside rates or the Government ones ? My opinion is they are safer as they are; but those honourable members who suggest placing these men under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act have a perfect right to do so, and, as I say, we are quite willing to do so, but it is the men themselves who are most concerned, and in their own interest they ought to be careful and consider the position thoroughly before doing anything in the matter. Mr SEDDON .- And the men themselves. should be consulted. Sir J. G.

WARD .- Yes; as I have already said, the men themselves should be consulted. I was going to refer to a number of other matters, but it seems to me that I will have some difficulty in doing so, as my time is nearly up. But before I sit down I want to say a word or two on a personal matter. While the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was good enough to compliment me on the honour conferred upon me, I am not so devoid of discernment as not to have noticed that there was some sarcasm in his remarks. The honourable gentleman has himself worn a military uniform, and in his observations I think he went out of his way, perhaps in order to crack a joke, to insult that uniform, and to say what should not be said by even the leader of the Opposition, or any other member of this House. Now, Sir, regarding this uniform. My right honourable friend and colleague the Premier did not refer to this at length, and time will not allow me to do so, but I will say this : that any man occupying a responsible position who goes to the Old Country receives invitations to go to many important functions in high State places, which, if he did not accept, would reflect upon his own country ; and the honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that if he does accept those invitations he cannot attend any of those functions unless he goes in that uniform which my honourable friend has taken such a decided objection to, and attempts to turn into a subject for ridicule. Sir, he knows that it is not only the usual thing to wear the uniform on occasions of that sort, but that unless one wore it he could not attend. He knows it is a uniform which is worn by men occupying the highest positions in England-both Tories and Radicals alike-and that any side in politics entitled to wear it does and must wear it on certain occasions. I have been informed that at least one of his own former colleagues in the Atkinson Government has worn the same uniform on certain occasions. An Hon. MEMBER .- Who was that ? Sir J. G. WARD. -- Sir Frederick Whitaker.

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Mr. ATKINSON. - Did you not wear the | honourable members most cordially for the uniform on the " Brooklyn "? Sir J. G. WARD. No, I did not. Sir, I am only referring to this uniform business now for the purpose of pointing out to some honourable members the position. While I am prepared to pay due respect to those who are entitled to wear uniforms, I have no desire to parade myself unnecessarily in any uniform. When I require to wear it I shall do so. If it should occasionally call from some thoughtless person a sneer, I can both put up with it and get over it. I do not believe that the putting on of a uniform changes a man's nature, or changes him in any way whatever ; and if it happens to create irony in my honourable friend, possibly because he has not qualified for the distinction which would entitle him to wear the uniform- Captain RUSSELL .- I have qualified ; I can wear it to-morrow. Sir J. G. WARD .- Then, all I can say is that the honourable gentleman must be afraid to show his legs. Now, Sir, many honourable members have been good enough to personally congratulate me upon the high honour which our King, through his son, has recently conferred on me. So far as I am concerned, that honour was unsolicited by me. I greatly appreciate the kindness that has prompted my comrades in Parliament in tendering their congratulations to me. I have had similar pleasant experiences from all over our own country. People of all classes have thought fit to communicate their congratulations. Local bodies, Chambers of Commerce, Liberal associations, workers' unions, and from many thousands of people I have received similar communications, and I value them very much indeed, and I now publicly express my acknowledgments to them for their kindness in so doing. If there are any people in the colony who take exception to my acceptance of such an honour, they, of course, have a perfect right to their own opinions. I respect them none the less because their opinions and mine do not concur. I may say that I have never decried those who, in the opinion of their Sovereign, having earned recognition, have accepted, when offered, titular distinctions. I have no hesitation in saying that, if I had refused to accept the honour offered me and conferred upon me by our future King, I should not have acted properly. What is more, it would have been greatly misunderstood ; and any one in my position who had such an honour offered to him and refused it would have acted the part of a snob, and would not have acted the part of a man occupying a high and

responsible position. If there are people outside this House or in it who believe that because of the conferring upon me of an honour which I am proud of it is going to make any change in my nature or in my disposition in the future, they are making a very great mistake indeed. Those who imagine that as the result of this they are going to brush me aside politically will find that they misjudge public opinion, as I venture with much confidence to affirm that the future will show they have also misjudged me. I thank attentive way in which they have listened to me. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) .- Sir, it is my intention to-night to go into rather a heavy subject. It does not afford scope for the brilliancy of the speech we have just listened to, nor will it have the dash, probably, of the speech of our worthy Premier. I shall, however, deal with matters that are of the greatest importance to the colony. I refer to our produce trade. I should dearly have wished to have gone into the subject-matter of the Address in Reply, but, as you are aware, Sir, time will not permit, and we shall have a fuller opportunity when the Financial Statement is before us of discussing the various questions that have been raised in the Speech from the Throne. Of course, one would like to have dwelt a little more with the speeches that emanated from some of the city members, and from our socialistic friends, who urged the necessity for increased taxation on the lands of the country. We had that from the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds), who said, whilst condemning the income-tax, that one of the most magnificent and beneficent Acts passed by the present Government was the repeal of the property-tax and the introduction of the land- and income-tax; and he attributed to the imposition of heavy taxation on the lands of the country our present prosperity, and advocated heavier taxation on our lands. Sir, I fail entirely to appreciate the logic of the honourable gentleman's position-that by increasing the cost of production by land taxation you would increase the prosperity of the colony. I would like, just before leaving the Speech from the Throne, to heartily congratulate the Ministry in connection with their promise to take action in regulating the hours of labour of bank-clerks and clerks in mercantile houses. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. - What about Private Secretaries ? Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- When the honourable member has a Private Secretary he will probably extend greater concessions to them than do the present Ministry, and I believe that Private Secretaries are as hard worked as any bank-clerks. But it is a perfect scandal that clerks, both in banks and mercantile houses, should be called upon to work the hours they do, working frequently after midnight, and in some cases on Sunday as well. I wish now to go into some aspects of the question of the produce trade of this colony, and to preface my remarks by saying that, although I may allude to firms and companies, and in some instances to individuals, I do so without any desire whatever of injuring their business, but rather to direct attention to the facts with a view to remedying defects in our system, and because they ought to be considered in the interests of the produce trade of New Zealand. This is the first occasion on which I have had fairly reasonable time to deal with the subject. I attempted to go into the matter last session, but, as you are aware, Sir, time would not admit of it. I will now deal with the question of faulty grading that prevails in this

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I have declared there was no damage on the whole of country, and of unjust claims that are levied regarding the quality of the meat that lands at Home and also of infamous insurance claims. I shall give personal experience in connection with these matters, and I hope, if there is time, which I doubt, to go into what I consider are the necessary remedies for the evils. First, I would like to say that the system of assessing for claims in the Old Country is exceedingly unsatisfactory. When a cargo of meat arrives Home, sold c.i.f., a claim is at once levied on that meat whether it is damaged or not. The men who are appointed to award the damages for the buyers may be the buyers themselves acting on their own behalf, or else men connected with the market ; and the insurance companies appoint assessors to act on their behalf. The vendor or insurance company usually receives no indication that there is a claim to be made on meat, although the policy so provides ; and it has often occurred that three or four months pass after

the claim has been awarded by the assessors before the insurance companies know that any claim is made or levied in respect to a cargo at all. For some months I found this state of affairs exceedingly unsatisfactory, and it was brought to a head in my case in connection with the portion of a cargo I received by the steamship "Ionic." I sold to a person 2,600 lambs by that ship, and nine weeks after the sale, and when the meat was all out of stores, I was notified that 2,000 of these lambs were awarded as damaged, and, of course, I had to pay that damage. My first step, however, was to inquire into the history of the voyage, and condition of meat on discharge. The "Ionic" was one of the vessels that usually brought meat cargoes to the Old Country in a remarkably sound condition. I discovered that the use#cc-zero meat left the ship's side subject only to a few trifling faults, and was received by the New Hibernian Wharf Cold-stores Company, up the Thames. I called upon these people to ascertain why 2,000 out of 2,600 lambs were so greatly damaged in the ten days they were in the freezing-stores. They were exceedingly indignant that I should cast any reflection on their stores; but, as I had seen the receipt that the ship obtained from the barge that the meat was then in good condition, save, as stated, a few trifling faults, I said that either the meat had been damaged in their works in ten days or else there was no damage there, and that it was an unjust award. I am inclined to think the latter was the case. My next step was to hunt up other shipments by the same vessel, to see how they had turned out, and I found after a time that the Colonial Consignment Company had obtained from the same ports in this colony that my meat came from and stored in the same holds 10,700 lambs. They took the meat further up the river, up to Blackfriars Bridge. The Colonial Consignment and Distributing Company's meat was not in quite so good condition as mine when it left the ship's side. Sir Montague Nelson and his capable manager, Mr. Keele, rendered me every assistance. Sir Montague's parcel sufficient to justify a claim. You can therefore readily understand that I ceased to employ the assessor who acted for me on that I next endeavoured to obtain an occasion. thoroughly capable assessor who would assert his rights, and not be browbeaten by the Smithfield demands. I am going to mention the name of this assessor, because there has been a newspaper correspondence in the colony in connection with it, a great part of it being sheer romance on Mr. Ismay's part. I told him he had to stand by what was a just award. The assessment was on a part of a cargo by the "Delphic." When he met the buyer they ran out 50 carcasses of a line of 1,104. Out of the 50 which was to be the basis of the assessment of the lot, the buyer declared that 27 of the 50 were damaged. My assessor could only discover 7 damaged. This caused the assessment to be broken off, as they could not come to terms, and I requested Mr. Ismay to report to me the conclusion he arrived at. This is his report :- "Having surveyed to-day at Hibernia Cold-stores 50 carcasses mutton ex 'Delphic,' marked 'A 51' (the same being part of a parcel of 1,104 carcasses), I have to report as follows : That 27 out of the 50 carcasses were put aside by Mr. - as having stained legs, but that I could not find more than one-fourth of the 27 to be so damaged, the apparent discoloration of the remainder being due to the manner of dressing, by which nearly every scrap of fat has been stripped off the legs and none left over the lean parts, which thus naturally look of a bluish tint. I affirm that, with the exception of about 7 carcasses which were slightly bruised on the legs, the said 27 carcasses are quite uninjured by transit or handling, the fault of unsightly legs being caused by the mode of dressing, as aforesaid. Mr. - claimed 4d. per stone on the proportion of 27 to 50 for the whole parcel of 1,104 carcasses. I regard this claim as absurd. I offered him 1d. per stone on the same proportion of carcasses, and I consider that this is a liberal offer, because the actual damage falling under the terms of the policy is very slight, being confined to about 7 carcasses in 50, instead of to 27 carcasses in 50. I have to report that Mr. - declined to accept my offer as above, and that the survey was then stopped." After a time he wished to call on the claimant, and I informed him that he must not give way if his assessment was correct. He, however, did call and give way, and eventually he allowed the amount of damage on twenty-seven sheep out of the fifty, and at double the rate which he had declared to be a liberal offer, which amounted on the parcel of 1,104 to 597

damaged sheep. That was what was done in that case. This led to a rather lengthy controversy. I demanded his reasons for having conceded damage to this enormous extent when he had previously declared that not more than seven out of the twenty-seven were damaged. His reply was that he thought by conceding this amount, which was less than what was demanded, he would probably make better terms

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than he could have made had it gone to arbitration. He said, - "I deemed it best to close the dispute by allowing them 2d. per stone, because the matter would otherwise have had to go to arbitration, and I believe that, as is usual in such cases, the arbitrator would have assessed the damage at a figure between those in dispute." He ought to have insisted on having an arbitrator appointed-as I had already told him such had to be done in event of a dispute-in order that the question should be properly and definitely settled. Now, Sir, it happened another assessment was made of the same lot. This was a second assessment by another insurance company who had an interest in the parcel. It is necessary, I suppose, to read all this because I wish it to go into Hansard, and, although reading out figures involves loss of valuable time, it is the only way to get it into Hansard. The table will show clearly the great discrepancy between the two assessments :- "Delphic," 15th September, 1898. Second Assessment. -- ExA- Sound. Damaged. mined. Per stone. 63 lambs CMC 396 2 at 3d. 10 8 .. NC 50 241 sheep 5 at 3d. 24 19 .. NC 54 3 at 3d. 175 17 14 68 lambs CMC 393 1 at 4d. 10 9 135 2 at 3d. 60 10 8 NCR 117 61 sheep 3 at 2d. 10 7 CMC 356 140 lambs 2 at 3d. 14 12 274 3 at 4d. 75 10 7 .. 300 sheep 26 4 at 3d. 390 30 NC 42 191 2 at 3d. 20 18 .. 110 BNC 51A 1,104 19 at 3d. 91 Ismay's Assessment. - Exa- Sound. Damaged. mine 1. Per stone. CMC 396 63 lambs 5 at 4d. 10 5 .. 12 NC 50 241 sheep 7 4 at 3d. .. 1 at 4d. 175 NC 54 17 .. 5 at 2d. 11 1 at 4d. 68 lambs CMC 393 10 5 at 4d. 5 135 60 .. NCR 117 4 at 2d. 61 sheep 10 6 .. CMC 356 140 lambs 9 5 at 3d. .. 14 274 75 Nil 10) 10 at 4d. 390 300 sheep 4 at 3d. 10 15 1 at 6d. NC 42 191 19 10 at 3d. 8 1 at 4d. BNC 51A 1,104 27 at 2d. 50 23 And so on through the list. And here are whole lines where the first assessor, Mr. Ismay, awarded all the sheep as damaged, whereas the second assessor, who had gone over the same parcel before the same buyer and claimant, found a large quantity of them to be sound. As an instance,- 274-75 Lambs. Second Assessor. Examined by Mr. Ismay. Sound. Damaged. Exd. Exd. Sound. , Damaged. Per stone. Per stone. 3 at 4d. Nil 10 10 10 at 4d. 7 Now, the total result of the two assessments on the two lots was as follows :- Sheep damaged. Second Assessment Mr. Ismay's Award. Award. 671 at 2d. per -tone. 406 at 3d. per stone. 30 at 4d. 310 at 3d. 406 at 4d. . 20 at 6d. - 1,407 436 So that out of a parcel of about 3,000 sheep, of which Mr. Ismay examined 199, he awarded damage on 1,407, the value of damage ranging up to 6d. per stone, whereas the second assessor of the 3,000 examined 265, and awarded only 436 damaged, the highest allowance being 4d. per stone. A careful study of the two assessments shows that Mr. Ismay, when he said that only 7 out of the 50 were damaged, when 27 were claimed, was very near what the second assessor arrived at-namely, he examined 110 of the 1,104 lot, and found 91 sound and 19 damaged ; thus 19 out of 110 is very close to " out of 50. Mr. Ismay has threatened to take an action for malicious slander against me for having referred to his work in connection with this large award. I may say that in the report that appeared in the papers of my statement it was made to appear that I had reflected upon him by implying that he had been bribed. That report was not correct. I said, "I do not say the man was bribed "; but in the report which appeared in the papers it went on to say, "I did not know whether the man was bribed or not." I say emphatically I do not believe Mr. Ismay was bribed, or could be bribed, nor that the buyer would use such means. What I do think was this : He was afraid that unless he gave a big award to the claimant, he would not get further employment. The whole system is infamous. Some of the buyers, if they do not get the assessors to approximate the amounts they claim, frequently object to having these assessors, and as these men are paid by the and not by a fixed salary, it is to their interest. of course, to

get as many assessments as possible. I say if he thinks fit to take action against me

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for slander he can do so on the facts I have sub- they again claimed for quality. I told the buyer mitted. Although it may not be possible at the I was quite content, after seeing his meat on speed I am going for you, Sir, to follow me, the the hooks, to give him a reasonable allowance facts as submitted go clearly to show that he for quality, but that I thought it was unneces- awarded enormous damages on sheep that were sary to go to the expense of employing asses- afterwards, by another assessor, judged not to sors, and paying them six, eight, or ten guineas, in damaged to much more than one-quarter the in order to ascertain whether the quality was extent that he awarded for, and at rates higher there or not. He said, " Under the purchase I than the second assessor awarded. I would have the right to call for assessment for quality, Muy, too, in this connection, that the state- and I shall exercise it." Well, he did exercise it ; but I said, "I will not have a man from ments I allude to, and to which . Mr. Ismay Smithfield to act for me in the matter of took exception, were made here at a private meeting before the underwriters of this town, assessing for quality," and I employed a man who requested that I would give them a from New Zealand who had a thorough know- full statement of the methods prevailing in the ledge of the trade. He went to arrange with Old Country. I said I was prepared to do the assessor acting for the other side to go down so if they would treat my communication and examine the parcel. But when the assessor as confidential, but that I was not prepared to from Smithfield met him he said, "You know give full particulars of business transactions if nothing of sheep, and unless you concede to me they were to be made public, because the ob- the demands I want I will not go down to the ject I had in view was not attack, but rather to cold-stores at all." He was exceedingly abusive. point out abuses ; and in giving illustrations, I My representative came back to me and said, merely mentioned the transactions in order to "It is quite impossible for me to meet that show that such things had actually taken man ; his conduct towards me was most arro- place, and not with the object of publishing gant." Then the employer of the assessor on names of companies or persons. But what did the other side came to me and said, " You can- these underwriters do? Although it was a not afford to fight Smithfield, nor this man acting as my assessor ; but I have got him to solemn pledge that they were not to give my communication to the Press, they actually agree that he will take any man you like to gave, without consultation with or consent send except the man you have selected." I from me, the whole report to the Press of this said, "That man goes, and no other"; and town, and it was published. The consequence after a considerable amount of difficulty a of that breach of agreement was a letter from meeting was arranged, and, as I thought that Mr. Ismay at Home threatening an action for it was not quite right for me to send my man slander. Sir, I say this in connection with the down to meet this ferocious Smithfield man, I underwriters of this town: Some of them are went with him to the cold-stores in order to be not men of that commercial rectitude regarding present at the assessment. The meat was brought promises one would expect. Then, the matter out of the Victoria Dock Stores : 10 per cent. to was taken up by an Insurance Gazette, and it be assessed for quality-and, mark you, on the same parcel of meat he had already received 30 was shown they were not in sympathy with the disclosure I had made. The insurance com- to 40 per cent. for damage. There was 10 per cent. of the carcasses run out, and the Smith- panies in this colony and at Home have never done their duty in connection with seeing that field man at once demanded, I think, 6d. per claims made on produce were bona fide claims. stone on most of the lot for not being up to They were content to continue to levy enormous quality. My man would not agree to that, and the Smithfield man, addressing me, said, " Do premiums on meat going Home, premiums ranging as high as \$3 10s. or £4 per £100, when you not think that is a reasonable amount? " the risk, if they had been true to their duty I referred to my assessor, and said, "He is at Home, could be covered for £1 5s. Of course, authorised to act for me, and I will abide by the whole of this unjust charge has to be borne his decision." He replied, "What are you by the farmers, who have all these incidental

here for ? " and I said, " I have been trying to charges deducted from the price they receive discover the 30 and 40 per cent. damage to these for their stock. If time admits, I will deal sheep you have already been allowed." He more fully with that aspect of the question a pointed out one or two mere abrasions on the meat and said, "What do you call that?" I little later on. As may be supposed, I ceased to employ Mr. Ismay, and employed the other said at once, "That was caused by sending them down a shoot, and if you had a spring assessor who had given the better, or rather the Ins. award. For a time claims were made for under the table instead of no spring at all that damage only, but about 1898 a system of would not have happened." He opened up and double-barrelled claims were set up. Not only said, "The man who declared this meat to be did they make a claim for insurance for damage up to quality ought to get three months." I on parcels of meat, but on the same parcels, said, "The scoundrel who has obtained the 30 to after receiving allowances for damage, they 40 per cent. damage on that meat ought to be in would claim for what they called " not up to gaol." I then took up the matter and said, " It has quility." I sold a considerable quantity to a been a system of rascality, and the claims which firm in London from a ship called the " Rakaia." have been made have been most unjust. I in- They claimed in the ordinary way for damage, tend to have the whole of this line of meat out and they were awarded damage of from 30 to of the store to see if the meat is damaged as 40 per cent., and on the same parcel of meat represented." He said the meat would not be

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allowed out, as I had sold it. I then got the manager of these works and he agreed to do it, but in view of the representation of the other side he afterwards declined. I then said, " As manager of the insurance company that has to pay the damage I claim to have it out." After a considerable discussion I at last succeeded, but not until I had said that in my analysis some time previously of the results of storing meat in the different cool stores in London I had shown the Victoria Docks to come out well, and Damage when Consignment went into One Store only. Date of Ship. Cold-store. Arrival. 1897. New Hibernia Tongariro May 31 Duke of Sutherland June 11 Ruahine June 12 .. West India .. June 30 Mamari June 10 Nairnshire . New Hibernia Waikato Aug. 7 Damage when One Ship's Consignment sent to One or more Stores. Date of Ship. Cold-store. Arrival. New Hibernia May 10 .. Aotea Victoria Dock May 24 .. New Hibernia Tekoa .. Victoria Dock May 1 .. New Hibernia Maori .. Victoria Dock Rangatira New Hibernia June 21 .. Victoria Dock June 28 Rimutaka New Hibernia .. West India July 15 .. New Hibernia Mataura .. Viotoria Dock * Average of 2s. 4d. per stone, all-round price for sheep and lambs. Consignments where no Damage occurred. 1897. May 12 Gothic .. Banffshire August 27 Damage was surveyed before going into Store. Date of Arrival. Ship. 1897. Ionic* August 5 .. . On eight carcasses damaged in over 1,000 carcasses. I would like to say before leaving this table that it is my opinion that the stores themselves were not responsible altogether-that I believe awards were made for damage to these cargoes when to a large extent they were not damaged at that if he refused to permit that meat to come out I would consider he was in league with the man, and he knew the meat was sound ; and I asked if he would allow it to come out to see if it was damaged or not. I will now quote a re- turn. as I want to hansardise something showing the results of different shipments that passed through various cool-stores. It is a table showing the damage in the case of a certain ship- ment that went into one or more stores :- Percentage Percentage paid Equivalent to of Sheep for Damage. per Pound .. damaged. 47.12 (about) 3d. 11.58 62.61 14.63 4d. 44.32 8.52 5-16d. 7.00 ■d. 45.14 40.00 9.84 jd. Not yet complete. 36.11 Percentage Percentage Percentage Equivalent to of Sheep paid for sent to each per Pound." damaged. Damage. Store. 30.92 7.17 21.85 Nil Nil. 41.85 7.25 90.00 Nil Nil. 10.00 7.97 40.37 81.00 Nil Nil. 19.00 70.51 75.63 10.78 Nil Nil. 24.37 . 16.81 84.41 80.00 . . - @d. 15.59 40.28 19.86 . 15.51 46-23 42.9 jd. .. Nil. 57.1 Nil .. Victoria Dock Stores. Percentage of Percentage paid Equivalent to Damage. for Damage. ½d. per pound. 0.59 7.69 . . all, and that the damage claims on meat are \- frequently contingent rather on the purchaser of the

meat than upon the store into which it goes, owing to the wretched system of adjustment and the demands that may be made.

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Referring back to this question of getting the the whole of the damage, except £2, that he had "Rakaia " meat out of the Victoria Dock store to awarded against my insurance company. I will see whether the damage was done as awarded : now read some of the correspondence in that connection. After I discovered that the damage after some hours' delay we succeeded in getting it out. But the meat was not in the store. was not there, I wrote, - There was only a small portion of it there ; the rest had to be brought from another place. The ' Rakaia,' amounting to over 30 per cent., I 10 per cent. on which the assessment had been went down and examined the meat, and there made was worse than the other. No doubt they was, to my mind, no justification for large per- had been specially selected, not as being a fair centage attributed." sample of the whole, but rather that portion which had been most damaged. Instead of the that the assessor he had employed had blundered. total damage being on the whole of that meat but he asked me to treat this as private and confidential. I replied that I declined to do so, that had been awarded, there was not two stating that had he discovered to me the im- pounds' worth of damage on the whole lot. I will deal with the question of the \$2 damage proprieties of his assistant that would have been another thing, but as I had discovered that. and the claims presently. But I would like to he had been awarded excessive damage where say, in connection with the 10 per cent. assess- ment on the lot, that that is a most improper only trifling damage existed I could not treat the matter as confidential. Then came this way of assessing damage, for you have no statement of what had been done by his em- guarantee that the 10 per cent. is a fair sample of the whole lot. Just about that time this ploye, whose engagement in the meantime he had determined :- New-Zealander that I employed was instructed not to confine himself to 10-per-cent. lots, Mr. -- yesterday, the mark (of which you ex- but to get 20 or 30 per cent. In one lot of ained twenty-six quarters) shows eleven sound 2.500 carcasses that he was sent down to assess there were only 105 carcasses in the store and fifteen damaged-equivalent to about 60 per altogether. All the rest had been distributed. cent. I was surprised at the heavy percentage, and therefore surveyed the meat again to-day A few days afterwards he went down to assess on another lot of 4,500, and only 45 were in your presence, when I was unable to find any found to be left in the store. Under the old damage. You can fully appreciate that there is happy style of doing things that 105 and 45 an enormous difference between nil and 60 per would have been the basis upon which the cent., and, in giving the allowance you have, I must admit that I have no confidence what- whole was assessed, and probably they were the most inferior of the whole; but still the ever in your judgment." damage would have been awarded against the lot. Allowances were therefore made on the amount of all the awards he had made against 45 and 105 only. Now, as we wanted to have my company, to which he replied :- a guarantee from the proprietors of these cold- think there is any reason to doubt the work stores that the whole bulk of the meat was there of which a portion was to be assessed, the my representative has previously done for your following form drawn out :- company, seeing that the figures, as a rule, were not high, and it must be borne in mind "Storage Certificate, No. . that several steamers arrived with considerable , 1899. " London, damage throughout. I can only again express "I hereby certify that the under-mentioned my deep regret that it should have been neces- quantity of the following frozen produce is now sary for you to write me questioning the allow- in store :-- ances, but there evidently seems ground for your complaint. You may be doubtless aware Steamer. Original Quantity. Now in Store. Mark. that Mr. -- , who acted on my behalf, is a practical butcher, and has been connected with the frozen trade for several years, and under these circumstances I cannot feel that I was unwarranted in employing him. However, in future, as already advised, I will do the work personally." They refused to sign this. That would indicate their practice when we entered on the matter. Now, as to the assessor who refused to

meet my wish to emphasize what I said to your repre- New Zealand friend. He left in the middle tentative when he called last week on me in of the delivery of meat ; and I would like to this connection - namely, that you cannot say here that a claim was allowed in connection permit the case to rest where it is. According with that meat. It was not up to the standard to your letter a fraudulent assessment has been grade, but I will deal with the question of made by your representative. You have dis- grading presently. The immediate effect, how- covered that your employé had declared that ever, of this dispute was that I insisted on damage existed on 60 per cent. of a line of meat, having a man outside Smithfield to assess for and had granted that amount against the in- me, and that the assessor who had acted for me surance association for whom you acted ; that for damage should pay out of his own pocket you, in company with your employé who " On receipt of your assessment for meat ex He then replied, saying that he had discovered " Referring to the survey at -- , held with I then claimed from this man the total "I am obliged for your memo. I do not . I replied :- "Re 'Rakaia' meat wrongly assessed: I

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granted the damage, examined the parcel in the presence of each other, and could discover no damage whatever ; that you afterwards sold the meat as undamaged at the full market price for sound meat, and your buyer is satisfied that the meat was sound. If a person guilty of such action is permitted to escape, then all I can say is the sooner those interested in the handling of our frozen meat abandons the pre- sent system the better." He replied, declining to pay the amount, and said :- " Your favour of yesterday's date is duly to hand, and I note what you say about the ' Rakaia ' damages survey. It is possible that the allowances granted by my representative were greater than should have been ; but at the same time there is nothing to prove that he exceeded his duty, and therefore I cannot see that I should be expected to pay a loss which, I take it, you only surmise. As regards the sur- veys at which you were present, I have always been given to understand that you were quite satisfied with the settlements. It is now impossible for me to take any proceedings against Mr. - , as when this matter was settled it was agreed that no further action should be taken by either party." On the 25th December this letter was sent :- " I am duly in receipt of yours. Crystallizing the first portion of your letter, you in effect say that my estimate of damage ex 'Rakaia' is merely surmise, and repudiating responsibility. If my estimate is only surmise, what can be said in favour on the estimates of damage you arrive at ? I examined every carcase that formed the basis of your representative's assessment; and, in addition to that, I had out-in the face of great opposition-every sheep in the parcel, which is a very different thing from an assess- ment on a little lot, which lot may or may not be a fair representation of the bulk at all. Indeed, in the case under consideration, the small lot your representative assessed from were not with the bulk at all, and were not in such good condition as the bulk parcel which I in- sisted on having out; but even on the 10-per- cent. which he inspected there was no justification for the large proportion of 30 to 35 per cent. he set down as damaged. I may say that as soon as I examined the sheep, and discovered the excessive assessment, I reported the fact to you, to which you replied offering to pay any excess, and describing your own un- fortunate experience with your assessor in the case of beef. Had you doubted my judgment . you should have gone down to the docks while the parcel was still in the stores-as you did in the other case-and so learn for yourself which statement was correct, your servant's or my own. This you did not do; and now, I sup- pose, it cannot be done, as the sheep will pro- bably be distributed. Personally, I cannot allow the matter to remain as you purpose leaving it. I therefore intend to place the case before my solicitors for advice. Of course, what is of most importance is whether a system is to continue which permits such practices to occur -a system under which thousands of pounds sterling are annually paid away on 'faked' damaged claims on meat which is really sound, and which is afterwards sold to retailers and to the public as sound, and at sound-value prices. I am aware that some insurance associations are content to permit things to continue as they are. They are satisfied with what they are making out of the shippers, and they

do not hesitate to say that if present rates do not pay claims they will increase rates until they do. The reform I wish to see effected is a reasonable adjustment of claims based on honest lines, so that insurance rates may be reduced to the New Zealand farmers and shippers, and protection given to honest traders here. Alluding again to the facts of the case under consideration, I can only say that if your assessor is the duly qualified man you say he is in your letter, and that if he awarded 60 per cent. of damage on meat-as you say he did-where no damage was found to exist when the meat was examined by you and your representative, and if you-as you did-afterwards sold the meat as sound, at full market-price for sound meat, then I say, most emphatically, that a much stronger term than the word 'blunder' must be applied to the transaction ; and it appears to me to be a most singular and irregular thing for you, when determining your assistant's appointment, to have become a party to a proceeding which would preclude you from following up the case by the only honourable course open under the circumstances, and the course people expect you to take whose interests you profess to protect." I then received a cheque from him for the amount. He was unable, he said, to proceed further with his late employé, because he had employed four or five men to examine the meat in dispute, and they declared that it was damaged, and his late employé was contemplating a cross-action. The effect of that encounter was practically to materially stop the claims for many months. The following week claims that had been made on Mr. Galloway, the Christchurch Meat Company's representative, were abandoned. The total claim made upon my company on my sales for the succeeding five months was £1 13s. 1d., and from other outside companies £18; whereas the claims I had paid to one Smithfield company alone during the previous four or five months had been as high as \$885. Now, Sir, I want to come to the question of grading of meat. Last year, when the Bill was introduced by the Minister of Lands dealing with the grading of meat, I joined in the discussion, and I pointed out that, owing to faulty grading in the past, the whole of the output from one provincial district had been much depreciated, because care was not taken to see that the grading was what it ought to have been. Notably was that the case in Otago, where I venture to say that some of the very best meat in the world is reared ; and yet we know that the bulk of our sheep now goes to Canterbury, and is shipped Home as Canterbury meat; whereas Otago ought to have got the credit of the excellent quality of our export, and not Canterbury.

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An Hon. MEMBER .- Yes; and the meat goes your mode of writing that I had not gone into from Southland to Canterbury also. this question of faulty grading outside of Par- Mr. T. MACKENZIE. - That is so, as the liament as well as inside; but such is not the member for Wallace states; and the South is case. Upon one occasion one, if not two, of being deprived of its reputation as a producer of your directors were present at a meeting, and first-class meat through the best sheep all being they were not aware until I then enlightened sent from New Zealand through Canterbury. them that you were in the habit of slumping I pointed out last session the experience lots of up to a thousand sheep of various 9.30. of the farmer who divided his sheep, weights." sending half to Oamaru Works and the other half to Timaru, both of equal quality. Yet book that I am unable to give the concluding because the Oamaru lot bore the Otago mark I portion. He acknowledged the receipt of that, could not obtain as good a price as that obtained and says,- for the Timaru parcel, though of equal quality. I then instanced the case of the Christchurch while they appreciate your efforts towards freezing companies. I stated there were the getting an opportunity of making a further P. Ifast Works there, and there were the statement in the House of Representatives, Christchurch Meat-freezing Works, and because they are of opinion that any further statement of the superior grading that prevailed in the you wish to make should be made in some Christchurch Meat - freezing Works higher place where we can have an opportunity of prices were obtained for their primest meat. either defending ourselves or of putting you to I alluded to c.i.f. sales of the Eclipse brand, the proof of your statements." it being their best. Exception was taken to that statement by the manager of the

Belfast give him ample proof of my statement that the Works, Mr. Waymouth. He wrote to me as prime of grading of the Belfast Works is not con- sidered in London as good as the grading of the "I was away in Australia when the debate best meat from the other company in Christ- ! on the Slaughtering and Inspection Bill took church, and, consequently, the c.i.f. price of place. and it was not until this week that my Eclipse is higher than the c.i.f. price of prime of Belfast, and that his slumping of large parcels attention was called to some statements made by you in the debate on that Bill, which I find depreciates the Belfast reputation. I may fur- in Han-ari No. 15, page 572. You must at ther say that I have frequently dealt with the subject outside Parliament ; but, even if I had once see that the statements contained in the paragraph on page 572, which begins, ' Well, not done so, I consider that Parliament is the he freezes his meat, no doubt, in Canter- place for a member of this House to make state- bury,' are a reflection on this company, and ments, if he thinks that by making these state- I shall be pleased, such being the case, if you ments he is going to improve the condition of will supply us with the data upon which you the produce trade of this country, and thereby base these statements." bring better results to our farmers and further I replied to that as follows :- establish our reputation abroad. When this is "I am duly in receipt of yours of 30th the object, and there is no desire to injure a August, and, in reply, have to state that upon company, but rather to induce an improvement, the first opportunity occurring I will supply I say Parliament is the place to make the state- the data upon which I based the statement ment, and Parliament is the place to make the defence. Now, I will refer, first of all, to the you allude to." He again wrote, asking me to give the data as question of the price of meat. I find, on pick- ing up several copies of the Australasian Pas- soon as possible. I replied to that that an toralists' Review, the various prices stated. opportunity had not arisen while I was present in Parliament enabling me to make the state- In June, 1900, I find it alludes to the quality of ment of data necessary, although I had tried to the Eclipse meat being ad. per pound higher bring the matter into discussion. The Speaker than the Belfast brand. The quotation is :- was, however, unable to permit it. In reply to that he said :- of New Zealand mutton. " Referring to your letter wherein you C.M. Company and Belfast, 3%d. to 3gd. per promise to supply 'data upon first opportunity pound c.i.f. These are for April and May ship- occurring,' and to my letter, to which I am still ments." without reply . You must be aware that . your statements, as printed in Hansard, are a is made to the best brands of Eclipse mutton. serious reflection on this company's mode of Then we have the report of Weddell and Co., conducting its business. Are we to conclude and I may say that these copies I am quoting that your failing to give us the promised data from are the only ones I have looked up. I means that you have none, and that you have dare say that if I hunted up other papers I uttered your libel in a place where honourable would see that the standard value of Eclipse members are shielded from the consequences of mutton ranks highest. This is the reference their libellous utterances by certain parlia- Weddell makes to the Eclipse brand : " Eclipse mentary privileges ?" brand, 31d. to 4d. per pound ; for ordinary I replied to him :- Canterbury, 32d. to 33d." Again, in the May " Your favour is before me, and I note what number, this year, which is the only one I have your directors wish. One would conclude from looked at since I have been back, it refers inci- This letter was so badly copied in my letter- " My directors wish me to say in reply, that, I can assure this Mr. Waymouth that I can " Forward business is brisk in all descriptions Eclipse, 3&sd. to 4d. ; Again, on the 15th December, 1899, reference

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dently to faulty grading that has occurred in | connection with the Wellington Meat Com- pany :-

"Trouble has arisen over a parcel of Welling- ton sheep. Messrs. Gordon, Woodroffe, and Co. report : 'Considerable trouble has arisen in con- nection with a shipment of 5,700 sheep er s.s. ' Delphic,' frozen at Wellington. The parcel was sold c.i.f., and described as of the favourite . W.M.E. Co.' brand, but the buyer refused the delivery, as not only were the sheep not of the brand specified in the contract, but were much inferior to 'W.M.E. Co.' in quality. Legal opinion went against the seller, and eventually the matter

was compromised. The .W.M.E. Co.' brand ranks first from the North Island, in the same way that Eclipse does from Canterbury, and sheep should not be sold as . W.M.E. Co.' unless they bear the brand." Now, I think I have shown from authentic reports in recognised market and pastoral papers that the prices and reputation of the Eclipse brand of meat are really higher than the prices of the best Belfast, and in addition to that there is my own experience of these facts. Now let me say that that difference has purely arisen because the grading is more reliable in the Eclipse work. Very frequently the same quality of meat exactly is sold from the Belfast works c.i.f., but does not bring as high a value, because the reputation of the brand of these works is not so high. The C.M. Company's brand and " Belfast prime " more nearly approximate. It is only after the meat is opened out that equal quality at times is found in Belfast lines. I will tell you now what I think occurs in the Belfast Works regarding grading. First, however, I will quote a letter from Mr. Inglis, who is the representative at Home of the New Zealand Farmers' Co-operative Association, and he has recently had cause to complain very seriously about the lack of grading from Mr. Waymouth's company's works. He says :- " It will probably be news to the bulk of the freezing clients of the Belfast and Fairfield freezing-works that those companies are singular, among the sixteen other freezing companies of New Zealand, in shipping a large portion of the sheep and lambs frozen by them without grading. "The particular grade used does not matter very much, but it is difficult to see why the Christchurch Meat Company should grade lambs 28 lb. to 36 lb., 36 lb. to 44 lb., and 44 lb. to 50 lb. ; the New Zealand Refrigerating Company 30 lb. to 36 lb., 36 lb. to 42 lb., and 42 lb. to 50 lb. ; while the Belfast and Fairfield only make one grade when they do grade, of 32 lb. to 42 lb. "The fact that all the other freezing companies in New Zealand grade all their meat invariably would tend to show that there must be some reason, and some good reason, why it should be done. " The price realised for meat probably suffers through the lack of grading, because if some butchers and salesmen will not buy meat which is not graded, and this is the case, competition in grading to weight ; on a line of lambs he had is lessened, and lessened competition generally means lower prices. One or two instances will show the effect of non-grading. " In one line of lambs frozen at Belfast which purported to average 38 lb., several lambs (n) weighed 58 lb. The buyer, a butcher, buying 38lb. average, naturally expected that the lambs would vary up to, say, 41lb. on either side of that weight. The result was that he said when Belfast meat was graded like others he would buy it, and not before. " In a line of 305 carcasses mutton frozen at Fairfield, which I sold on an average of 60 lb .. no less than fifty carcasses were found to go as high as 76 lb. to 80 lb. A weight of this sort on an average of 60 lb. is too absurd, and is enough to spoil business, more particularly when it is remembered that 48lb. to 64 lb. sheep are worth probably 2d. per stone more than weights over that range. " It is to be hoped that the Belfast Company will see their way to change their system as soon as possible." This matter of grading was taken up by the Pastoralists' Review of 15th February, 1901. and this is what is said in that journal by its London representative, who is a most capable man. regarding the eccentricities of grading at Belfast :- ## " Belfast Grading. " Mr. Inglis's letter to the Christchurch Press has been canvassed here, as grading cuts at the root of the New Zealand mutton trade. Your correspondent at that place seems to take it as a matter of course that Canterbury men and methods must be perfect. Mr. Inglis's statements were moderately put, and could only be refuted by proving that the figures he gave were wrong, and that Mr. Waymouth in his reply did not attempt to do. Mr. Inglis has been here long enough to know about London's trade wants. His (Mr. Waymouth's) remarks were uncalled-for and were most unreasonable. If the object of the New-Zealand-meat people is to get the best possible price for their article. why. when a point like this is reasonably raised, can- not they consider it on its merits? I suppose Mr. Inglis and Mr. Waymouth, here and there. are working towards a common end. What Mr. Inglis complains about is that a good proportion of Belfast mutton is sent out not graded to weight at all, simply shipped as averaging a certain weight, which allows of such ups and downs as 45 to 75 and 85 in a parcel averaging 60 lb. Mr. Inglis did not say

that none of the meat was graded to weight ; his contention is that all the mutton should be graded. as the other company grades its meat. Grading to weight is such an enormous facility to the sale of mutton that no wonder the subject has been raised. It seems a pity that Canterbury mutton. the very best that comes to this country, should not have the very best arrangements made to commend it to buyers. I spoke to a salesman. on the subject. He said that he was constantly in the habit of declining to buy Belfast and Fairfield mutton on account of the absence of

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people at Home, and the reputation of the lately. averaging 38lb., several went to 58lb. ; and in 305 sheep from the same quarter, average colony, should not suffer. Because, let me say 60 lb., which he handled, fifty went as say here, there is a special class to whom high as 76 lb. to 80 lb." this colony's meat is well suited-the great In a subsequent issue the same paper has the middle class of the people of Great Britain. The consumers in the Old Country may be following :- "On page 825 of the February Review the divided into three classes. There is first of all printer makes me say, with regard to Mr. C. H. the upper class, who can afford to buy at any Inglis's letter re grading, that 'his remarks are price that may be sought for meat ; and then uncalled-for and unreasonable.' I desire em- there are the lower classes, that have to be con- phatically to repudiate such an expression of tent with Argentine and other inferior meats ; opinion. I think just the opposite. [We greatly and between there is the great middle class, regret that such a misreading should have and that is the class we should strive to keep as occurred.]" our customers, because the excellent quality of Now, I will not say that the Belfast people do our meat now satisfies them ; and if our meat not always grade ; they do grade very frequently, is allowed to deteriorate until it approximates and grade very well, but not nearly so well as in quality to the Argentine it will come down the other company do their finer lines, nor by in public favour, and consequently in price, so close weights. What they do is this, I pre- and it will be impossible to secure that trade sume : A farmer may have a parcel of 1,000 sheep and raise it again to the level which is necessary ranging from 45 lb. to 80lb. in weight, and he to make farming pay in this country. You may take them to the Belfast works and have must remember that you are competing in your agricultural products with countries that have the whole lot frozen in one lot and sent Home, facilities which you cannot approach. My and vet the shipping papers that accompany the honourable friend here, the member for Wai- shipment give no information that the weight ranges from 45 lb. to 80 lb. ; they only give the taki, told you, in regard to cereals, that the total weight - say, 1,000 sheep. 60,000 lb., Argentine would cut us out in wheat. We equal to 60 lb. per sheep-from which you get must therefore do our utmost to retain our the average, and it may work out at a 60 lb. mutton trade by careful grading and high average. Now, 60lb. is the favourite weight, and quality, thus commanding the best class of patronage, which you make exclusively your if you go to a buyer with 1,000 carcasses of an own ; and, in order that that may be done, it average weight of 60 lb. he will pay you the 6 lb. average value ; but when he finds that he is essential that a system of high grading and classifying should be carried out. I now wish has light sheep at 45lb., and heavy sheep at to deal a little more fully with Mr. Waymouth. Solb .- weights frequently quite unsuitable to his class of trade-he is greatly annoyed, and I have a slight grievance against this particular consequently when you go back to him with gentleman : I consider he has been too un. another line from the same works he will not necessarily offensive in his reflections for me give you the same price he formerly did, because to spare him or his methods. Some time ago he went to London, presumably to put the & parcel of 60 lb. sheep always commands a higher price. This has occurred to me when meat trade on the most satisfactory footing, selling Belfast meat. It has a most pernicious and arranged consignment shipments to a Smithfield firm ; "and thereby hangs a tale." effect. It may be urged that, if all the meat is exposed for sale on the hooks at Smithfield The season of 1898 offered splendid prospects it does not signify; but this is not always for our New Zealand lamb. The previous season had seen all the lambs cleared out, and

possible. A great deal has to be sold c.i.f. or after arrival in cold-store, and it has to be sold on everything was favourable, and there were prospects of good prices being steadily maintained a certificate from the colony; the meat is not through increased demand, by reason of the season, and if your grading is not of the highest class, and constantly reliable, then as a consequence wider knowledge obtained by consumers of the excellent quality of our lamb. This improved sequence your brand must suffer. I know reputation was largely brought about by the people who have instructed some of the freezing-works to grade carefully receiving less series of dinners which were arranged in London than those who sent carelessly graded meat; and, at which good representative people and because that carelessly graded meat, if it journalists were present, who made the fact happened to average out at 60 lb., might get a widely known in hundreds of high-class newspapers. Colh. price, on the assumption that the sheep papers that the quality of our meat was so excellent would be from 55 lb. to 65 lb., but not above or so excellent that it could not be distinguished from below these ranges; while the man who took the very best British. The consequence was out his "unders" and "overs" had to accept that there were prospects of a largely increased demand at steady rates; and, although But the slumping of weights from 45 lb. to the arrivals in March had been considerable - 80 lb. finally brings down the price on c.i.f. sales, ably greater in number, yet the lambs were because buyers are not sure what they may lighter in weight by 41 lb. or 51 lb. Advices sometimes be receiving. Therefore, with a view from New Zealand showed that March, April, to obviate these inequalities, I emphasize the and May shipments would be light, yet, in the necessity for the Government of the country, face of this, values began to go down at a rate if the freezing companies do not grade properly altogether inexplicable and unjustifiable. We properly, doing it themselves, in order that the who were interested in the trade met in the Old

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Country, and endeavoured to maintain a price that was reasonable, which we had first settled upon - namely, 3s. 2d. per stone of 8 lb., and the price paid up to June of 1897, when the market was not so promising and could not be maintained. And how was that brought about? It was attributed by many to consignments of meat from the Belfast Factory, held by certain tradesmen in the Smithfield Market. That reduction went on until the price for lamb fell from 3s. 8d. per 8 lb., early in March, down to 2s. 7d. and 2s. 8d. in May, when the price came down to that point. The firms selling the consigned lines from the Belfast Works operated largely on the market, buying extensively, and then they hardened prices; other vendors were only too glad to follow suit. The market steadily advanced from May until well into October, when the price then reached 3s. 6d. and 3s. 8d. per stone - a price which might have been maintained throughout the season. And the profit made after the slump doubtless enabled the firm to buy a magnificent estate in Scotland. I wrote out to my directors in Canterbury, indicating the reason of this slump; but in Canterbury itself Mr. Waymouth told the people that an attempt had been made to increase the price of lamb in the London market. He was against the combination - probably for reasons of his own - and he said :- "Let me tell them what was the result of the effort which was made in London as to the fixing of the price of lamb. A gentleman who was concerned had a number of Australian lambs on hand which he was able to unload (sell), whilst the Canterbury lambs did not go off. Then there was another meeting, and the idea of trying to fix the price of lamb failed." This speech was made at a meeting held in Christchurch for the purpose of concentrating meat in fewer hands, and also to appoint an advisory committee in London, in order to regulate the meat trade and prices at which the meat was being sold. A report also appears in the Lyttelton Times, in which Mr. Waymouth stated :- "The combination in London was made to keep Canterbury lamb off the market for a time, and then raise it a pound. One agent had Australian lamb to sell at the time, and the result was an increase in the price of Australian lamb. His company was very averse to any attempt at regulation of prices." We did not hold that meeting for the purpose of increasing the price, or keeping Canterbury lamb off the

market. That statement is absolutely incorrect. We did it to save it from coming down. Lamb had been sold at 7d. per pound, and it had fallen to 6d., and then to 5d., and it was getting lower, and we endeavoured to maintain a price that was low and reasonable—namely, 4½d. per pound—a price that might easily be maintained for the whole season. The meetings did some good in checking the "rot" that had set in. I will give the position of the market at the time, and compare it with previous years and prices up to that time:—Imports, January to March. 1896. 1808. 1883. 1497. New Zealand lambs 120,000 93,000 29,000 Australian 12,000 46,100 74,000 34,000 Totals 142,000 139,000 163,000 253,000 New Zealand average 51d. 5d. ½ prices 58.4. 'Included prices for a large quantity of old stocks. Imports for April only. 1895. 1696. 1807. 1898. 121,000 171,000 New Zealand lambs 174,000 139,000 Australian 9,000 2,000 Nil 5,000 Totals 180,000 176,000 139,000 126,000 New Zealand average 5d. 5½d. 5d. prices ? ... 'Estimated, and excluding 40,000 by "Aotea" and "Indraghiri," not due before end of month. Total Imports, January to April. 1895. 1896. New Zealand lambs 241,000 264,000 203,000 35,000 Australia 27,000 55,000 76,000 34,000 390,000 Totals 268,000 319,000 391,000 ... Increase, compared with previous years 73 p.c. 19 p.c. 6 p.c. 15 p.c. The increase of 130,000 lambs from New Zealand during January to March, 1898, as compared with the same months in 1897, is to a certain extent counterbalanced by the decrease of 40,000 in the arrivals of Australian lambs. By the end of April, 1898, the increase in New Zealand arrivals, as compared with 1897, will, apparently, be no more than 95,000, and the decrease in Australians will have become 42,000. Taking Australian and New Zealand lambs together, therefore, the increase in arrivals at the end of April will not be more than, say, 52,000 carcasses, or 15 per cent. The lambs from New Zealand this year were probably, on an average, 5 lb. per carcass lighter than last year, equivalent to a reduction of 124 per cent. in the weight available for sale. I have in my hand a diagram which shows that, instead of the quantity of lamb from Australia having increased and a better price being obtained for Australian lamb after our meetings in March and April, the price of Australian lamb went down rapidly from 3s. 4d. per stone in the month of February to 2s. 9d. and 2s. 8d. in the months of March and April, and to 2s. 6d. in May and June, whilst New Zealand was always higher during that time. It is therefore incorrect to imply that our meeting was for the purpose of holding Canterbury lamb and increasing the price, and that that policy enabled Australian holders to clear out theirs at a higher rate. I am exceedingly sorry, Sir, that my time is so limited. I have been quite unable to do justice to the subject at the rate I have had to rush and in the time allotted to me. I would like to have gone into the questions of shipping and marketing, et cetera. As I have said before, the grading should be insisted on by the Government if works will not do it properly themselves. The whole of our meats sold c.i.f. should be subject to an insurance policy containing a provision that, in the event of any dispute arising regarding claims for damage, one arbitrator, who shall be appointed by the New Zealand Government at a permanent salary, shall

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decide the matter, and that there shall be no London arbitration for quality claims. The meat to be sold on the New Zealand certificate. Of course, it is urged, on the other hand, that if you insist on conditions of this nature it will stop the purchase of our goods. Such is not the case. Our meat has become a necessity in the homes of millions of people, and if the men in the trade there will not buy our meat, subject to the provisions suggested, there are hundreds of others who will do so and who will be only too glad to obtain the trade, and who will make it profitable. Mr. MASSEY (Franklin).—Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is necessary for me to refer to the exceedingly interesting, instructive, and valuable speech that we have just heard from the member for Waihemo, because it was not of a debatable character; but it is none the less useful on that account. The Minister for Railways, however, with other honourable members who have spoken on that side of the House, seem to imagine that the members on the Opposition benches intend to remain quiet and silent. If so, they are very much mistaken. We intend to exercise our right of

criticizing the policy, doings, and proposals of the Government to the fullest and freest extent whenever we think it desirable so to do. But we decline to take part in the wretchedly useless and wearisome discussions such as took place this afternoon and yesterday, and which were apparently intended for the purpose of keeping the galleries for the Premier and the Minister for Railways ; and I think it will be found later on that each member will do his duty in his own way, and in a way that will be satisfactory to his own constituents and to the country. Sir, referring to the speech of the Minister for Railways, I do not think it is necessary for me to deal with it at any length, because nearly the whole of his time was occupied in apologizing his department in connection with the recent importations of rolling-stock from America and England. I want to congratulate the Minister for Railways on his speech -- it was a good speech from his point of view-probably the best that we ever heard from him ; but all the same I do not know that he improved his case. except in promising that he would manage better for the future, because he admitted our contentions. He admitted the ability of the people of the colony to manufacture the rolling-stock-the engines, carriages, and wagons-required on our railways. He admitted that the colonial workmanship was quite equal, if not superior, to the workmanship of other countries, and he admits the cost is less. Now, Sir, it has always seemed to me a peculiarly unsatisfactory state of affairs that we should be borrowing money in England for the purpose of paying for rolling-stock manufactured in America, and afterwards to be used on the lines of this colony. We have had it admitted even by the Minister for Railways, and we know it for ourselves, because we have all travelled in good comfortable easy - running carriages manufactured in the railway workshops of the colony. We have been told by experts that the timbers of the colony are some of the best in the world for coachbuilding purposes ; consequently, I was pleased to hear from the Minister that importation is going to cease, and that a strong effort will be made in the future to keep the money in the colony, to give employment to our own people ; and, perhaps most important of all, it would follow, I presume, that it would give our young people an opportunity of learning the different trades. I want to say-and as an Opposition member I can criticize the doings of the Government freely- that I do not think the Government encourage the local industries of the colony in the way that they ought to be encouraged. We find at the present time large quantities of timber are being imported from Australia for public works purposes, and thousands of railway-sleepers are being landed here from Western Australia. Mr. GUINNESS .- No; that is stopped. Mr. MASSEY .- The member for the Grey may say that it is stopped, but it was only a few days ago that I saw huge heaps of railway-sleepers being put into the trucks at Auckland, and I was informed that it was a shipment of ten thousand from Western Australia. Mr. GUINNESS .-- I have the Premier's assurance that the Cabinet has stopped it. Mr. MASSEY .- I would believe my own eyes rather than the Premier's assurance, and I can assure you that I saw the sleepers being landed from Western Australia only a few days ago. Sir J. G. WARD .- It is quite correct that for the curves on the New Zealand railways hardwood sleepers have to be obtained, and it must always be so. Mr. MASSEY .- Even in the case of saddlery for the equipment of the Contingents sent to South Africa much of it was imported. So far as timber for bridges, piles, and railway-sleepers are concerned, I am satisfied that we have still a sufficient supply in the colony for our own requirements; and I am strongly of opinion that the money will be very much better expended amongst our own hard-working and deserving settlers than by being sent to Western Australia, to a country which imposes high rates of duty on almost every article of our produce. The subject of the railways of our colony is always a subject of interest, not only in this House but to the public outside, and for many reasons. We have spent, from time to time, large sums in constructing our railways, and we are continually being told of the enormous concessions that have been made to the people who use the railways for the carriage of goods and produce, and to the travelling public. Last year the concessions, we were told, amounted to \$70,000 per annum ; and I noticed that one member, addressing his constituents, told them that the concessions to the farmers amounted to the enormous sum of \$400,000 per annum ;

but, Sir, while I admit that great concessions were made last year to many classes in the community, to tourists, business - men, sporting - men, news- paper-men, and working-men living in or near the larger centres of population, what I com- plain of is that little or nothing has been done for the country settlers, the most important

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class of all our people. Of course, it will be | said that they get the benefit of the reduction in fares. Probably they do, but it is to be re- membered that the reduction took place mostly in connection with single fares. There was little or no reduction in return fares, and, as country settlers generally require to take out return tickets, the reductions made are of very little benefit to them. Sir, what the country settlers want is that their produce should be carried at the lowest possible rate consistent with a fair rate of interest being paid on the cost of the railways. One thing wanted is an arrangement by which it will be possible for settlers who have different varie- ties of produce to dispose of to hire a wagon, and be charged for the wagon, instead of under the numerous headings connected with the present system, so long, of course, as a certain weight, which should be specified, is not exceeded. Such an arrangement would be a great con- venience to the farmers, and, I think, no loss to the community as a whole. Then, so far as the northern provincial district is concerned, mem- bers from Auckland know this : that agriculture cannot be carried on in the greater part of the Auckland Province without a literal use of bonedust or other artificial manures. And I think it would pay the department to make a substantial reduction in this class, even if not to carry artificial manures free altogether, be- cause it goes without saying that every ton of bonedust carried up the line means many tons of additional produce carried down the line. Then, there is great room for improvement in the speed of our railways. Take the train in which the district I represent is most inter- ested-that is, the train which leaves Mercer at about ten minutes to seven in the morning and arrives in Auckland at thirteen minutes to ten. The distance is only forty-three miles, and the time occupied being about three hours, gives as nearly as possible a fast and furious speed of fourteen miles an hour, even when up to time, which is not always the case. And this is a train used by country settlers, who go to town to do their business and want to get back the same day ; therefore time is of the utmost importance to them. I say that that journey from Mercer to Auckland ought to be done in two hours at the outside, and done in perfect safety and comfort. The line is a good one, and there is no difficulty in that way. Then, while I am talking about that train, there is another grievance in connection with it, and that is that on the occasion of holidays in Auckland, or race-meetings at Ellers- lie, the train, instead of leaving Auckland for Mercer at a quarter past four, is put back to about six o'clock, so that many of the settlers are very often put to the inconvenience of having to travel after dark long distances on bad roads to their homes. I do not object to people who . attend race - meetings or any other legitimate amusement being carried to their homes-it is quite right that they should be carried-but I sav there should be special trains for the purpose, or some better arrangement should be made than the present one. Sir, I think it is quite sufficient for me to mention that par- ticular grievance to the Minister for Railways, and I need not then dwell upon it further. Then, with regard to what are called work- men's tickets. The Minister knows-and he and I have had some considerable correspond- ence on this subject-they are made to apply only to trains which arrive at their destination by eight o'clock in the morning. But, as every member knows, many workers, male and female, are employed in shops, offices, and warehouses who go to work at nine o'clock, and just because they go to work at nine o'clock they are charged double the amount which those who go to work at eight o'clock are charged. That is not right. One is as much a worker as the other, and I think it is a fact that the average earnings of those who go to work at nine o'clock are less than those who go to work at eight o'clock. If there is a difficulty- and I believe there is, for it has been pointed out to me by the General Manager -it ought to be got over by issuing tickets only to wage-earners who earn under a certain wage. That, at all events, would be a more

satisfactory state of things than charging one set of workers 2s. and another set 5s. for exactly the same service, and that is what is being done now. After ventilating the more important of my grievances, I want to say that I agree with the principle which has been laid down, that the railways should earn not less than 3 per cent., because there are many districts which are not tapped by railways, and if we make a loss on our railways the people living in those districts will be called upon to make up the loss by taxation, and I cannot think that would be right. I do think though that many reductions can be made and concessions given, and the rail- way revenue increased rather than diminished. Now, leaving the railways and coming to other matters, I regretted to hear yesterday afternoon, and to notice in this morning's paper, that a member of the House who represents an agri- cultural district made a most severe attack- denounced in the severest terms at his command, and that is saving a good deal -- the Farmers' Union and farmers' associations which are being formed throughout the colony. I refer to the honourable member for Masterton, Mr. Hogg. and the honourable member for Pahiatua fol- lowed his example only in a milder form. I happen to know some of the men who are taking a prominent part in connection with these organizations, and I will say this : that they are doing good and useful work, and doing it un- selfishly and well on behalf of the class to which they belong. These people see that by the legislation of recent years the country settlers are placed at serious disadvantage as compared with the city people. They see that the country settlers do not get their fair share of the earnings of the community. They see that the country settlers work harder, and longer hours, for less remuneration than any other class. They see that the country settlers are not getting a sufficient return on the capital they have in- vested. They have recognised that by union it may be possible to considerably improve the conditions of the farmers and country people ;

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is an omission from the Governor's Speech, and who will deny them the right to unite and combine ? Why, the member for Masterton and the member for Pahiatua. I have often heard the member for Masterton prate of his Liberalism, and tell the House and the country that he was a Liberal. He told us yesterday in trumpet tones that he was a member of what he called "the great Liberal party." After the expression of opinion which he gave yesterday I do not believe he is a Liberal, be- cause he would deny to the country settlers the right to unite and combine on their own behalf which has already been taken advantage of by the people of the cities. I want to say that this movement has my sincerest sympathy. I hope that it will go on and prosper, and I hope that one of the planks in their political plat- form will be that their political support will only be given to genuine country settlers, bond and free, the North ? fid. farmers, because until they are represented in the Councils of the country by men of their own class-by men whose sympathies are the same as their own-they will never be able to obtain that justice and consideration which they are entitled to, and which the import- ance of their calling demands. Now, the recess has been remarkable for a great many things. Among others, it has been remark- able for the number of Royal Commissions that goes a little too far. It goes without saying that have been set up. We have had the Royal Commission to inquire into the great subject of federation, we have had the Teachers' Salaries Commission, we have had the Midland Railway Commission, we have had the Coal Commission, we have had a Royal Commission appointed in each of the four large centres to make arrange- ments for the Royal reception, we have also had the Rivers Commission. In spite of the increase of Ministers made last year, we seem to be developing a system of Government by Royal Commission. So far as the Federation Com- mission is concerned-the most important of them all-it has reported, and the report is decidedly against federation. Nobody expected anything else. Why, there was not a member of that Commission that was in favour of our joining the Commonwealth. I believe the work that was done by the Commission could have been done just as well by a parliamentary Com- mittee, and at a hundredth part of the cost. But these Royal Commissions serve a double purpose, and perhaps a treble

purpose. They are used as rewards to political friends and supporters. Then, when there is a subject before the public about which there is a considerable difference of opinion, and possibly strong feeling, the Government wants to shirk their responsibility, and they set up a Royal Commission to make inquiries and report. But what happens ? Trunk Railway, and yet the completion of it The Premier takes care that the majority of the members of the Commission will be of his way of thinking, so that, while the Commission has all the responsibility, their report is exactly ing satisfactorily, and that everything possible what the Premier wants. I do not want to follow this point further, because I shall have better opportunities of discussing these questions when the reports of the different Com- at work on the great Makohine Viaduct. I missions are placed before us. Now, coming wonder how long it will be before the train is to the Governor's Speech, or, rather, to what running through to Mangaweka; I wonder how I notice, Sir, that there was no mention in the Speech of the Cabinet appointments made during the last twelve months. Of course, so far as the appointment of the Hon. Mr. Duncan is concerned, it was made during last session, and it may not have been necessary to refer to that. But the appointment of the Hon. Mr. Mills was made during the recess. Now, in referring to those two honourable members, I do not object to them either personally or politically. I believe I am at the present moment on very friendly terms with both of them. But I object to the position in which the North Island is placed in the way of representation in the Cabinet. Who are the eight members of the Cabinet? Mr. Seddon, Mr. Walker, Sir J. G. Ward, Mr. Hall-Jones, Mr. Duncan, and Mr. Mills-all southern members. Who repre- Although the recent census has shown that the population of the North Island is considerably more than that of the South Island, the North Island is only repre- sented in the Cabinet by two members, as against six who represent the South. An Hon. MEMBER .- All the brains are in the South. Mr. MASSEY .- Not quite. But I think this six men have more brains than two. Well, is that a satisfactory state of affairs? I do not think any one will say that it is. I say more. I say that the state of affairs in the Cabinet, so far as representation is concerned, is a positive insult to the people of the North Island. How long would the people of the South Island stand such a state of affairs? Not for a day ; not for an hour. And yet the people of the South would have less to complain of than we have. Now, I am sorry to have to refer to the Minister of Lands again. What are the duties of the Minister of Lands ? To increase settlement ; to increase the productiveness of the colony. The Premier told us last night that he had taken over the land-purchase business. And what is left for the Minister of Lands to do ? Why, simply to look after the settlement of the lands in the North Island, where we can place ten settlers on the Crown lands for every one that can be settled in the South. Perhaps it is owing to the fact that the Minister of Lands is a South Island member that the Crown tenants in the North have not received the rebate of } per cent. which has been granted to the Crown tenants in other parts of the colony. It is almost as bad with the portfolio of Public Works. The most important line in the colony yet remaining incomplete is the North Island depends on a South Island member. The Premier told us the other day that the construction of the Makohine Viaduct was proceeding- was being done. Sir, I was assured yesterday by a gentleman of the most unimpeachable veracity that there were only thirteen men

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long it will be before there is railway connection between Auckland and Wellington. How the North Island representatives who are supporters of the Government can stand such a state of affairs I cannot imagine. I have referred to this on the public platform, and I am referring to it now, and I will refer to it on every possible occasion until what I consider is a serious injustice to the North Island is removed. Now, Sir, I come to the Royal visit, and here I agree with the honourable member who proposed the Address in Reply in his expression of opinion that we have had too much excitement during the last twelve months, and the sooner we return to our ordinary avocations the better. During the recess there has been a long series of events of Imperial magnitude. There was the war in South Africa; the departure of the different Contingents ; the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, with all its attendant circumstances; the

inauguration of the Commonwealth in Sydney ; the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne ; and last, and to many the most interesting of all, the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Then, again, let me say that I agree with honourable members who have spoken, and who have referred to the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York. I am pleased that the people of this colony have risen to the occasion, and have extended to the Royal guests a welcome which is worthy of themselves, worthy of the visitors, and worthy of the Heir Apparent, who is the King's son, and, as I look upon him, the eldest son of the eldest branch of the great Anglo-Saxon race to which we all belong. But I feel it my duty to say- . I am sorry the Right Hon. the Premier is not in his place-that, so far as Auckland is concerned, the interest and pleasure in the visit were spoiled to thousands of people by the autocracy and obstinacy of the Premier, who refused to allow Mahuta to present an address to the Duke, and who placed difficulties in the way of a Maori-canoe display in the Auckland Harbour. How different it was, as any one can see by reference to the early Auckland papers, when the Duke of Edinburgh visited these shores. Then three war-canoes, manned by two hundred sturdy Natives, went out to meet the Prince's vessel, and, singing their songs of welcome, accompanied her right up to the Auckland Wharf, where -- and this is another precedent-an address was presented to the Duke by the chief Paul Tuhaere, of Orakei. There was a precedent for all that was asked for by the Auckland people. I say, Sir, that, instead of the Native gathering taking place at Rotorua, it should have been held in the neighbourhood of Auckland, at one of the historic places there. It might have been held at the Native settlement of Orakei, within easy distance of the city, or at the site of the old Native settlement at One-tree Hill-the park just presented to the people of Auckland by the Mayor of that city. If the Native gathering had been held there I believe it would have been very much better for the Native people. There would have been less mortality and sickness, and pleasure would have been given to a great many more European people than was the case by taking the Natives to Rotorua. Then, I have been given to understand that if Mahuta had been allowed to present his address at Auckland he intended to present to the Duke the great war-canoe owned by the Waikatos - the last canoe used in actual warfare - as an indication that the Waikato Natives had no further use for it, and were now, and would be in the future, loyal subjects of the King and faithful citizens of the Empire. What better or more appropriate gift could have been thought of? And yet to thousands of people the success of the reception was spoiled by the obstinate stupidity of those who were responsible for the arrangements. Now, Sir, in connection with the Royal visit, other speakers who have preceded me have congratulated the recipients upon the titles which have been recently conferred, and I follow their example. But, Sir, I have always been given to understand that titles were conferred by the sovereign, or the representatives of the sovereign, as a mark of approval for services rendered to the State, and that they were given to the most deserving men, irrespective of party. Has that principle been adhered to in this instance? Why, Sir, the very silence of the Government supporters is an admission that it has not been adhered to. There are men in the colony who have done more service to the State than any man who sits on these benches. An Hon. MEMBER .- NO. Mr. MASSEY .- What about the venerable Mayor of Auckland, the public benefactor. the pioneer colonist, the man who has given the best years of his long life to the service of his adopted country? That gentleman has done more for this colony than all the men who sit on those benches put together. Was there a title offered to him ? I do not know if he would accept one after what has occurred, but no man deserves it more. Then, there was a gentleman who used to sit in front of me- Mr. Rolleston. A Liberal in the truest and best sense of the word, an able and, what is more, an honest man : he has been in politics for a generation. Was any title offered to him ? No; he was the "wrong colour." Then, there was the Hon. Mr. Bowen, the author of the Education Act and father of the education system. Is there a man more deserving of a title than he is ? Was there a title offered to him? No. For what reason ? Because the members of the Cabinet. who had the recommendations to make, wanted all the titles for

themselves. In fact, right through the length and breadth of the colony the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York was used for party purposes. Cards and invitations were forthcoming for all the functions from Government House downwards for the followers of the Government and their friends, but those who were not followers of the Government were kept carefully in the background. I do not speak for myself, because I do not care two straws for these displays, but on behalf of

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many old colonists, representative men who | be allowed to retard settlement. There is another assisted to build up this colony and make it paragraph in the Speech, referring to the Cook what it is to-day, and who on such an occa- Islands, and expressing satisfaction at the ex- sion should have been recognised, but who were tension of the boundaries of this colony so as to include those islands. Well, Sir, it seems to ignored and passed over. In fact, it seems to me, and it must have seemed to outsiders, that me that it is much too soon to say whether the the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York was benefits received by the colony will be sufficient intended as a sort of glorification for the Pre- to compensate it for the responsibility we are mier and his followers. Now, coming back to taking up. I noticed from the Speech that it is the Governor's Speech, there is a paragraph in evidently intended to continue the present form it expressing satisfaction with the way in which of government for some time; but we cannot the Maori Land Administration Act is working ; get away from this fact : that by this extension I do not remember the exact words, but the para- of the boundaries of New Zealand the natives of graph is there. Now, what does this Act pro- the Cook Islands are now to all intents and vide? It begins by dividing the colony into six purposes citizens of our country, and conse- districts. For every district there is to be a quently we are bound sooner or later to treat Native Land Council. The members of those them exactly in the same way as our own Councils are to be partly elected by the Na- Natives. We shall be expected to educate them. to make them acquainted with our laws, and to tives and partly nominated by the Government. I believe in most districts the Natives have keep the peace amongst them. They will in elected their representatives, but the Govern- time expect to have representation in this House, and probably in the other House as well, and ment have not yet nominated a single member. These Councils have not been set up, not an I suppose by-and-by they will expect us to provide their old people with pensions. Well, acre has been disposed of under the Act since communities have duties as well as individuals, we were here last year, yet they say the Act is and it may be our duty to take up what Kipling working satisfactorily. Personally, I did not calls "the white man's burden " so far as the expect very much from the Act ; but I do want to say that if it will help to individualise titles Cook Islands are concerned ; but I believe it and give to each Native his own particular block would be very much better for us to develop cur of land, then good work will have been done. own resources, instead of interfering any more There is one thing in connection with the Act with which I agree : the provision that where the Maori owns land he shall be compelled to retain sufficient from which to make a living. But where a Native is not able to make use of his land I would allow him to dispose of it on the understanding that the money went to the Public Trustee, or into the securities of the colony, so that the Native could draw the inter- et ; but he should not be allowed to touch the principal. If the Native has more land cf his own than he can use for his own purposes, then we should allow him to do what he likes with it, only taking care to see that he Kets a fair value for the land he disposes of. But it is scarcely necessary even to do that, be- cause the Natives are now just as well able to look after their own affairs and take care of themselves as the majority of Europeans, and probably, in many cases, better able. The Native land must be settled, and there need be no trouble in settling it if we do not place un- necessary difficulties in the way. The land should be opened up in a similar way to that in which the Crown lands are opened up; and I want to say in this connection that I have no sympathy whatever with what seems to be the tendency at present-a tendency to set up a class of Maori landlords and European tenants. I think in every case the settlers should have the right to acquire the freehold of the land ; or, if

not the freehold, then such a lease as will secure to every man the value of his improvements. But that has been altered. The increased value given to the land by such improvements. I would do the fullest justice to the Natives; and, while I would give them all the advantages of Europeans, they must fully improve—a very different thing. A great understanding that they have to accept certain responsibilities, and, above all, that they are not to be less than can possibly be helped with the government of islands twelve hundred or fourteen hundred miles away. There is another subject particularly affecting the country settlers to which I wish to refer, and in connection with which there was considerable friction during the recess—that is, the valuations that were made under the Government Land Valuation Act; and I am glad to see the Minister who controls that department is present, so that he may hear what I have to say. Of course, it must be admitted that during the last few years there has been a considerable increase in the land values of the colony. Whether this increase is permanent or not remains to be seen. I am inclined to think it is not permanent, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the large centres of population. But there is no doubt about this: that the Government, or the Valuation Department—which is the same thing—have been very quick to take advantage of the increased values; they have put up the values, and consequently increased the taxation. The principal objection was, however, not so much to the capital value as to the way the capital value is divided into value of improvements and unimproved values, or, putting it another way, to the way in which the unimproved value is arrived at. Formerly the unimproved value was defined to be the capital value less the value of the improvements, and that was right, because it provided for the full exemption of The Act of last year provides that the unimproved value is the value of the land supposing it was possible to take away all the unexhausted deal depends on what is called the unexhausted improvements, because, for instance, I am

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given to understand that the valuers are instructed that, in the case of land which was originally bush, they are to consider as exhausted improvements the original clearing, the felling of bush, the draining of the land, and so forth, all of which are necessary to bring the land under cultivation; that is to say, they consider those works exhausted improvements if the work has been done so thoroughly, or so long ago, that no traces of the original growth remain. If, however, it has been done in a slovenly manner, or done so recently that some of the stumps remain, then it is considered an unexhausted improvement, and exemption will be allowed. The same thing applies to swamps. 11.0. Many of them have been drained at a cost of several pounds per acre, and if the work has been done so well that the land is thoroughly dry, and perhaps been ploughed and sown in English grasses, then no exemption is allowed for the original draining. Well, if there is one improvement that never becomes exhausted, and which always remains, it is the improvement that brings the land into a state of Houses, and outbuildings, and cultivation. fences may decay, but the first improvements on the land itself never decay. We have also heard of land being valued at what is called its "prospective" or "sentimental" value. That means this: There are thousands of settlers who perhaps many years ago went on to unimproved land. They have made farms of it. Their families have been born on it. They have become attached to it. The valuer comes along, and, seeing a well-kept and well-cultivated farm, he puts a high value on it. The owner, of course, objects, and the valuer says, "Well, will you sell it for that?" But rather than have any trouble or run any risk the owner simply puts up with the injustice. Land, according to my way of thinking, should only be valued according to what it will produce, according to its value for farming purposes—its using value—and full exemption for improvements should be allowed. Any other method of arriving at the value is unjust to the settler, and cannot be satisfactory. We are informed in the Governor's Speech that it is intended to go on with the Local Government Bill this session. On this occasion it is called the "Counties Bill." Well, I have not seen the Bill this session, but I read the measure that was circulated at the end of last session, and, although I do not want to discuss it now, I wish to say that I do not think, if we can possibly avoid it, there should be

two sets of local bodies in any one district - that is to say, where the Counties Act is in operation we should be able to do without Road Boards, but where the work is done by Road Boards we should not have a County Council. I think, too, the ratepayers should be given an opportunity of deciding, by a poll to be taken for the purpose, which form of local government they wish to have. So far as my own district is concerned, the County Councils Act has been suspended for many years, and the work has been done by Road Boards. I have been a member of one of the local bodies myself, and I may safely say the work has been well done, and satisfactorily and economically done. What, in my opinion, is wanted is a system of extended road districts, the Government to take over the main roads-not only the roads provided in the Bill which was circulated last session-that is, the roads over which His Majesty's mails are carried by coach-but such roads as the Main South Road in the Auckland Province-the arterial road of the Island. Such a scheme, I think, would be satisfactory to many districts, and I do not think would cost any more than at present, because less would be required in the way of parliamentary grants. I approve of the suggestion that has been made, that the Bill should be referred to a conference of delegates from the different local bodies. Those men are experts in connection with local government, and their advice and assistance will be very valuable to the members of this House. I also approve of the Bill being sent to a Committee of the House; but, if any important alterations are to be made, I think the Bill ought to be taken to the second reading, or perhaps even to the Committee stage, and then dropped for the session, so that the local bodies of the country might have the opportunity of studying it for themselves, and expressing an opinion on it. There is another paragraph in the Governor's Speech, Sir, in which many members of this House seem to be particularly interested - a very vague paragraph referring to the mail-service. I do not know exactly what it means, but I have read it, and it seems to be intended to draw discussion and criticism in connection with the mail-services. It certainly has had that effect so far as the Frisco mail-service is concerned. I may say that I do not like the American shipping-laws any more than any other member who has spoken, but at the same time the Frisco mail-service is the best possible service, and the fastest service, between this colony and Europe. The particular objection is in connection with the American navigation-laws, which provide that no foreign ships can trade between American ports, and consequently our colonial steamers are considerably handicapped by being shut out of the trade between Honolulu and Frisco. And now things are worse than they used to be, because the American Government has subsidised the Oceanic Company, a strictly American line, one of the conditions being that the ships must be purely American ships and the seamen American seamen. However, a similar condition existed with the Canadian Government some years ago. I accidentally came across the speech of an Australian politician referring to this particular point, and I want to quote it for the benefit of the House. He says, - "Of course, our coastal navigation is absolutely free, and it may be the best policy for Australasia to keep it so; still, as we are taking upon ourselves national powers, this question being a national one should receive our consideration. A great difficulty occurred on this very question between the United States and Canada when Lord Elgin was Governor-General. He saw that the American ships were in the

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habit of swooping down on the whole of the Canadian ports, returning with cargoes to the United States, while the Canadian vessels could only touch at one United States port. They could not reload for another, but were obliged to return to Canada. He brought the matter before the Washington Government, but they pooh-poohed it. They said, 'This is a national question. You are only Governor-General of Canada, and you can have nothing to say about it.' The result was that Lord Elgin and his Ministers recommended Parliament to impose taxes on vessels belonging to the United States passing through the Welland Canal from the lakes to the St. Lawrence River, thus almost prohibiting United States vessels from getting to the ocean from the lakes. The people of the United States were thus paid off in their own coin, so that

they were obliged to grant reciprocity to English vessels." Canadian vessels at the present time, according to this gentleman . and he evidently knows what he is talking about are exempt from the operation of the American navigation-laws, and, if Canadian vessels are exempt, I say Australian vessels should also be exempt. I say that it is the duty of our Government to join with the Government of the Commonwealth in approaching the Government of the United States, asking them to amend their shipping-laws so that Australasian steamers may be able to trade between . American ports in the same way that we allow American ships to trade between Australasian ports. Now, the new steamers of the Oceanic Company have been referred to disparagingly on account of the breakdowns that have taken place, and their consequent inability to keep up with the time-table dates ; but any one who has visited those steamers and seen them, as I have, must admit that they are magnificent vessels, and vessels calculated to do a great deal of good to this country ; and if we have to choose between two evils, between putting up with the hardship of the American shipping-laws or discouraging the present San Francisco mail- service, let us stick to the service, in the hope that time and diplomacy will bring about a better and more satisfactory state of things. There has been a good deal of boasting about the so-called success of the 4-per-cent. loan which was floated in the colony, but I do not think there is anything to boast of when we remember that the debentures may be held in London just as well as in the colony, and that the interest is payable in London just as well as in the colony. Probably the greater part of the debentures are held in London at the present time. And another point we ought to remember is that a 4-per-cent. loan to the Government is as good as 4 per cent. invested on mortgage, because there is no mortgage-tax to pay. We should also remember that the other colonies have been able to raise money at a much lower rate. The Premier told us that it cost them 4 per cent. Fortunately I have it on record as far as Victoria is concerned :- " Tenders for the Government loan of half a million at 3 per cent., the minimum being fixed at 96, were opened to-day. \$549,000 was tendered for. Tenders from £96 1s. to £97 5s., amounting to 40 per cent., were accepted. The balance was taken at £97 1s. - Melbourne, 5th June." Victoria placed their 3 per cents. at about 97, and New South Wales raised their last loan locally at 3 per cent. Sir J. G. WARD .- They both had to pay for underwriting their loans, and we did not. Mr. MASSEY .- Our loan cost us 4 per cent., so that in any case I do not see that there is much to boast about. Then, there is the paragraph in the Speech in regard to the earth-hunger. Undoubtedly, an earth-hunger exists -or, at least, there is a keen demand for land for agricultural purposes. What happened the other day in connection with a block of 5,000 acres of land in the King-country ? For that block of land 2,900 applications were received. I believe that the Minister of Lands means well, so far as the North Island is concerned, but I can tell him that there is most intense dissatisfaction amongst the settlers of Taranaki and Auckland at the slowness with which the King-country lands are being opened up. We are only now beginning to appreciate the Auckland lands. Every Auckland member knows that there are blocks of land that a few years ago were regarded as almost worthless, but what is their position to-day? They are growing grasses suitable to the climate and soil, and they are carrying stock accordingly. There are large areas of second-class land in the Auckland District which can be settled if sufficient inducement is given by the Legislature to have the land opened up on reasonable terms, roads made, and bridges built over the streams, and settlers given security of tenure. There is no doubt that the whole of these lands can be settled, and the sooner they are settled the better it will be not only for Auckland, but for the whole of the colony. I have little more to say, but I wish to conclude with a few words regarding the conduct of the business of the House last session. I have no intention, Sir, of making any reflection on the Chair, but I desire to speak of the way in which the business was put before the House by the Government. Last session for the first two months little or nothing was done, the third month was a little better, and in the fourth month members were almost worked to death to make up for lost time. The consequence has been that a lot of useless, contradictory, and unworkable legislation, which will have to be amended this session, was placed on the statute-book.

Of course, in former years the Premier would have cast the blame on the so-called obstruction by the Opposition, but last session the Opposition declined to discuss the Address in Reply, they refused to discuss the Financial Statement, and they assisted the Government in every possible way; and yet it took eighteen weeks to get through the business of the session. There is not a local body in the country that could not have done better. And yet I am quite satisfied that the large majority of members of this House want to do the business in a businesslike manner, and in reasonable hours. But why not ? I want

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to say this: If the Premier and some of his followers will only refrain from making long-winded and acrimonious speeches when there is no necessity for them, and when they are not attacked - I do not object to them replying severely when they are attacked - and set a good example to the House in this respect, answer questions properly, and give any reasonable returns that are asked for, the business of the House could be done in three months, or less than three months ; things would run more smoothly ; it would be better for members on both sides of the House, and a much less expense to the country. Mr GILFEDDER (Wallace) .- I am pleased to see that the Opposition have at last realised their responsibility, have risen to the occasion, and endeavoured to criticize the Speech from the Throne. I was coming to the conclusion that the old Opposition of a few years ago, which so adversely criticized not only the Governor's Speech, but every measure brought before the House, are "Wearing awa' to the Land o' the Leal." Why, they have been as silent as the harp in Tara's hall. But the Opposition have at last wakened up to a sense of their duty not only to their constituents, but to the country at large. This has so far been a session of surprises. A few weeks ago we were surprised at the unexpected resignation of the member for Christchurch City, Mr. Lewis. The leader of the Opposition has sprung another surprise on us by intimating that his party, which was so fierce and formidable a few years ago, is no longer a solid organized body, for it has no longer a leader. I sympathize with Captain Russell, who has been a courteous gentleman while a keen critic, and has been an able leader of that party for a number of years in this House. We miss now the splendidly prepared speeches of Mr. Scobie Mackenzie. Where are the Richardsons, the Rollestons, and the Hutchisons, who gave us so much trouble two or three sessions ago ? They are no longer in the political arena. I sympathize heartily with the member for Hawke's Bay, who has at last been forced to throw up the sponge. The member for Franklin has just delivered a speech that was long and windy, as his dissertations usually are, but a speech that was not acrimonious. A great deal of what fell from the Whip of the Opposition I most cordially agree with, and so will many members on the Ministerial side of the House. The bitterness of tone that was adopted in the past by the members of the Opposition is conspicuously absent from the speech of the honourable member, who alluded to the fact that the Ministry does not sufficiently represent the North Island. Why, is it not a fact that the Ministers of the Crown are for the most part resident in the North Island ? Hon. MEMBERS .- Oh ! Mr. GILFEDDER .- How often is the member for Westland in his own electorate, or at Kumara? How often has the Minister for Railways been in Southland since he has become a Minister; and how often is the Minister for Public Works to be found in Timaru? Why, they are resident in and travelling through the North Island, endeavouring to find out the requirements of those districts, rather than in their respective electorates. I consider that the time has gone by when members of the Ministry should be selected according to the localities which they represent. This provincialism should be a thing of the past, and I hope the member for Franklin will support some of us who are advocating an elective Executive, and so endeavour to place in the Ministry the strongest men of the party. Sir, it cannot be gainsaid that there is a wave of prosperity passing over the colony at the present time. Ever since the advent of the present Administration the country has gone on prosperously. We have been told session after session for the last ten years by the Conservative seers and prophets that we were galloping to a deficit, that we were bringing the colony to the brink of ruin, that we were riding for a fall. Well, I can only say it has been a

long ride, to which Dick Turpin's ride to York was a mere circumstance. And, what is more than that, the Ministry of the day have been growing in the confidence of the people, until we find that the Opposition have melted away and their erst-while leader has resigned his post. I should prefer rather to see a stronger Opposition. I believe in the measures that are brought before this House by the Ministry being keenly criticized, and I hope that the members of the Opposition, though disorganized, will freely criticize those measures, and assist us to place on the statute-book legislation that will be worthy of a Liberal Administration and worthy of this colony. Reference was made by the last speaker to the pageantry in connection with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Sir, I am pleased to know that the people of this colony rose to the occasion and showed their loyalty to the Empire to which we are all so proud to owe allegiance, and that each large centre vied with the other in order to give as loyal and cordial a welcome to our Royal visitors as they possibly could. Instead of finding fault with what has been done, as the member for Franklin has been inclined to do, I must give credit to the people of the cities, including the City of Auckland, for what they did on that great occasion. Then, Sir, reference was made in the Speech to the death of our late esteemed sovereign Queen Victoria, and also to the accession of her son as King Edward the Seventh. So much reference has been made by previous speakers to those events that it is unnecessary for me to allude to them further than to remark that the reign of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria has been one that will be memorable in history for the great progress made in all industrial arts, inventions, colonisation, and in civilisation itself ; and it is to be hoped that her son, the present King, will follow her noble example of devotion to the interests and well-being of her subjects, and that the intellectual and moral advancement so conspicuous in the past will increase with the ever-growing prosperity of the nation in time to come. Now.

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the only discordant note sounded during this debate so far has been the personal reference made by the honourable member for Riccarton to the Right Hon. the Premier. Sir, the summe captions tone was not adopted by the honourable member for Riccarton when he was seeking the suffrages of the electors a short time ago. He must remember that he was returned to this House some years ago as a supporter of the Liberal Administration, and that when he kicked over the traces and turned his back on the party that his constituents returned him to support they relegated him to that obscurity from which many people consider he never should have emerged. And what is the result ? There are some people who will take a lesson ; there are others who cannot. There are some who can profit by their experience in the past ; but there are others whose comprehension does not allow them to do so. Well, we find the honourable member for Riccarton, just on the eve of the last general election, endeavouring to climb into Parliament on the broad shoulders of the Premier of this colony. He did not, in his speech at Riccarton on that occasion, sneer at the dress worn by the Premier when he so worthily represented this colony at the Diamond Jubilee in the Home land. At last election he was returned by the respectable majority of one-he was carried in, as I have said, on the broad shoulders of the Premier, whom he now so vehemently denounces, but whom before the election day he had promised to loyally support. This exhibition that unfortunately took place a few evenings ago reflects little credit on the member for Riccarton, and cannot be said to redound to the credit of the constituency that sent him here by the majority of one. Sir, I am sorry for the honourable member. I regret that he cannot possibly be consistent; but there are men who cannot be consistent, and I fear my friend is one of these. The Premier, in his reply, alluded to the honourable gentleman as a man of ability. Well, his ability does not evidently lie in the direction of politics. He has evidently come here to attack the party that his constituents sent him to support. He is like the "bhoy from Ballyhooley," spoiling for a [w, and might exclaim,- We will burs' up the Seddon faction, We will sound the warlike note. So if von're up for a row or a ruction Just tread on the tail of my coat. That is the attitude adopted by the honourable member for Riccarton towards the party he was returned to

support. If presumption, arrogance, and self-glorification, with the ordinary clap-trap and flap-doodle of the shoddy third-rate demagogue, constitute ability, then the honourable member for Riccarton is a man of recognised ability indeed. But I must say I admire consistency, even in a political opponent, and so I hope the honourable member for Riccarton will profit by his experience in the past, and will no longer continue to act like that noted personage of acrobatic proclivities, and to wheel about, and turn about, and just do so. And every time he wheels about, jump Jim Crow. But we shall find the honourable member for Riccarton as meek as a cooing dove at the next election. There is an American poem which, I think, sums up the conduct of the man who is ever ready and eager to find fault with the person who is honestly trying to do his best; but when once that man gets to the top of the tree his carping critics let him severely alone, and even toady and scrape to him. The poem says :- The world seems inclined to be sometime unkind To the man who has "git-up-and-git"; He is jostled and jeered while he's trying to find A place where his talents will fit. They make comic pictures, and vow with a grin That his likeness is truly expressed; And the way that the gossip will talk is a fine, Of the man who is doing his best. They'll all bow and scrape when he gets to the top, But when he is toiling to rise, The people with plenty of leisure will stop To hinder whatever he tries. But it's all in the game, and 'twill teach him to serve Where courage and skill meet their test; So let the crowd shout, for it braces the nerve, Of the man who is doing his best. The Premier and his Ministers are doing their best, and do it successfully. And the honourable member for Riccarton, with a bias which will not allow him to act consistently, is doing his best to discredit them. Reference was made by the honourable member for Franklin to the I do not setting-up of Royal Commissions. consider, Sir, that there is a great deal to be said against setting up Commissions to inquire into those subjects that are agitating the public mind and are of importance to the country. The Federation Commission has collected a great deal of evidence, and no doubt has come to a decision that the majority of the people of this colony foresaw could be the only result of their investigations. But they have satisfied the public mind that, after due and mature consideration, the feeling, not only in this colony, but, I think, in some of the other colonies, is adverse to the federation of New Zealand with the Commonwealth of Australia. Another remark made by the honourable member is to the effect that the setting up of these Commissions was simply a move on the part of the Ministry to buy political support. But the peculiar thing is this: that the members of these Commissions are about evenly balanced so far as political parties are concerned. I happened to be on a Commission upon which there were two Opposition and two Liberal members of the House. - Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. - Hear, hear. Mr. GILFEDDER. - And the honourable member for Riccarton was not appointed to that Commission; and that, possibly, was the motive that prompted him to deliver the acrimonious speech he did the other evening. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL. - I am not to be bought for £1 a day. Mr. GILFEDDER. - I am sure the member for Waihemo and the member for Rangitikei, who are members of this Commission, cannot be bought for £1 a day, and I do not think the honourable member for Riccarton is justified in insinuating that they could be so won over. I wish to refer in a casual way to the Commission

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appointed to draw up a colonial scale of staffs and salaries for the public schools of the colony. I may say that during the years I have been in Parliament I have been advocating the adoption of a colonial scale of staffs and salaries. It seems ridiculous that each of the thirteen Boards of Education should have a system of its own; that we should have a master in one district teaching a school for, say, \$150, and in the adjoining district another master, for doing exactly the same work, getting \$200. You will find in one school four teachers doing the same work that is being performed in another district by five teachers, while in a third district only three are provided to do it. Consequently, seeing equal work is not being done, equal salaries are not being given. But there is another cause at work. In the strong education districts it is possible for the Boards to give better salaries than they are able to do in the weaker districts.

So the Government took the wise and judicious step of endeavouring to arrive at a colonial scale of equal work and equal pay, irrespective of the education district in which the teacher may for the time being be engaged. Reference was also made by the previous speaker to the land administration of the present Government ; but he was able to find very little fault with what was being done. He advocates a number of reforms that may be effected, and with some I must say I concur. There is, no doubt, room for improvement in the land administration ; it is time the distinction between acquired lands and Crown lands should be abolished - that settlers, whether the land be acquired or Crown, should have the same opportunity of taking it up under the alternative systems, either for cash with the right of purchase or on lease in perpetuity. Seeing that the honourable member for Franklin has gone at length into the subject, it is unnecessary to go into it further than to advocate periodical revaluation of the Crown lands. Many settlers who take up land are clamouring for a reduction of their rents. Those who take up land above the value paid for it will not complain ; we only hear complaints from those who are dissatisfied. Some people are very hard to please. Consequently I advocate a periodical revaluation. If the settlers were all subject to periodical revaluation without taxation on improvements at the end of ten, twenty, or twenty-one years, as the case may be, then you may rest assured that, if it is found they are paying too high, they will be entitled to get relief, and if they are paying too little they will be called upon to pay a little more than they have been paying. Reference has been made by previous speakers to the dairy industry of the colony. The Government deserve a great deal of credit for the assistance they have given by way of technical instruction to those engaged in that industry. The producers are able to place on the Home market a better article by far than they did two years ago. The export of butter and cheese has considerably increased, and we are able to obtain prices in the Home market that are in many cases about equal to those realised by the Danish product. And I hope, in time to come, the Government will extend this system of supplying technical instruction to wool-growing, as has been referred to by the honourable member for Otaki. I have advocated the appointment of an expert to give instruction in wool-classing and wool-grading, and I think effect should be given to what has been urged by the honourable member for Otaki in that direction. Then the thousands and thousands of pounds that have been lost to the wool-growers of the colony through ignorance in the classifying and proper grading of the wool would be obviated, and the best possible prices that could be obtained in the Home market from the buyers would be the result. I hope the Government will take this into their serious consideration, and that the same energy as marked their efforts to stimulate the dairy industry will be exerted to enable the wool-growers to obtain the highest prices possible for their products. The question of borrowing, Sir, has been touched upon likewise. I have advocated for years the advisability of more systematic borrowing, in order to carry out a plan of progressive public works. If we were to decide to borrow a million, or even a half-million, a year for a period of, say, five years, and if the amounts we proposed to so borrow were earmarked for the carrying-out of a well-defined policy of progressive public works, then we should know exactly what we are doing. But to borrow a million and expend it, and then as the necessity arises to borrow another million and spend it, without any well-defined public works policy, is, to my mind, an extravagant method. Therefore I should advocate borrowing systematically, say, half a million a year for the next five years-or a million for that matter-and carrying out a system of public works-roads, bridges, and other improvements-that, if not immediately reproductive, will at any rate tend to promote settlement and afford the necessary means of communication with our outlying districts. Then, if in a certain year it is found impossible to proceed with particular works, it will be satisfactory, at any rate, to know that one may look forward with some degree of certainty to the execution of that particular work in the year following. But now, with the haphazard manner in which we are proceeding-getting a million for one year and trusting merely to the possibility of getting another next year-it is not possible to know at any time exactly where we are. The Government deserve credit for the assistance they have given to the backwoods

settlers. It must be borne in mind that these settlers who take up areas in the back blocks and endeavour to carve out homes for themselves and their families are doing a great deal to prove the capabilities of the soil. They are materially improving the well-being of the community, and helping to build up the nation. As respects the construction of the three main lines of the colony I am in favour, seeing that the Referendum Bill is now before the House, of placing the matter fairly before the people of the country. If the majority are in favour of borrowing a sufficient

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sum to carry out these three great works- namely, the North Island Main Trunk line, the Midland Railway, and the Otago Central, then by all means borrow sufficient money to finish these works. If, however, the majority are against that, then, of course, we must proceed with them in the very slow manner that we are doing at the present time. But to say that we shall go on borrowing a million each year, and spending the greater part on these three works, which for years to come will be unproductive, is to my mind not adding to the prosperity of the country. With regard to light lines of railway, I favour the extension of a system of light railways, which shall act as feeders to the main lines, give encouragement to the settlers to bring their produce to the market, open up the country, and tend to stimulate and enlarge the industries of our really productive colony. Seeing that a measure is to be brought before the House to improve and consolidate the Counties Act, I hope that power will be given to the local authorities to borrow a sufficient sum to carry out some of these smaller public works, such as the construction of light lines of railway, with power to rate those for whose benefit these lines are being constructed. Respecting trade and commerce, it must be borne in mind that, seeing our debt, public and private, is about one hundred millions, and that the interest is between three and four millions, which is paid not in hard cash or gold, but in produce, it behoves us to make that produce go as far as possible in liquidating our indebtedness. This brings me to the question of opening up new markets, and I consider that were the Government to borrow, say, a million, and establish a carrying fleet of its own-three or four vessels, at any rate-to take our produce from New Zealand to South Africa or to the Home-country, it would be a very good speculation, and one that would produce numerous advantages to and confer many benefits on this country. As has been stated by a previous speaker-the member for Waihemo - there are possibilities of opening up a good trade with the Mother-land ; but the question is, How are we to go about it ? We find difficulties in the way of landing our produce and disposing of it in the Home- country. I consider, Sir, we should have a real live representative there in order to look after the interests of the producers in New Zealand. I am pleased to see the Government have appointed a Commissioner to inquire into the possibilities of establishing new markets wherever there is an outlet for the produce of New Zealand. Knowing Mr. Gow, the new Commissioner, as I do, I feel every confidence that his appointment will redound very much to the credit of the Government and to the benefit of the colony. I hope the Government will take into serious consideration the advisability of opening up new markets for New Zealand grain, wool, and frozen meat in the Home-country and elsewhere, and also equip a fleet of our own to carry produce away as cheaply and expeditiously as possible. With regard to the railways, I consider a reduction should be made in fares and freights, especially in the freights. I quite agree with the member for Franklin that we should endeavour to increase the speed of the passenger trains where practicable. With regard to the freights, I consider that the railways should not be looked on as merely money-extorting machines. The railways belong to the people-they are a national asset- and consequently it behoves us to work them in the interests of the people of the colony. Therefore, if we can endeavour-and we should endeavour-to help the producers to get their produce as expeditiously and as cheaply as we can to the seaport towns, we should do so, and so bring the foreign money into the country. The Government, I consider, should not only keep that steadily in view, but should endeavour to bring such a scheme into successful operation. Seeing we will have the opportunity later on of discussing the all-absorbing question of federation, which

has been reported upon by the Commissioners who were appointed to inquire into the advantages to be derived by this colony from our joining in the Commonwealth, I shall defer my remarks on that subject until that opportunity presents itself. I hope the Government will carry out the programme as delineated in the Speech from the Throne. I notice an effort will be made to adopt a system which is akin to State fire insurance. The time has come, I think, when the Government should establish State fire insurance. We find the fire insurance companies of the Australian Colonies have adopted a very high rate of premiums, so that were the Government to adopt a system by which the State would become the insurance body, and take up risks at what is considered a fair figure, I have no doubt great benefits would accrue to the property-holders, while the high premiums that are being extorted at the present time would no longer exist. I wish to congratulate the Postmaster-General, Sir Joseph Ward, for the successful inauguration of the penny post. While speaking on that subject, I might allude to the honour recently conferred on that gentleman by the Duke of York. As one who has personally known the honourable member for Awarua for a number of years, I can bear testimony to the very high respect in which he is held in the southern part of the colony ; and we all know the undoubtedly great work he has done to advance the welfare of this country both at Home and abroad. I am sure there is not a man from the North Cape to the Bluff who is more deserving of a title than Sir Joseph Ward. I consider that greater encouragement should be given to Volunteering in New Zealand. We found, when occasion required the services of our men, that our young soldiers went forth and acquitted themselves creditably in South Africa ; and, coming home again, all these tried men-these men who have borne their part so nobly on the veldt and the karoos of South Africa-will stimulate and encourage the Volunteer movement in this country. Therefore I hope that the Government will give what facilities they can to encourage the establishment of

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Volunteer corps and rifle-clubs, so that should the occasion occur when we will be required to act on the defensive-and we all hope it will not-we will be able to give a good account of ourselves in defending our shores from the invasion of a foreign foe. I hope that a Bill to enable a referendum to be taken on the main political questions that affect the public for the time being will be passed, and that the Referendum Bill will become a statute. I hope, also, that provision will be made this session for an Act to increase the salaries of honourable members. I am one of those who on former occasions advocated increasing the salaries of honourable members, and the time, in my mind, has arrived when such should be done. We find, for example, that in Victoria the honorarium is \$300 a year, in Queensland the same, and in New South Wales the same ; but in New South Wales there is a sessional allowance of about \$35. In this colony we represent a much greater number of constituents than what they do in those colonies, seeing that the female franchise has come into vogue in New Zealand, and that the work of members has increased all round. Seeing that the duties that have to be attended to by members of Parliament have very much increased, I consider we should be placed on an equal footing with those across the Tasman Sea. Going beyond the Australian Colonies, we find that in France the senators, who are elected for nine years, get \$360 a year, and in the Chamber of Deputies each member gets £360 a year and is elected for four years. Labour members of the British Parliament, where there is no honorarium paid, are really expected to receive from their constituents the sum of \$500 a year, and I think they do receive that sum from the labour organizations. That is looked upon as the least salary they ought to get for their services on behalf of their constituents. Until a few years ago in New Zealand the honorarium was two hundred guineas per session, not per year, and very often it happened that in a Parliament there were four sessions ; consequently, that meant they earned eight hundred guineas for the four sessions. Captain RUSSELL .- Where was this ? Mr. GILFEDDER .- In New Zealand. We had four sessions, for example, in the last Parliament ; but, unfortunately, seeing the honorarium was \$240 a year, it made no difference. Consequently, in New Zealand until recently, with four sessions of Parliament, the difference between

what would be obtained then and now is #180. Now, last session a measure was introduced called the Public Revenues Bill, and in that a clause was inserted which enabled members of the House to receive a sessional allowance of \$40. On that occasion I think only eleven or twelve members voted against it. and I was sorry to see afterwards that some of those honourable gentlemen sought to obtain a little credit by telling their audiences that they did not vote for this sum, and had not drawn it out of the Treasury. But I wish to put on record the fact that no honourable member could draw that \$40 until he had filled in a voucher. What he did with it afterwards is for himself to say - that is his business : but, to my mind, there is nothing more reprehensible than for honourable members to fill in a voucher and draw that \$40 while leading their constituents to believe that they would not touch it on any account. Some members were said to have devoted the \$40 to bribing their constituents ; but I can hardly believe that honourable members would draw the grant out of the Treasury and give it to those who might in time to come repay them by recording their votes in favour of the donors. But, as I intend to ask for a return of those honourable members who have filled in vouchers and drawn the \$40 voted last session, it is unnecessary for me to deal with the matter further. Now, Sir, I think that members of the Opposition will agree with me in stating that at no time in the history of the colony has it been more prosperous than it is just now. Of course, the members of the Opposition will not give credit to the Government for assisting to bring about or for increasing that prosperity ; but, Sir, I consider that prosperity is due mainly to three causes. First of all, there is the cheap money under the Advances to Settlers Act, then there is the extension of land-settlement, and the extension of trade and commerce. I consider, Sir, that some of these measures have conduced considerably to increase that prosperity, ameliorate the condition of the masses, and place New Zealand in the happy position it is in to-day. Those honourable members who talked themselves hoarse over granting assistance to the Bank of New Zealand some years ago-those members who so persistently and consistently stonewalled and obstructed every measure brought forward by the Government- are now quite willing to concede that those measures have proved beneficial, and have justified their enactment. Therefore I hope the Opposition now, unlike the roaring lions we heard about the other night. have seen the error of their ways, and that they will assist us to carry out the legislation that is demanded by the people of the country, and so enable us to place New Zealand in the foreground of the countries of the world. Mr. McGUIRE (Hawera) .- I must congratulate the honourable member who has just sat down, particularly with respect to the latter part of his speech. But I must make an exception to one of his references to the Opposition, with respect to the Bank of New Zealand. It is surprising how accurate some honourable members are on certain subjects when they are endeavouring to make political capital. Mr. GILFEDDER .- Look up Hansard. Mr. McGUIRE .- The honourable member says, " Look up Hansard." I have no occasion to look up Hansard. I maintain that the statement made by the honourable member is incorrect. I wish the honourable member had been more accurate for his own sake, because I am not without admiration of a kind for him. There is not much interest taken in politics at present, and there are several reasons why this is so. What has taken place in South Africa during the past two years has distracted the

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minds of people from colonial politics. We are all very proud of the doings of our sons, and of their courage and daring in the face of the enemy, and we are proud of the high praises they have received from the generals commanding, and from the Commander-in-Chief. I am perfectly certain that the British people will never forget the services rendered to the Empire by her over-sea sons. Again, our attention has been drawn to the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth. There was also the death of Queen Victoria, a sovereign whose memory will be for ever enshrined in the hearts of the people of this country. Then we had the opening of the Federal Parliament by the King's son ; and after that the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York to New Zealand. I think His Excellency, the

Countess of Ranfurly, the Government, the members of both Houses, and the people of this country rose to the occasion and received their Royal Highnesses in a suitable way. I was pleased at the consideration and attention shown to the veterans, both Imperial and colonial. It was a suitable recognition for the services they had rendered the Empire on many a bloody field. In my opinion, the veterans have in the past been treated shamefully. Many hundreds of them have gone to their graves with grievances unredressed, and it is a blot on the fair fame of the colony that such should have been the case. For years I have fought their battle on the floor of this House and also on Committees, but this was the first time that they were properly recognised by the Government, and it was very pleasing to notice that they received that kindness and attention which they so well deserved. In the early days these men were regarded as the saviours of this country, and they were respected and admired accordingly: but latterly they seem to have been forgotten, and many of them have never even received the land-grants they were entitled to. I was also pleased to see at the luncheons given to the veterans the younger New Zealand veterans from South Africa. They have, I am very glad to say, been treated in an altogether different way from those who served the Empire in the past. On this occasion, however, it was pleasing to see that all were treated alike. I was also glad to see that the Natives of this country were given a prominent place, and made such a creditable display at Rotorua, because I am perfectly satisfied that there is no people in the British Empire more loyal or true than the Maoris, and none are more brave. I have been a witness of their courage on many a well-contested field. Another thing which was worth seeing was the gallant bearing of our Volunteers as they paraded the streets on the occasion of the Royal reception in Wellington; and I am satisfied that they are the right stamp, and if this country should be called upon to defend itself against an enemy invading our shores, all I can say is I pity the enemy. They will have a very poor chance of regaining their ships. Our Volunteers, rifle-clubs, and cadets have not, up to the present time, received the consideration they deserve. They should, in my opinion, receive more encouragement, and they should be served out with the very best weapons. But although I am in favour of spending money upon our Volunteers and cadets, and improving them so that they may become thoroughly efficient, I am, nevertheless, opposed to any wasteful extravagance at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, Port Chalmers, and Westport. We should take the advice of that distinguished soldier Lord Roberts, and encourage our Volunteers and rifle-clubs, in order to make them efficient soldiers and good marksmen. It would be more prudent than spending enormous sums to fortify towns with armaments which go out of date, and which in a few years will become obsolete. I consider it a wilful waste of public money to expend the funds of the colony in that direction. I would rather see the colony more substantially subsidising, if necessary, the Imperial navy, which is our first line of defence. We should improve the conditions of the settlers in the back blocks, who are manfully fighting the virgin bush, so that they can carve out homes for themselves and their families. We should also consider the little children, who are unable to attend our public schools on account of the absence of roads and bridges, before spending large sums in the direction I have mentioned. Now, with regard to the war in South Africa, I think we have every reason to be proud of our contingents. Their gallantry in front of the enemy is, I consider, one of the best advertisements New Zealand has ever received. Many of those who went in the First Contingent came from my own electorate and provincial district, and amongst the number was Captain Davis, of the Hawera Mounted Rifle Volunteers, who, I am pleased to observe, has received his majority, and also his lieutenant-colonelcy and a C.B. He won these distinctions in the face of the enemy, in the van of the battles. Again, there is Sub-Lieutenant Bartlett, who is now a captain. Young Coutts, who won the Queen's sash, worked by her own hands, is again in South Africa, and has, I am pleased to know, won his captaincy by his dash and bravery. Mitchell and Morrison, after serving their term, have again taken the field, and are now serving in South Africa as lieutenants. Sergeant Palmer, Morgan, and many others whom I cannot at the present moment call to mind, have won distinction in the field, and all these

I have named were members of the Hawera Mounted Rifles. But enough has already been said and written in respect to the South African War ; in any case, time will not permit further reference to this interesting subject. I notice, from the applause of honourable members, that you are all proud of the Taranaki boys. Now, just a few words on federated Australia. The Commonwealth of Australia is not a federation begot of fear, but a federation of a free people who voted on the great question in peaceful fashion. There was no hostile army at their gates to make them combine against a common foe, nor had they armed guards at

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their posts. There were 160,000 votes against federation, but the number in favour of an Australian nation was over 422,000. I regret that the Royal Commission which was set up by this House, instead of interviewing the producers from the soil of this colony, gave them a wide berth, and kept to the centres of population, and paid great attention to the tales of the manufacturers, the artisans, and merchants, who were for the most part opposed to federation. When the resolutions were passed giving the Government authority to appoint a Royal Commission, they were to appoint men eminently fitted for the office and conversant with the agricultural, commercial, and industrial interests of the colony. But the agricultural interest received no consideration. There are good and valid reasons, no doubt, against federation, and one of the principal reasons, to my mind, is that the Natives of this country are not to be counted in reckoning the number of the people of the Commonwealth. Now, the prosperity of this country, as honourable members know, is greatly due to our producers. Our farmers have to compete in the markets of the world, and year by year we are endeavouring to find fresh markets, and it will be a great disadvantage to our producers if they are shut out by a prohibitive tariff from federated Australia. That this is likely to take place I think there can be no doubt. We want reciprocity, but I fear it is not likely to be accomplished. I will just read a list of the principal goods which are raised from the soil of this country that we send to Australia :- Butter 75,723 .. Cheese 53,914 .. Fish 14,736 . . . Gold 502,794 .. Oats 84,366 Malt 25,868 Oatmeal 16,938 . . Hides 17,296 Leather, &c. 17,617 Machinery, &c. 24,741 .. Preserved meats 26,139 . . Onions 14,457 .. Phormium 29,531 . . Potatoes 137,416 .. Seed grass, &c. 43,152 Tallow 39,026 .. Timber 147,893 Honourable members can see that the most of this produce is raised from the soil of New Zealand. Our imports, on the other hand, from Australia consist to a considerable extent of re-exports of commodities of British or foreign origin. They are as follows :- Bark 33,088 .. Books (printed) 27,839 . . . Bicycles 37,321 . . . Coals 105,203 .. Drapery, &c. 48,234 .. Drugs, &c. 18,895 .. Fruit 47,349 Iron and ironware .. 25,497 Machinery, &c. 50,601 .. Bone dust .. 27,156 . . . Guano 24,262 . . . Oils, various 20,993 Spirits 20,017 .. Sugar and molasses 116,910 .. Tea 34,002 Timber 60,994 .. 23,916 Tobacco and cigars, &c. . . Miscellaneous 71,212 . . The above figures show that the most of the goods are imported from other countries prior to being sent to New Zealand. The speech of the Premier was very interesting to me, and I was very much pleased with the good intention to our producers therein contained. I rejoice that he is determined to make satisfactory arrangements with regard to the question of shipping. That is a very important thing for the settlers of this country, and he says if he is unable to make satisfactory arrangements with the shipping companies, who have formed a combine for the purpose of fleecing our producers, he is determined to go further and get steamers to do the carrying of our produce to the markets of the world. This is a bold step to take, and in case he is unable to make satisfactory arrangements he shall have my assistance, because it is all-important that the producers should get their goods shipped with regularity and despatch, and that they should be placed on the markets of the world at the lowest possible cost. At present the greatest war that is going on is the war of commerce, and we want low freights and regularity and punctuality in the despatch of our produce. Without this our producers will not be able to compete in the markets of the world, and if something on the lines indicated is done it would be a boon to our farmers. Also, if our produce could be disposed of

without the assistance of the middle- man, that would be an advantage, as there is a leakage somewhere, and it is the duty of this House to find out where and apply a remedy, because there is no doubt that our producers are the sufferers. And if we can be relieved from the middlemen and shipping rings it will be a step in the right direction, and we will have the support of the Farmers' Union, which, I am satisfied, is bound to become one of the most powerful unions in this colony, notwithstanding the attack made by the member for Masterton. It was a most unjust and ungenerous attack. To describe those farmers who had joined the union as wolves in sheep's clothing was very strong language to use. You know, Sir, that every trade and profession has its union, and why deny the right to the farmers to combine ? I was sorry to hear the member for Masterton making such an attack upon a body of workers who are the most industrious in the country. Surely the country settlers have a right to com- bine as well as those who live in large centres. Let us turn to the exports of last year, which amount to nearly twelve millions. The farmers have exported eleven millions and a half, and all the manufacturers put together only exported about \$350,000. Notwithstanding the small

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which we have made in this direction during amount of these exports they have the ear of the Cabinet. And why have they the ear the past twelve years :- of the Cabinet: and why have they made their power felt in the House? Because they have united on a common platform. The farmers have now found it absolutely necessary to move in the same direction, and they are determined to have the ear of the Cabinet and of members of the House. Who works harder than the farmers, their sons, wives, But Denmark still has taken £6,800,000 for and daughters? They are endeavouring to be independent, and they are self-reliant. They butter supplied in the same year to the London market. She is the smallest producing country, should be commended and encouraged for their thrift and industry. The State should lend but exports the most and commands the best price in the market. Victoria had a splendid them a helping hand. I am satisfied that, year in 1900 on account of the rain, but that although the Farmers' Union has been con- demned by two members of the House, when does not always happen ; and Canada is very they are thoroughly united we shall find the heavily handicapped by her long severe winter Premier becoming their leader and throwing months, so that we are fast overhauling Canada. Russia has become a vigorous butter-producer, some of the sickly city unions, who are always but has been unable as yet to maintain high wanting and never satisfied, overboard, and quality ; but from late returns the quality has saving to the farmers, " You are the backbone very much improved. She has, however, to of the country, you are the foundation on which contend against a very severe winter. France the prosperity of the country rests ; therefore, last year exported over two million pounds' come along my boys, I will help you all I can." worth of butter. We have no need to fear any The farmers have no objection to the unions in of these countries, however, except Denmark. the towns. The workers in the towns think We shall have to fight hard to beat the careful they are wise in their generation ; they have and industrious Danes ; and I am satisfied that unions, and why not? They have a right to look after their own interests, and they do look in the course of a few years, providing the car- riage to the port of shipment and freights to the after them. They have their conciliation and markets of the world are reasonable, we will be arbitration. Why should not the farmers unite able to come very near them. At the close of the aiso ? No honourable man, I am satisfied, year 1899 there were 152 butter-factories in New would object to them uniting. However, the Zealand, of which eighty-five were in Taranaki, farmers are the best judges of their wants and eighteen in Wellington, sixteen in Otago, and requirements. They know what they are about, fourteen in Auckland. and they do not require either advice or assist-
handle.net/2027/uc1. 32106019788238 fore see that Taranaki is the great dairying ance from the honourable member for Master- district of the colony, and therefore a dairy ton or from the honourable member for Pahia- school should be established somewhere in that tua. They know by uniting they will

get more district. When I learned that the Government attention paid to their wants and requirements. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind had purchased Mr. Livingston's estate in the neighbourhood of Hawera, I at once communi- that every member that represents a country district will see they have prompt attention. I cated-on the 3rd June-with the Agricultural Department, to the effect that the mansion- am sorry to see that two members who repre- house and offices, together with a sufficient sent the country have made such a violent attack on the farmer, and I am quite satisfied area of ground, should be set apart for a dairy school and a stud-stock station, and that in a short time they will change their advising the department to retain a por- opinions and advocate the Farmers' Union. tion for the purpose indicated. On the 12th Now, there is another important matter I should like to bring before the House, and that June I received an answer informing me that is in reference to the dairy industry. I think the matter would receive consideration, since which I had an interview with the Minister on the dairy industry has made great progress in this country, and we should be very proud of the subject. There is a great future for the dairying industry of New Zealand, and I am what our people have done in such a very short time. It is only a few years ago since the Danes satisfied that Taranaki will be able to maintain and Swedes had full control of the English the premier position in the future as she has market, but it is not so at the present time. In done in the past, providing that she gets fair-play. 1800 the United Kingdom produced 85,000 tons I also wish to bring before the Minister the of butter, and they imported 169,492 tons, and matter of the New Plymouth Harbour. For New Zealand supplied 6,800 tons of this ; and in some years past it has been the habit of the 1898 we only exported 4,800 tons. In the ten Government to nominate all the nominee mem- months ending October, 1900, we landed in bers of the Board at the New Plymouth end, to British ports 50 per cent. more than we did in the exclusion of the country settlers. This, I the record shipments of 1899; so that when the think, is very unjust. The Board has nine returns for 1900 are completed we shall find members, and the district is divided into six that we exported last year butter to the amount districts, each of which returns one member of over a million. You will notice by the and pays harbour-rate. figures which I will give the great advance £1,307 8s. ; Taranaki East. 21,071 10s. ; Tara- 197,170 1888 366,483 1894 1889 213,945 1895 378,510 1890 207,687 411,882 1896 . . . 1891 236,933 553,122 1897 . . . 1898 539,466 1892 318,204 . . . 713,617 354,271 1893 1899 . . . Members will there- Hawera Riding pays

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naki North, £1,156 0s. 9d. ; Taranaki South, 9474 11s. 3d. : Clifton, \$408 15s. 3d. ; and New Plymouth only \$573 15s 8d. Nothwithstanding that New Plymouth pays only \$573 annually, and the other country districts larger sums, all the nominees - with the exception of Mr. Sarten, who resides in the Clifton Riding, but who, it is said, persistently votes with New Plymouth-reside in the Borough of New Plymouth. The Government, as I have said, have three nominees, and it is only right they should have them, considering the interests they have at stake in the district ; but it is feared the Board may determine, at no distant date, to go in for a conversion and seize the sinking fund, as was done on a previous occasion, and the liability of this unjust im- position would become perpetual, and the Government is assisting them by appointing all the nominees at one end of the harbour rating district. We have had a promise from the Government in the past to alter the exist- ing state of affairs, which is most unsatisfactory, but so far nothing has been done. I have & resolution that was carried at a meeting of the New Plymouth Harbour Board, which I will read to the House. It is as follows :- "That immediate representation be made, through Messrs. Symes and McGuire, members for the district, to the Government of the unfairness attaching to the present appointment of the Government nominees to the New Plymouth Harbour Board, and that it be pointed out that the county provides three-sixths of the revenue, and is entitled at least to two nominees as a proportionate representation ; and. further, that the members of the House of Representatives referred to above be requested to strongly urge that the matter should be dealt with before the date of

next re-appointment." On receipt of this resolution I wrote to the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones, Minister of Marine, to the following effect :- "DEAR SIR, -I have the honour to enclose herewith a resolution passed by the New Plymouth Harbour Board. It is not necessary for me to inform you that I am in sympathetic accord with the resolution. The subject-matter of the resolution I brought before the Government on more than one occasion. I also brought the matter before yourself by question in the House. The request is reasonable and just : it was brought under your notice by deputations at Opunake and Manaia on your last visit to the district. I have therefore much pleasure in submitting the matter for your favourable consideration. Awaiting your early and favourable reply." I have received the following reply :- " Marine Department, Wellington, 27th May, 1901. " SIR, -I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, forwarding a communication from the New Plymouth Harbour Board, in which it is urged that at least two of the nominated members of the Board should be selected from country districts, and, in reply, to state the matter will receive consideration when the members are next appointed .- Yours, &c., "WM. HALL-JONES." I believe the time has almost arrived when the appointments should be made, and I trust the Government will appoint men from the Counties of Hawera and Stratford. I do not care what the "colour " of the parties be as long as they are country settlers and rate-payers ; but we have a right to expect that the Government should do this, as it is only just and right that such appointments should be made. I have also noted that Sir Joseph Ward has taken a great interest in trying to find markets. That is one of the principal things we have to consider in this colony, because New Zealand is a great agricultural country, and therefore any one who can find profitable markets for our produce is a public benefactor. The honourable gentleman is certainly an able man, with commercial knowledge of a high order, and his speech to-night in reference to the management of the railways must have satisfied the House that he is the right man in the right place. I am pleased to know that he has appointed a commercial agent to report on the question of this colony obtaining further markets for its produce, and also a tourist agent to assist in the development of that traffic. I feel sure that the tourist traffic will be a great thing to this country in the near future, and when we consider that our summer is contemporaneous with the European winter this country should be capable of attracting a good many tourists. We have a variety of scenery, which surpasses that of Switzerland and Italy combined. We also know that tourists leave a large amount of capital in the country they visit. For instance, it is calculated that the tourist trade is worth five millions to Switzerland alone, and we might, therefore, naturally expect to get a million or a million and a half here. To commence with, it is our bounden duty to let the good points of our country be known with respect to the fertility of our soil, the mildness of our climate, and its scenery. I am glad to see that the Government are interesting themselves in opening up markets in South Africa, where I consider there is a good market for our produce. In this connection I am going to read an extract from a paper read by Professor Wallis, of the Agricultural Association of South Africa. This gentleman is a very capable man. and he is thoroughly conversant with the question he writes about. He read this paper at the Royal Colonial Institute lately, and he says,- " It remains to be decided whether or not South Africa is an agricultural and stock-rearing country capable of great development and of supporting many more inhabitants of European origin. My personal belief is that South Africa will never be developed through its agriculture. but that development will first come through the mines, not alone of gold and diamonds, but of silver, copper, coal, and many other valuable

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represented in a manner for variety and extent | unsurpassed in any other similar area. The demands for fruit and vegetable products at the mines will no doubt lead to the extension of market-gardening near these populous centres, pean cereals practically impossible during the but the development of the general agriculture of the country will be a slow process. The chances are that for a time it will go back in the two new colonies, because the Dutch population will not henceforward exercise so much control

over the black people who have done this work, and the area of cultivation will A great deal has been naturally contract. written about irrigation being the probable salvation of the country. Many small local ventures have been marvellously successful in additional element of speculation, which cannot transforming what was desert into a Garden of Eden. At Douglas, for example, a prosperous community has sprung up on small plots, many of which were sold recently at over \$53 per acre. Land under ordinary farm crops is held at Oudsthoorn at from \$50 to \$150 per acre of capital value. Fruit lands of good quality have in some instances run up to several hundreds of pounds per acre, and at Warrenton, in a report issued by Government authority, a record annual return of \$100 per acre is mentioned. A good many promising irrigation schemes have been examined in various districts of Cape Colony, but most of them involve the expenditure of a large amount of capital, and will require to be worked with much skill and care to make them pay. But all the possible schemes put together would not form a scheme large enough to produce any appreciable difference on the development of the vast area of South Africa. Admitting that there are many small irrigation ventures that are likely to be financially successful, by bringing my remarks to a close. I wish to even with a considerable capital outlay, it is a fact that no great irrigation undertaking like attentive hearing they have given me. those of India is possible. There the cause of success of the great canal systems of northern India is that the inlets are supplied near the bases of the mountains by the never-failing drainage from their ever snow-clad summits, last baby to the visit of the future King of Eng- and most abundantly when the sun is hottest and when water is most wanted. In South lating Sir Joseph Ward on the honour bestowed Africa the conditions are quite different. There is no summer reserve of snow. The torrential young infant grows up, and when the next visit rains pass off in a few days by deep channels, from which water can only be taken in limited of the King's son takes place, we shall have a Sir Patrick. Now, I am surprised to find that quantities at few points and at great expense. other changes have taken place, in connection No deep storage dams could be contemplated with the Opposition. Personally, I may say in the mountains to supply an area of, say, that I must acknowledge the courtesy that has 100,000 acres, and the shallow dams which it is always been shown to me by the Opposition, possible to form in a flat country with an evapo- and particularly by their esteemed leader. A ration of a depth of from 5 ft. to 7 ft. of water annually become in a few years salt marshes. assure honourable members on the other side This fact has been abundantly demonstrated at that I shall always regard with satisfaction the Van Wyk's Vley, in the dry Carnarvon district presence of the present leader of the Opposition of Cape Colony. The irrigation dam at Beau- on those benches. As regards one of the fort West has also demonstrated that shallow members of the Ministry, I am surprised to dams in the Karoo rapidly fill with silt washed hear that he is just now in hot water, for I in from the drainage area. learn that he has gone to that far-famed sana- "Without irrigation, the extent of South torium Rotorua. I have felt very great pleasure Africa that is capable of cultivation with satis- at the action of the Government in one respect : factory results is an infinitesimal fraction of I am, as members know, a supporter of the Go- the whole, and even that is subjected to peri- vernment, and I shall continue to be so as long odical droughts, which at times destroy a whole season's crop ; to destructive hailstorms, which are specially prevalent on the central plateau ; and to fungoid parasitic pests on the common grain-crops, which makes the growth of Euro- South Africa wet season of summer. will never be a great agricultural country capable of exporting grain. With the development of the local irrigation schemes that are possible, and better systems of management, it may more nearly produce the amount of food requisite for internal consumption. The possible develop- ment in the numbers of live-stock is for the present curtailed by the prevalence of so many diseases, which reduce profits, and introduce an fail to check the investment of capital in the industry. The common diseases and parasitic affections are nowhere better represented ; but in addition South Africa has a number of diseases peculiarly her own, for which specifics have not yet been found." Honourable members will see that 12.30. there are great opportunities for pro- curing a

market in South Africa, and we should promptly take advantage of it. But in order to do so we must have shipping facilities, because if we have shipping facilities we can increase our exports; there is no doubt about that. It would pay too. If highly cultivated, New Zealand can produce enough to supply the armies of the world. If we have cool-stores established at the Cape, as suggested by the Premier, it will be a step in the right direction, and if they are managed in a proper and systematic manner we ought to succeed. Now, I think at this early hour of the morning I shall be consulting the wishes of honourable members thank honourable members for the kind and Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City) .- Mr. Speaker, since I had the pleasure of sitting in this Chamber interesting and great events have taken place, from the arrival of Sir Joseph's land. I have very much pleasure in congratulating him, and I have no doubt that when the thing of beauty is a joy for ever, and I can

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as they do justice to Auckland, and do what is put into the hands of those settlers who took right in the interests of the colony. Speaking as a member for the City of Auckland, I have been extremely pleased at the way in which members of the Ministry have kept their promises made on the floor of this House. They promised to visit Auckland and ascertain the requirements of the northern part of this Island. I pointed out to them last session that if they visited the north they would be cordially received, and they would find that the northern portion of the colony requires an attention which it has never yet properly received, and that they would see the large areas of uncultivated Crown and Native land which requires settlement. There are many advantages enjoyed by the northern part of this Island which were not known even to members of the Ministry until they recently visited Auckland. I have been very much pleased that the Government have kept their promise so far as our district is concerned. I heard also that, out of the £130,000 promised for the continuation of the Main Trunk line, £129,000 has been expended. That in itself is very satisfactory. Perhaps the Government have shown rather a superabundance of energy in regard to military matters. It is all very well to excite our young men to go to South Africa, and I quite approve of what the Government did in the first instance; but I do not think it is in the interests of the colony that any further martial spirit should be aroused. I think the attention of the Government and the people should be devoted to opening avenues of labour and developing the resources of the colony. There are a certain number of men in every town who are always out of work, and there are a number of boys who under the present regulations cannot be appointed as apprentices. There are in every portion of the colony the resources which, if the Government exercised the organizing power which they possess, and if they put into industrial matters the same energy that they have displayed in sending our young men to South Africa, this country would soon bound to the front and make very rapid progress indeed. Now, in connection with the North Island goldfields, at the present time there is a disposition on the part of the English investors to withdraw their capital. There are three mines closing down at Coromandel, and the capital is to be sent to South Africa. It is not for us to advertise South Africa before the world. We require to retain our producing-power in our own country. Our difficulty should not be how to find employment for our men, but how to get sufficient men to develop the unparalleled resources of this country. In regard to the land question, the same principle applies as it does to our industrial matters. Instead of continually buying land that is already productive, being covered with grass and sheep, I would like to see a certain number of men put on to clear a thousand or two acres of land in the King-country, so as to still further increase the wealth of the country. This land could be sold, and, instead of giving the unearned increment to private owners, the money expended could be up portions of the land and settled upon it. I consider that the great energy and ability the Government possess might be devoted to finding profitable sources of employment in the colony. I do not care whether it is in the direction of developing our goldfields, or in opening up our lands, or what it is; but anything is better than allowing the whole world to think only of South Africa when far greater resources exist in New Zealand. The complaint of many members of the

contingents who returned to New Zealand is that they cannot obtain work, and I do not think in a country like this there should be any difficulty whatever in providing work of a profitable nature to employ them. All that our working men want is the necessities of life, all of which can be produced here, and we require to keep our own able-bodied men here to assist in increasing the wealth of this country. I am not for a moment expressing dissatisfaction or a want of confidence in the present Government, and consider that, as far as Auckland is concerned, their action in taking the Royal party to Rotorua was a very wise one. The advertisement that Rotorua received on that occasion is going to be productive of the greatest benefit to this colony. I was at Rotorua myself, and I saw there the representatives of the greatest newspapers in the world, and they were sending away daily columns descriptive of what was taking place. The representatives of illustrated papers were there also, and no doubt we shall shortly see illustrations of the hot lakes of New Zealand in those papers, and the district will be advertised as it has never been advertised before. The hot lakes have not been of the same benefit to us as the hot springs in other parts of the world have been to those countries where they exist. I think in that one action alone the Government have earned the gratitude of the people of Auckland. As regards the question of selling the produce of this country, it certainly is most important that some steps should be taken to secure better markets for our settlers. An enormous market exists in England, and when I was there I was struck with one fact, and that was that the settlers of this country are not getting the prices they should for their sheep. There was illustration of this at the Grosvenor Hotel inquiry. It seems that some of those interested in the management of that hotel property were found guilty of having bought articles at a very low price and having sold them at a very high one ; and for some years past it turned out that they have been buying New Zealand mutton at 33d. per pound and selling it to the hotel at 1s. 3d. per pound as best English mutton. I mentioned this to the Agent-General before I left, and I was very pleased to see in the papers this week that they have been taking action against dealers who have been selling Argentine and Australian mutton as New Zealand mutton. It seems we have been between two fires in this colony : on the one hand they have been buying our mutton and selling it as English ; and, on the other hand, they have been buying other in-

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ferior mutton and selling it as New Zealand mutton. However, I have just arrived from Auckland, and I will not detain the House longer, except to express the very great pleasure it has always been to me to meet this House. I hope we shall direct our best energies in order to get industries started and avenues of labour opened up in different parts of this country, and that we shall be able to do away entirely with this craze that exists of sending our people to South Africa. I hope we shall give them no consideration whatever to go to any part of the world except this magnificent Colony of New Zealand, and I trust that, instead of sending our young men away, we will make such an attractive programme of land-settlement and railway-construction as will draw people of the right class from all parts of the world to New Zealand. Mr. J. HUTCHESON (Wellington City) .- Sir, I have a few words I would like to say in connection with the matter contained in His Excellency's Speech ; but, before addressing myself to the Speech, I would like to say that, having learned that it is the intention of the Government to call for a division at the close of the debate, and that the resolution before the House is that a respectful address be presented to His Excellency in connection with the Speech from the Throne, I feel it my duty, however I may differ from the details of the Speech, to vote for the adoption of that motion. The Premier is exceedingly adept at digging pitfalls for the feet of the unwary. He is a Master of Arts in putting people in false positions; but for my part I have not the slightest hesitation in voting as my judgment directs, without regard to the left-handed significance that it may be made to bear afterwards to the constituency. I was somewhat amused to hear the interesting discourse of Artemus on Sir Joseph Ward. His pretty little reference to the latest baby was quite characteristic, and the glowing eulogy of the member for Hawke's Bay as "a thing of

beauty and a joy for ever " was quite overpower- ing. However, we can pardon the honourable gentleman, as he has been travelling recently, and has not long arrived in the House. But he struck the same keynote as almost every other member in the House in this address, or any other address of any importance for about the last two years. The burden of his song also was, "What a splendid advertisement New Zealand will get from the Royal visit." Truly, Napoleon Buonaparte knew his England when he said it was a nation of shopkeepers. Adver- tisement. advertisement, advertisement - even the death of Her Majesty was not too sacred for the advertising instinct ; the death of our sons in South Africa -- what a glorious advertisement for New Zealand ! The Premier set the keynote in the sending away of the troops-a splendid advertisement ; the return of the troops-an advertisement for New Zealand ; the accession of His Majesty King Edward VII .- a glorious advertisement for New Zealand; the Impe- rial troops - a glorious advertisement for occasion I, who have served in American ships New Zealand. From the instinct of the ad- and sailed under the American navigation-laws. vertising shopkeeper there is no subject sacred. and therefore have had experience of what I Now as to the Address. The mover of the Address, it appeared to me, was considerably puzzled to discover in the Speech how much he could approve of, and was somewhat anxious to avoid subjects he could not approve of, in marked contrast to the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds), who said candidly, " What I am going to speak of to-night are sub- jects in connection with the administration and legislation of the Government that I do not approve of ; those I do not refer to it may be taken I generally approve of." The one spoke of those things he could approve of, while the other said that what he spoke of on this occa- sion would be those measures he could not approve of. Now, in the speech of the seconder of the Address, the honourable member for the Suburbs, we have two matters principally dealt with : One was the important question of the Frisco mail-service, and the other his pet theme, the Petone Workshops. In connection with the mail-service the honourable gentle- man made a most creditable exposition of the present position of affairs. The only thing I had to find fault with was that it might have come with a better grace from others who feel the position as strongly and as keenly as he, and of whom it could not have been said that they were actuated at all by self-interest. But what is the position in connection with the mail- services? Let me refer briefly to the utter- ances of the Premier on the 1st September, 1899, when the question of ocean mail-services was under discussion. The honourable mem- ber for Dunedin City had moved a certain resolution limiting the payment of subsidy for carrying ocean mails to vessels registered in a British or colonial register. That was taken by the Premier-as, indeed, it was meant-as a direct blow to the subsidising of the Spreckels steamers for the carriage of the San Francisco mails. But, not to be beaten, he attempted to scare the House by the bogie of international complication, more hinted at than expressed, and to the effect on New Zealand of the passage of the Hanna-Payne Shipping Act by the United States Congress. He said, ---- "I do not wish to do or say anything un- pleasant, but I want to show you the serious- ness of the situation if what the honourable member for Dunedin City proposed had been carried. At the present time what is known as the Payne Bill is before the Congress of America, and, as you know, they are contractors for the San Francisco service. If you passed such a motion as was proposed by the honourable member it would materially prejudice the position of this colony with America. It would prejudice the colony particularly in respect to the San Francisco service." Well, we have paid the subsidy. We have had the service, and from the accounts, even of those who wish to see it a successful and permanent service, it has been a dismal failure. It is not the question of the service at all ; it is the question of the principle involved. On that

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am talking about, pointed out to the House how conservative, how prohibitive, were the ; further refer to it, except to say that, between American navigation-laws. I pointed out that while we, in our foolish magnanimity, per- mitted American vessels to come here with cargo for Wellington, Lyttelton,

Dunedin-aye, and Auckland-and to peddle the various portions of that cargo coastwise, like any other coastal vessel, a British vessel similarly situated was compelled to discharge every ounce of her cargo at the first American port she touched at. The American said in effect, " We will do our own coastal carriage, and if you have goods for more than one American port we will carry that portion to the other ports ourselves." But we use still our national boast that " Britannia rules the waves." It is high time that lying motto was taken down, when we have got to subsidise foreign bottoms to carry British mails, goods, and passengers. The remedy was pointed out by my friend Mr. Massey, who, quoting from the words of an Australian speaker, told us what they had done in Canada. We want to play the same game as they. We want to say, " If you are going to trade from San Francisco via Honolulu to Auckland and Sydney, or any other Australian port " -and this is a question in which we ought to ask the co-operation of our great Australian neighbours-"you shall do similarly as you compel us to do in your country." Again, in this connection, if this colony does not seek better measures for her own protection than what at present is done the alternative route for the carriage of our mails to Vancouver will also be subject to the same disabilities as at present attaches to British steamers calling at Honolulu on the route to San Francisco. Now, this is a matter that I refer to quite free from party bias or rancour, in the strong and sincere hope that Ministers will set themselves to work and, without inviting the hostility of our cousins in America, bring them to their bearings, because they are exceedingly amenable to any argument with dollars behind it. It is the dollar 1.0. that speaks in America, of all countries in the world, and if we can show them they will be at a disadvantage in dealing with us- such a disadvantage as they compel us to submit to-we may treat ; but until that is done there is no doubt that, with the complexity of American politics and the far-reaching influence of rings, trusts, combines, and the great moneyed interests, the most friendly disposed legislators in America are absolutely impotent beside the greater influence outside their House. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay made a speech in this debate that was concise and brilliant. He put the position of those who are opposed to the Government clearly and emphatically, as he believed he had put it last year, and, although there may have been many members who did not then grasp the import of his words, there was at least one here who, according to his own admission, fully understood the significance of the statement made by the honourable gentleman ; but, like the perfect master of fence that he is, he parried it, and went on as of yore. As the member for Hawke's Bay has put the case exhaustively, I need not that honourable gentleman and every member of the Opposition who sit on this side of the House, there is the most complete trust and confidence and friendship. There is nothing of an unpleasant nature, nothing ungracious, no bones broken, none sticking in the throat. We have taken the action we did in the interests of the country. We believed it was necessary that in the criticism of affairs some aid should be given to us. Members of the House have accepted the position, and have themselves said they felt the necessity of free and frank criticism of the legislation of the Government. As long as we were a party with cohesion in our ranks and could be used as the fulcrum under the lever of that great mover of heavy weights, the Premier. he was satisfied. His side refrained from aiding us because of the terror he raised by the crack of the party whip. But now the position is this: that the Opposition is once more resolved into its constituent parts, and the legislation of the session may be fairly debated on its merits from all parts of the House. There will be no more use for the long-handled lever. My respected and learned friend from Auckland, Mr. Napier, was indignant at the insinuation that his party could not, and did not, influence and control the legislation of the Ministry. That is quite a recantation of the views expressed by him in the city he represents, for, if he is correctly reported, these are the words he uttered to his constituents during the recess :-- "The first thing that struck him during his first few weeks in Parliament was that, according to the ideas he had formed of parliamentary government, and according to what was laid down by constitutional writers, parliamentary government did not exist in New Zealand." . Strong terms, my masters. He goes on to say, - " According to the

Constitution of New Zealand, the people of New Zealand were supposed to be supreme in the government of the country. The Ministry was supposed to be a committee of the representatives of the people, to obey the representatives of the people and carry out their desires. That was a complete myth. The measures were concocted and devised by the Ministry, and members were supposed to accept them unintelligently." Is there anything more emphatic than that? "The measures were concocted and devised by the Ministry, and members were supposed to accept them unintelligently." Could I give you a greater condemnation of the sentiments so finely expressed by the honourable gentleman here the other night? He further says, "The consequence was that the country was governed practically by a bureaucracy. An individual member, or even a number of members, could not do much to resist the Ministry. The conditions of work were so opposed to common sense and so much beyond physical endurance that, unless by a large body of the members, successful resistance of anything that might be bad was impossible." You see there is no question here of con-

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trolling, guiding, or even answering the legislation of Ministers, but, on the contrary, any feeble resistance that can be made is all they make reference to. Well, I leave the honourable member at that, to reconcile the discrepancy of the two speeches as best he may. Now, I cannot allow the member for Masterton, who made reference to the farmers' unions, and all those connected with farmers' unions, to pass without some remark. He inveighed against any organization of the farmers, and, Sir, his very heart was in his words if one might judge by the manner of his appeal. He solemnly warned the farmers of New Zealand not to be led aside by wolves in sheep's clothing, as he styled those who were organizing this union; and he further stigmatized those who were advocating this union in New Zealand as Tory hirelings and agents of the National Association. I ventured to remind him, by way of mild interjection, that his friend, the member for Otaki was exceedingly assiduous in his campaign, organizing and solidifying the farmers of New Zealand. As an old unionist, and one who knows the benefits arising from unity, I certainly think the farmers of New Zealand are at last on the right track, and I say, "What for no?" If they have interests, it is fair to assume that they feel those interests can be better conserved by taking united action than by isolation from their fellows. Their conditions of life are such as do not permit of their having daily intercourse with most of their fellows, as is the case with tradesmen in towns. Again, there is so much that by combined action farmers might do for themselves in the way of securing better markets for their produce. As was pointed out to-night by the member for Waihemo, they might even by a national union of farmers regulate the price of their exports on the London market, and also better regulate the local markets for their foodstuffs and products. And for a member who has been considered as the very embodiment of democratic Liberalism to inveigh against such an organization surely indicates one or two things—either he must have been densely ignorant of the object and aims of unionism, or, on the other hand, he had a fear in his heart that it might interfere with his political aspirations, and I venture to assert that the latter assumption is the proper one. He is afraid, Sir, that the farmers may, as other organizations have done before, sell their votes and interests in the highest market, and ally themselves with those whom they believe to be their best friends. And surely they have the right. It may be that their trend will be towards the side of Liberalism, it may be that it will be towards the side of Conservatism; but, as my gallant and honourable friend the member for Hawke's Bay said the other evening, there was no line of demarcation now between Liberals and Conservatives; and his method of proving that was a thrust that went very keenly home. Sir, I will now make a short reference to the honourable member for Riccarton's speech. There is no necessity, and he might well be pardoned for question about it that he made many a good and substantial point. That it should be made by a member of the Liberal party is, of course, another affair, and he duly received the castigation that all recalcitrant members of that great party inevitably receive when they swerve in their allegiance to the great

monopolist of Liberalism. Fortunately, the member for Riccarton belongs to the order of Pachyderms. He has got a thick hide and is well able to stand it, and I know of no member of the House who is so well able to retaliate when the chance offers, and I shall be much mistaken if he does not seek reprisals as opportunity affords. When the Premier was speaking the other night he went exhaustively into the question of titles, armorial bearings, and other things of courtly nature. My views of titular distinction in a self-governing colony are on record in the pages of Hansard of some two or three years ago. Those views I hold as a matter of personal opinion, and I do not desire to force them on any one else. From my point of view titular distinctions in these self-governing colonies are only things for courtiers and flunkeys. I have no words of reflection nor expression of regret to offer to the honourable gentleman who is the most recent recipient of such distinction. In fact, from my point of view I prefer to congratulate him on having accepted such distinction. Of course, I am actuated-and I express it candidly-by the belief that it will accomplish that which it has done for every, or nearly every, colonial statesman who has accepted a title-that is, it will ultimately effect his political obliteration. Sir, some day it will be the cause of his rejection from the favour of his constituents. If we go over the roll from Sir George Dibbs, Sir Henry Parkes, Sir George Turner, and, coming nearer home, Sir Robert Stout, we find they have all met the same fate, and for the same reason: that though with us they are no longer of us. They are no longer commoners. They have accepted a title beyond the gift of the people; and the very first principle of our form of government is that the will of the people is supreme. But that is a matter for the recipient. I have no reflection, or expression of regret, or anything of the kind to offer to the honourable gentleman who has received it. Rather do I say, as the American schoolboy said when presenting the inkstand to his departing master, "Sir, we ask you to accept this mark of our esteem with the hope that you will go forth and soar, and the sorer you get the better we'll like it." It was very much in the same spirit that many people saw the honourable gentleman accept the titular distinction. Now we come to the Premier. It was truly pointed out by the member for Riccarton that, of all previous democrats who has ever led a political party in this colony, to him has been reserved the distinction of being the first to masquerade about the country in a Windsor uniform. That it was necessary for him to wear such a uniform when he approached the Royal presence I am quite willing to agree. There it may have been conforming to the custom. I would use no

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words of disdain to any democrat who, as the representative of a self-governing people, went to interview the Sovereign and there conformed to the customs to any degree, however ludicrous it might appear to me. But that he should parade in livery here, that he should have been photographed in it in the presence of, amongst others, the King of the Cannibal Islands, and Maori chiefs innumerable, in his inordinate desire for notoriety and fame, is another matter. If that is his idea of being a leader of a democratic community such as ours, then I say more's the pity. The short glimpse I got of him "with them all on" reminded me of nothing else than Hosea Biglow's recruiting sergeant, as thus described in the "Biglow Papers": - "Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as poplar as a hen with 1 chicking, with 2 fellers a drummin and fifin arter him like all nater. the Sarjunt he thout Hosea hedn't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo's though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosy woodn't take none o' his sarse, for all he hed's much as 20 Rooster's tales stuck on- to his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his shoulders, and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut natur hed sot in his featers to make a six-pounder out on." Now, the right honourable gentleman was good enough to make his usual reference to myself, when commiserating the honourable member for Hawke's Bay on having such as myself and the honourable member for Palmerston sitting with him. The honourable gentleman alluded to me by name as one of two vipers that he had taken to his bosom to sting him. Now, under what circumstances did I leave the right honourable gentleman's leadership? Was my cessation from his lead not done as honourably as a man could do?

Did I not resign my seat in this House on the issue that I could no longer follow his lead, and did I not again seek and receive from my constituents a new charter, directing me and instructing me no longer to follow him? What has he to complain of? While in his following did he find me ever deceive him, lie to him, or do one dishonest or unfair thing to him? Did I not protest against the abuses of his Administration, as many of his party are candidly and honestly obliged to do; and was it not reluctantly, and after long and painful experience, that I became disillusioned from the estimate I had formed of his character? Why, then, should he complain, or deny me the right to candidly criticize his public actions now? What right has he to accuse me more than any other member who is opposed to him of any kind of treachery, or want of fealty, or anything else? Did I not sever my connection as honourably as a man could do, by resigning my position in the House and appealing unto Caesar, who gave me a new charter? Coming to the Speech itself, I wish to express my simple and earnest regret at the loss of a Sovereign the like of whom the world has seen but few indeed; and, Sir, my regret is quite as sincere and quite as vain as the long string of greasy phrases hung together in this haphazard fashion, and reading more like a Dr. Williams's pink pills advertisement than an Address from the Crown—one of those advertisements with conspicuous headlines, which, after you have read on a bit, you find is all about Clement's Tonic or Mother Siegel's Syrup. Yet Ministers put this thing into the mouth of His Excellency, and we are asked to pass a motion embodying a resolution that we present a respectful Address agreeing to consider the contents of this message. With many of the measures of policy outlined in the message I am in perfect agreement. The methods or the ultimate form of them is another matter. But the proposals are there laid down in fine terms of generalities, so that no man can say what may be evolved. Now, reference has been made to the increase in the Maori race. A recent writer in one of our daily papers has questioned that, and from the character of his writings I am inclined to believe he is a man who knows something of the subject. He points out very rightly that this is probably the very first occasion upon which a complete or exhaustive census of the Native race has been taken. If it is correct that the Native people in the colony are increasing I shall rejoice; but it is well we should not delude ourselves by false estimates, when we come to consider that any census of the Native people that has hitherto been taken has been admittedly imperfect in the extreme. There are just one or two more points I would like to say a few words upon, because I know the House is desirous of closing this debate and going to a division, and I will not be the means of keeping members too long out of their beds. The Speech makes reference to the stopping of the operation of trusts and combines. All I hope is that legislation may do it; but I have very strong doubts that it will be found that those who are engaged in the formation of trusts and combines will succeed in defeating the spirit if not the letter of any legislation that we may pass. I ask members who know anything of the subject -- who have given themselves the trouble to look into their wives' grocers' bills—who has got the benefit of the recent rebate on the items composing the necessaries of life included in the recent rebate in the Customs duties? I have carefully studied the grocers' bills from that time till now, and I find there is absolutely no difference whatever, not even in the price of kerosene. I find that two-shilling tea is still two-shilling tea, and I want to know who has got the benefit of the remission? It certainly has not come home to the consumers and those whom it was intended to benefit. What a remarkable coincidence it was that the price of kerosene jumped up as soon as the news reached America that 6d. 3 gallon duty had been taken off in New Zealand. Was it a coincidence, or was it in keeping with the practices of trusts and combines like the Standard Oil Trust and others? Whoever has got the benefit, I say it has not gone to the pockets of those whom it was intended to benefit

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there I should have said so too—will not his—namely, the working-classes. I am sorry to see words stand inverted, and should I not say, that the honourable member for Wallace is not "Inasmuch as you argued that no one had a hand in his place, because he is an open and honest rival to deprive you of the emoluments

for champion of what has passed down to history as "the £40 steal." He implied, although which you contracted with the people, therefore you should say no logic, nor reason, nor he did not say it directly in his speech, that every member of the House who voted for honesty could defend the increasing of your it and those who had voted against it had salary during the time of the currency of your drawn the money and pocketed it for their own service." I wished, for the sake of others, to use. He argued that, having accepted it from say as little as possible about the £40 allowance to members at the time; I did not wish to the Treasury, they must have utilised it for make a hullabaloo about it, especially as most their own benefit in some way. I would like to have told him that in my view it was necessary of us had sat up during the long and weary that an honourable member should take delivery nights while Ministers and a good many of their supporters worked in relays, and of it before he could divest himself of it, because had so manned down the feeble and nu- it would lie to his credit in the Treasury so long merically small Opposition till we had not as this Parliament existed, and it could be said, strength nor mental energy enough to resist. and would be said, that he had only left it there until the scent had cooled, in order that he But now the proposal to increase the salary during the currency of Parliament, and give might go later on and lift it. That is the reason why, as soon as might be, I went to the Trea- members the advantage of it, is as wrong sury, drew the money, and immediately walked as the attempted filching of part of the to the Bank of New Zealand and paid it into honorarium for which the honourable gentle- the Public Account, whence, in my opinion, it man had contracted in 1887 during the term of had been improperly taken. I am not singular his services in that Parliament, and it will be in that respect, but there are others in this hard for him to find any logic to justify an House who do not choose to make capital out argument to the contrary. The Public Revenues Act is one of the wickedest and most undemo- of that sort of thing: but they were so heartily ashamed of the matter that they wanted it cratic and most tyrannical measures that any disposed of as soon as possible. Now, in his representative Chamber has ever permitted its. speech the other night, in the very few Ministry to put through. It puts into the hands of the Ministry of the day the absolute moments that the Premier had to spare on general subjects-in the very few minutes he control of the purse. I instance a case in con- had left over from cudgelling his erstwhile nection with the Conciliation and Arbitration supporter, the member for Riccarton - he Act of last year. In section 112, this House defended that misappropriation, and also the inserted an amendment debarring the Minister Public Revenues Bill. I turned to the Speech of the day from fixing the emoluments of the of the honourable member for Kumara in 1887, President of the Arbitration Court; and yet, when the debate on the reduction of honor- Sir, notwithstanding, by the aid of this in- arium was on in this Chamber, and there I iquitous measure, the express will of Parlia- found the honourable gentleman the ment, as set down in the statute law, is set 1.30. strongest advocate of adhering to a at naught and reviled, and the fees of the contract. He argued, and properly so, that President of the Arbitration Court are ab- there had been a contract with the electors solutely gazetted at £2 2s. a day during the time he is hearing a case, or travelling. when that Parliament was elected that he was to receive a certain remuneration for the life of to or from any part of the colony to hear & case, which in theory and in practice means that Parliament-at least during the term of the whole year through. The time of the his service in that Parliament. That is a good puisne Judge who has been intrusted with the sound democratic argument; he has always work of the Court of Arbitration is almost ex- consistently argued that the servant is worthy of his hire, and so have I; for that also is a clusively taken up in arbitration work. From good and sound argument. He also said he knew no reason why he should sacrifice himself on the altar of popularity in order that he lous position-which, perhaps, was intended- might starve. He upheld the right of a man to payment for his services, and so would .I. But will not his argument turn end for end ? Can I not invert his argument and say that if it was a contract that the payment should not be diminished during the term of that Parliament, is it not also a contract that the payment should not be increased ? If during the time of depression- and it

was unfortunately a time of depression, as he had to admit in his speech-if during the time of depression the argument held good, that though there was a necessity for the strictest kind of retrenchment, yet he saw no reason why he should offer up a sacrifice-and if I had been all we can judge by the cases pending, his work will be perennial, and we shall find the anomaly- that one of the junior Judges will be drawing a salary superior to that of the Chief Justice of the colony. Although that may please some who hold extreme partisan views, I do not think it can be said to be based on justice, fairness, or a sense of the fitness of things. I will now leave that matter, and will make just one more reference to the Address from the Throne, and, as I have already promised, Sir, it will be short. One paragraph says, "I regret to say that the war in South Africa still continues." Sir, to that expression of regret I give my most sincere Amen. I do regret that it continues, and it was by no wish of mine it has continued so long, or indeed that

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it ever began. Sir, I cannot avoid saying -it is part of my very life when I say that I believe, from the bottom of my heart, that in this matter England has erred. It is, of course, a matter of no moment what I may think on this matter. But the condemnation of the war we heard this evening seemed so strange, coming from the mouth of the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Barclay). It seems to me so bold of him, and, of course, I could not help agreeing with very much of what he said. But it is not yet the time to discuss the details, the merits, and demerits of the war, though I sincerely believe there will come a time in the not distant future when we shall look back to this affair of South Africa as regretfully and as remorsefully as we have done over the American War of Independence and the crime of the Crimea. Sir, for nearly two years now, since that fatal afternoon in September, 1899, when we launched so enthusiastically into the great sea of Imperial conquest, we have been living in a state of false, enervating excitement, and we have become surfeited with Jingoism, militarism, Imperialism-call it what you may; and now to me the most gratifying thing in our public life is that all the pomp and panoply is passing away, and that we are coming back as a country to our reason, coming back to sane and rational citizenship, to interest ourselves in the affairs of our colony, in the interests of our people. We shall look back upon this period as a hideous dream, and we shall regret, I hope not in vain, that we did not pause a little before we went to the extreme we have done. Sir, I will not prolong my remarks any further except to say I have resolved and do fully intend that, as far as my services can assist in the perfecting and passing of legislation that I believe to be for the good of the people, those services shall be cheerfully rendered. I intend throughout this session to seek no advantage from a party point of view, neither to impede nor impair the process of legislation. but to aid and assist in its prosecution in every way. Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City) .- Mr. Speaker, I shall not only be consulting my own feelings, but, I am quite sure, consulting the feelings of the House, if I refrain from making any lengthy reply to the speeches that have been made on the motion which I had the honour to move a few evenings ago. Just one or two remarks are all that will be necessary from me. Captain Russell, and one or two members of his party who followed in a similar strain, appeared to think that I ought, in moving the motion, to have expressed myself in stronger terms. Their remarks seemed to suggest regret that my speech was not a speech of a somewhat more vehement character. Now, Sir, when I was asked to move that Address, and consented to do so, it struck me how very little there was in the Address to call for anything like heated criticism or debate, and as I looked over the details of the Address, and saw that in regard to every item that was proposed I would be bound to admit at once that I was in agreement, I felt that anything like a heated speech would be altogether out of place. I am not particularly fond of duplicating my words, and I left the debating of the questions themselves until those questions are in detail before the House. It may be deemed inconsistent for one who has moved the Address in Reply to state that to my mind it has always proved a waste of time to engage in a debate of this kind, and in moving the Address I wished to avoid arousing anything like a lengthy or acrimonious discussion. But, of course, it is impossible to please everybody, and I certainly should never try. The

honour- able member for Hawke's Bay, in a speech which has already been referred to as a speech characteristic of the honourable gentleman. drew our attention to the fact that he had resigned his position as leader of the Opposi- tion. Indeed, Sir, he told us that at a meeting held on the morning of the day on which he spoke it had been decided that they should dis- band as an organized Opposition. He went on to point out that, under the altered circum- stances of the case, it would be necessary for every member of the House to deal with the measures as they came before the House in the fullest and freest criticism. It struck me while the honourable gentleman was speaking that his remarks were almost identical with re- marks I myself had made a few weeks ago when addressing my constituents. I then said,- "The Government majority was so over- whelmingly large as to induce one to believe that party government was abolished, for, prac- tically speaking, there was now no organized Opposition. The very security of the Liberal party and Government, however. depended on the proposed legislation being submitted to the fullest and the fairest criticism." Those are almost the identical terms used by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, leav- ing out, of course, the words " Liberal party " and " Liberal Government." The honourable gentleman told us they had reduced the erst- while Opposition to a position of equality- there was now absolute equality amongst them. I am not quite sure whether that equality is a desirable thing in the House. I am by no means certain that it will lead to a better class of debate than we have had in the past. That remains to be seen. I am afraid it will not enliven the proceedings of the House, and it struck me we might almost express the posi- tion in the words- # Equality, where are the charms Politicians have seen in thy face; Better speak 'midst continued alarms Than debate in this dead-level place. Sir, it does appear to me that the position suggested by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay is simply that of reducing, not to a position of equality, but to a dead-level -- a very dead level. It will be futile to attempt to criticize the numerous speeches that have been delivered. Indeed, Sir, I can in the main congratulate the members who have spoken on being in such close agreement with the proposed legislation which is foreshadowed in the Address from the Throne. In only one or two instances has there been cause for regret in the course of

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the debate. It is not for me to attempt to step in between the member for Riccarton and the has every right to entertain the opinions he leader of the House, the Premier, with regard did this afternoon ; but, I would ask him, Is to their differences. The honourable member for Riccarton expressed himself fearlessly and forcibly, as he always does, and expected, of course, a reply from the leader of the House. We all have to take it in our turn ; but there is one little item which I think every member in the House regretted, and I cannot allow it to pass without expressing my personal regret. That is, that the Government Whip unintentionally forgot, I think, that he was debating They probably would never hear anything about on the floor of this House, and ventured, in the course of his remarks, to drag before this House some ancient history of an essentially private character. and which has no bearing on the matters before the House, or on the speech made by the member for Riccarton. It had no bearing on the conduct of the Premier of the colony, or on the honourable member's remarks regarding it, and it ought never to have been introduced ; and it could only have been intro- duced with the idea of disparaging and be- mirching the character of the honourable member for Riccarton. Mr. STEVENS. - I rise to- a point of order. It has been stated by the honourable gentleman that what I said was of an essentially private character. My information was derived from the public press of the colony. Mr. COLLINS .- Well, Sir, it may have been from the public press of the colony of years ago. I certainly knew nothing about it, and, at any rate, it was a matter having absolutely no bear- ing on the debate. My observations clearly show that it would have been a very good thing if honourable members had followed the example I set them generally in proposing the resolution. It would at least have left the debate free from anything like acrimony, or anything like strong Duncan personal ill-feeling when the debate was over. I might just say that I regret also that the honourable

member for Dunedin City (Mr. Bar- clay) this afternoon should have seen fit to make remarks which I think were most injudicious. While no doubt entitled to express his own views, and while giving him credit for sincerity and courage in making the references he did, still I do think it is one's duty to resent such remarks as were made this afternoon in regard to the conduct of the British authorities in connection with the operations in South Africa. The honourable member said that the tide of opinion was rising-that opinions were changing with regard to the conduct of affairs in South Africa. Now, Sir, there are many of us who lament and who regret exceedingly that that wretched war in South Africa should have been so terribly prolonged : but, Sir, I am under the impression that the prolongation of that war is very largely the result of indiscreet utterances similar to those we listened to this afternoon, and, though he has a perfect right to express his own feelings, I would tell him. without fear of contradiction, that such utterances are indiscreet. I do not regard him as a pro-Boer. I accepted his explanation to us twelve months ago that he was not a pro-Boer. I do not believe that he ever was pro-Boer. I admit at once that he it not unwise, while our sons and brothers are fighting the battles of the Empire, and shedding their blood in South Africa-is it wise to prolong that wretched struggle by creating an impression among the Boers that the tide of opinion is rising, and that public opinion was changing in their favour. I do not for a moment imagine that the speech of the honourable gentleman will have that effect. it, but it is unwise all the same. It is speeches of that character which undoubtedly have led to the prolongation of the struggle in South Africa. Such utterances are calculated to en- courage the feeling on the part of the Boers that there is a growing change of feeling in their favour, and that there is a rising tide of senti- ment favourable to them, and to lead to further prolongation of this wretched and now useless struggle on their part. Sir, I do not know that there is any need for me to say more. The debate has finished, and I congratulate honour- able members generally on the way they have conducted the debate ; and if I have ventured to express dissent from one or two things that have been said, I hope honourable members will take it in good part, and accept my remarks as the expression of my honest conviction. The House divided. AYES, 32. Mills Allen, E. G. Fowlds Arnold O'Meara Gilfedder Seddon Barclay Graham Steward Bennet Hall Buddo Tanner Herries Thomson, J. W. Carneross Hutcheson Lang Carroll Ward Witheford. Laurenson Lethbridge Tellers. Ell Field Massey Collins Flatman McGowan Hornsby. NOES, 4. Tellers. Fisher Palmer Parata. Stevens. Majority for, 28. Motion agreed to. The House adjourned at five minutes to two o'clock a.m. #