

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Friday, 6th September, 1901. Shops and Offices Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. SHOPS AND OFFICES BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- This Bill has been circulated with the amendments, and honourable members are no doubt familiar with what has been done in regard to it. Although they do not all go in the direction I would wish, still I am prepared to accept the Bill as it left the Council. I beg therefore to move, That the Council agree to the third reading. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI .- Sir, I do not like this Bill, and as this is the third reading I think it right that I should say a few words by way of protest against it. When the Labour Bureau was established, this was done for the purpose of finding employment for casual labourers. Since then it has grown in a most wonderful way. It has grown and grown until it has become a great monster in the community, and for the last ten years we have, in legislating for the country, had nothing before us but labour legislation-legislation which has proved itself to be detrimental to the best interests of the community. It has crippled a great number of enterprises, and has benefited practically no one. Sir, no doubt the department must keep pace with the times, otherwise it would be shut up; and, so as to show some need for its existence, legislation of some kind or another is submitted to us every session. The Bureau from its commencement up to the present time has been an injury to the community as a whole. We have not to go far to see what the effect of that legislation has been. We are all cognisant of it ; and we now begin to think that the Labour Bureau and its advocates are virtually the Government of this colony, for they are dictating to the Crown. I am perfectly satisfied, as far as Ministers are concerned, that they never thought they would be driven into the position that they are in at present by the Labour Bureau. Sir, this Bill was referred to the Labour Bills Committee, and it is not very often when a Government measure is referred to a Committee that it is mutilated in the way this Bill has been. The Committee has taken upon itself to place in that measure clauses which are most arbitrary, and which will prove ruinous and heart-breaking to a great number of people, and which will, if carried out, affect the

methods of a great number of hard-working people in the manner in which

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they get their existence. It will reduce the strong, powerful company be exempt from the value of property, and by shutting up shops vidual struggling with his express dare not will decrease the income of the Corporation, and do anything? Where are we going to, and decrease the income of the Government, as far as valuation is concerned. Sir, take clause 2A, have at all times taken a deep and sincere which compels the smaller shops to close at six o'clock. Why, that is the very time when the interest in the welfare of this colony, but I am poor and unfortunate people are getting an distant when we shall be sorry for what we are existence, because whoever wishes to buy any- thing during the day goes to the large stores where there is a greater variety; and if these shops are shut up the consequence will be that dumb, and we can read and see what is going they will have to lose half a day's work to on ; and, to prove the power of this legislation, procure that which is necessary for their subsis- tence. Take, Sir, the case of charwomen, the women who are cleaning out these premises, or given to a Minister of the Cro . n, we had the those engaged in a store, who go through their labour party dictating to the Premier of the work and are paid at six o'clock. They go home intending to buy the necessaries for the day coming for their children ; but they find should be in the future. Such a thing is every shop shut up. The consequence will be unheard of-that the dignity of a Minister that the poor unfortunate people must starve their children or lose a day's work. But that his being dictated to as to what should take is not all. The aim and ambition of the parties who wish to enforce that law, to my mind, is very simple : it is that, while the shops are all allow himself to sit there and be intimidated in open and doing business whenever they think that way. I speak warmly, because I believe fit and proper, the socialist unions have not the power to command them, and their de- and I felt a deep sense of-I was going to say pity, but I will not I was very sorry to find sire is consequently to starve out the little ones so as to consolidate trade in the hands of that Ministers should be so associated at a banquet, and intimidated as to future labour the few, and then they will have power to deal with those big parties. That is the sole sub- legislation. Sir, I have been down South for a stance of their ambition-to drive people from few days, and from Lyttelton to Oamaru and business and make them go into the big places if they possibly can, and as soon as they have against the encroachment of this labour legisla- driven all the little people out, and the trade is tion. I tried to disabuse the minds of the consolidated into the hands of the few, our people upon the subject. The Government friends the socialists will have power to control made a start, but the department has driven them. That, Sir, to my mind, is the intention them from the beginning, until it has now of this Bill. We have it on the authority of become the huge monster it is at the present my friend the Hon. Mr. Rigg. The other day instant I feel I should be wanting in my duty he said in this Council that, if they could as a public man if I were to allow this Bill to. not get a living unless they kept their pre- mises open after six o'clock, they should give up business and seek employment somewhere order of the day for this day three months. else. and if not able to get employment they should apply to the State, and the State should physically fit this afternoon to say much on this Bill, but I cannot allow it to pass without keep them. That is a pretty state of affairs, surely, to declare the colony a benevolent in- saying a few words. And, first, I must say I stitution for every one who wishes to come to it agree with everything that has fallen from the Hon. Mr. Shrimski about this foolish, and, because the socialist does not want them to I must call it, wicked measure. I call any work or keep their premises open. We have Bill a wicked Bill which is calculated, whether excluded the mercantile businesses, and we have excluded the banks, and there was ambition in intentionally or not, to sow discord where that by the socialists. If they can get the bank there is or ought to be peace. If this Bill (facials to come under this Act, they will force had passed through Committee as originally introduced, the bank clerks would have been them to form themselves into a union, and they will

become part and parcel of the unions brought within its operation at the suggestion of a few faddists and mischief-makers, who, in existing at the present time. I am pleased to find that these gentlemen in the banks have a all probability, know nothing whatever about h gher ambition and a greater respect for them- banking houses, or whether there exists a necessity for interfering with their internal stlves than to allow themselves to be incorpo- rated under this Bill. And that, Sir, is the arrangements or not Without hoping for a. trend of this legislation. Then, Sir, we have moment that anything I may say will have also excluded the forwarding agencies. I should any influence upon this question, or help to stay the passing of the Bill through the like to know what claim a forwarding agency Council, yet, on arriving at another place, has to more rights and privileges in this colony I do hope it will receive short shift. It seems than the poor express-men. Why should the I operation of the Act, while the single indi- where are we going to land the country ? I beginning to fear now that the time is not far doing in the passing of this legislation. What do we find ? We are not deaf, and we are not I will say a few words as to what took place the other day. At a social gathering, at a banquet colony as to labour legislation, and intimating to him their opinion as to what its course of the Crown should be deliberately insulted by place in the future in regard to labour legisla- tion. I feel grieved that a Minister should every one ought to respect those in authority, Dunedin, right through, it is one hue and cry proceed any further, and I will therefore move, That the third reading of the Bill te made an The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND. - I am not

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public opinion throughout the colony is called to this important question, to say some words about it. The general opinion throughout New Zealand seems to be that industrialism is in danger-we all know from what quarter. The working-man in New Zealand seems to be mad drunk with vanity, and almost bereft of his senses. He does not look beyond the day. Every concession that has been made to him has been the stepping-stone to another unrea. sonable demand. He never asks himself, Can my employer afford this? It is no use for the employer to go before the Conciliation Board and say, "I cannot afford to pay higher wages ;" the working-man says, "This is what we want, and we will take nothing less." The narrow-mindedness of these men, their shortsighted selfishness is marvellous. We heard the other day of a man who was told by a fellmonger that he could not afford to pay any higher wages, and what was the man's answer ? " If you give the farmer less for his skins, you will be able to give me more." That is a fine specimen of the noble-minded working-man and of the working of the abominable unionism. When I say this I do not include all working-men. I know there are large-hearted working-men, but they are not those who join in these outcries, and allow themselves to be talked over by hireling agitators. They keep themselves aloof from caucuses and meetings of working-men, though, of course, by so doing they are looked upon as traitors to the good cause. I have often thought it would be a good thing for the colony if it became necessary for all the manufacturers who have large industrial establishments to agree to close down for a time. This would bring the working-men to their senses if any- thing would. What would they say if they were obliged to walk about the streets in idleness with their hands in their pockets, and nothing else in their pockets but their hands ? I think that would make them think a little. They would find out then that it was not through cruelty on the part of the employer, but from bitter necessity, he has been compelled to do this. I believe the employers of labour in New Zealand are as large-hearted and generous-minded men as any to be found in the world. But they cannot do impossibilities ; they must leave a margin of profit. What man in his senses would embark his capital unless he did ? As it is, men are closing down their works, clearing out, and leaving the colony ; they cannot go on ; they must get out of the colony to save a little from the wreck. It almost makes me regret that industries were ever started in this colony. I little thought when I used to rejoice at hearing of a new in- dustry being started that it was to be turned into a curse instead of a blessing ; that before long the brave man with his skill and capital put into the undertaking would be confronted by this terrible difficulty and danger. Where is it to end? I am

convinced it would be a good thing for the colony if the working-men were to pack up their traps and leave New Zealand in a body. It would be a Hon. Mr. Scotland them. Their place would be easily filled by Chinamen and Japanese, and the very men we are trying to exclude from the colony by £100 penalties we should then be only too glad to welcome to our shores. The white settlers could carry on the agricultural pursuits of the colony, and there is plenty of room in our towns as well, and let the workman take his labour and skill to some other country. But, where will he find himself better off ? I believe he knows where he is well off. If he went to America he would not better his condition ; he would find that where he could scrape through here with half a day's work for a whole day's pay he would have to give a full day's work there. In the States they do not do the union stroke. They would have to work, and they would very soon find it out. I do hope we are now coming, if not come, to an end of this terrible state of things, and that there will be a stand made-I wish it could be made this afternoon-against this absurd Jack Cade legis- lation. We have had enough of it, and it threatens to ruin the colony. I shall raise my voice against the third reading of the Bill. although I have very little hope that it will have any effect. The Hon. Mr. BOLT .- It is very peculiar to hear these desponding statements in reference to a Bill of this sort. We are told that our industries are going to the dogs ; that people are getting scared, and everything is going in a way which will be prejudicial to the best interests of the colony. We are told that this is a most drastic measure, and is going to pre- vent people attending to business and getting a living. What are the facts of the case ? The fact is that this Bill is, to all intents and pur- poses, a consolidation measure. So far as new matter is concerned especially-and, indeed, on the whole Bill-we took a large amount of evi- dence, and it is now before the Council as a practical expression of the wishes and desires of the people who came before the Committee to represent the various trades. So far as I know there is not a clause in the Bill that is against them in that respect. The warehouses and the banks protested against being included in the Bill, and they were accordingly taken out. Nearly the whole of the clauses which are new were put in their present form on the sugges- tion of the several people who gave evidence before the Committee. Clause 2, which is said to be the worst, was put in at the suggestion of several public bodies of employers and many of the witnesses who came before us, and there is nothing in the Bill now but what may be viewed as generally an expression of the wishes of those witnesses. In the face of that, why this jeremiad about labour legislation, and it- effects on the colony ? What has been the result of the labour legislation on our industries during the last eight or nine years ? We have been told that it has driven capital out of the country ; but when this legislation was first commenced, eight or nine years ago. we were told the same thing. As a matter of fact. We have no evidence that anything of the sort has

not times have, very properly, to go to the wall, know what are. Then, further on, it speaks of because they force themselves in where there is the case of a ledger-keeper. Now, I think that no room for them, or they fail because they a ledger-keeper is generally recognised in com- have not sufficient knowledge or appliances to merical circles as being essentially a banking successfully carry on their trade. I say, Sir, it official. There are certainly ledger-keepers in is not to be wondered at that people fail in such other commercial institutions, but I think that cases ; but to quote one case in this country, the ledger-keeper proper is always recognised which has had eight years' experience of labour as a bank official. There is also reference to legislation, accompanied with great prosperity, clerks, et cetera. All of this leads me to the does not prove anything against that legislation. opinion that banks are not excluded at the The only fault that I have to find with this Bill present time. I think there is a misunder- is that it is not consistent with itself. standing on that point which ought to have The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- It will be revised been cleared up before the Bill left the Committee. At the present time the Bill in another place. The Hon. Mr. BOLT .- It will certainly have is simply a conglomeration of various clauses, without our really knowing what is included to be revised. We have struck out the defini- tion of offices, while several clauses of the Bill and what is not. We find the interpreta- refer to offices as defined by this Act. It simply tion clause struck out, while no consequential amounts to this : that in order to make the Bill amendments are made. I am not going to take up the position of abusing the labour consistent with itself we shall have to strike legislation of this colony, because I think that out the whole clause relating to offices. The Committee of the Whole struck out the defini- up to the present time it has had a most bene- tion referred to, while the other clauses re- ficial effect. But we can have too much of a good thing. We are all very fond of having a lating to offices have been left in the Bill. The Hon. Mr. LOUISSON .- I think there pocket full of sovereigns, but I doubt whether is some misunderstanding with regard to the we should like to pay 25s. apiece for them. You can pay dearly for very good things, and the way this Bill has come out of Committee, very gentleman who initiated the labour legis- for I, with certain other members of this lation of this colony, the Hon. W. P. Reeves, Council, was under the impression, when we and also the present Premier and others, have went into Committee, that if we proceeded with the Bill and skipped the interpretation already recognised-in fact, they recognised it long ago-that we might go too far in this direc- clauses it would be for the purpose of deciding whether banks and warehouses should be in- tion. Before leaving the colony Mr. Reeves cluded or not. Now, Sir, we got the Bill sounded a warning note with regard to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. through Committee up to that point, with the interpretation clause in which the word He told the workers that they had a very " banking " is mentioned struck out. valuable institution in that enactment, but he The Hon. Mr. JONES .- It is only suggested. at the same time warned them not to ride it to death-not to make too much use of it. The Hon. Mr. LOUISSON .- I have my idea And the Hon. the Premier, the other day, in as to what the suggestion is, and the honour- reply to a deputation with regard to labour able gentleman can have his. The Hon. Mr. matters, made similar allusions, showing that Bolt has just said that we struck out the bank he also was of opinion that very good legislation clanse. might be spoilt by being overdone. Now, Sir, I The Hon. Mr. BOLT .- The definition. contend that the present Bill is not required. The Hon. Mr. LOUISSON. - Very well, the It will have a very mischievous effect, and it definition ; but it seems to me that we do not creates a certain amount of unrest and in- know where we are -we do not know at the security amongst the people of this colony, both present time whether banks are included or not. employers and employés. The Hon. Mr. Bolt It was an understanding that when we came to spoke just now about not knowing of a single the interpretation clause we should discuss the An Hon. MEMBER .- They are not. The Hon. Mr. LOUISSON .- An honourable

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months in Christchurch, where a large firm two or three years ago went into a manu- facturing business

and erected large buildings, went in for most expensive machinery, and established what they thought would be a very flourishing industry ; and in consequence, as I understand, of the uncertainties of the labour conditions within the last, two months they have closed up the business, and intend for the future to do all their business with im-ported articles and imported goods. I think that is a very unfortunate thing to occur. An Hon. MEMBER .- Bootm ikers ? The Hon. Mr. LOUIS ON. - No, not boot- makers ; a furniture-manufacturer, if you want to know-one of those industries that ought to be supported, and that ought to be flourish- ing in our midst, because we have got as mag- nificent a supply of timber as is to be found in any part of the world, and we have got all the facilities for carrying on that business if we were allowed to do so without too much inter- ference. On the present occasion they have disposed of their stock and plant, and they pro- pose for the future to carry on their business through imported goods. With regard to the boot-factories, I believe that several are closing in consequence of the difficulties of the labour legislation. I was rather amused-or, rather, I should have been amused had it not been so serious-at some of the reasons given for bringing this Bill forward. The Hon. Mr. Rigg said something to this effect: that his only reason for wanting this Bill passed was that he wanted to see what effect it would have, and if it had not a good effect -well, it could be altered afterwards. Those were not exactly his words, but what he said was something to that effect. That was some- thing like a youngster wanting to put a match to half a pound of gunpowder just to see what effect it would have, and thinking that it could be put right afterwards. He also expressed the most remarkable opinions with regard to the parties interested who were opposing this Bill. The bank officials, who were almost unanimous in their objection to this measure, he described as a very poor lot. To hear the comments on their petitions one could only come to the con- clusion that they were a lot of imbeciles-that they had no idea of what they wanted, had no intelligence at all, and simply had to be legis- lated for as a lot of children who did not know what they wanted. I think that was a terrible insult to level at a most intelligent class of people. I have already said that if we want to pick a class of workers who should have, and who probably have, as much intelligence as any class of workers in the colony, we should cer- tainly pick out the bank clerks. It is neces- sary, in the prosecution of their duties, that they should be specially intelligent, and I believe they are; and to say that these men absolutely unanimously do not know what they want, and therefore are to be given what they do not want, is an absurd posi- tion to take up. While attempting to legislate Hon. Mr. Louisson I say they are not friends of labour - they are enemies of labour Friends of labour endeavour to find out wha is beneficial for the labourers, to find out what are their wishes on the sub- ject, and then, as far as is consistent, to legis- la e in that direction. Friends of labour do not say, in the most autocratic manner : "We do not ask your opinion as to what you want ; we know what you want ; you do not know, and we do not want your opinion ; and we are going to legislate directly in opposition to your opinion, and you will have to be satisfied with it." I say, honourable gentlemen who take up that position have no right to pose as the friends of labour, and I think, if they gave the workers full credit for a little more intelligence as to knowing their own requirements, they might then pose as the friends of labour with some justice, but at the present time I think they are simply the enemies of labour. Now, Sir, look at the evidence that was taken in connection with this Bill. I have gone through it, and I am astounded to find that the evidence all goes in one direction. There is not a single particle of evidence in favour of the Bill, except from an official of the Labour Department. Nearly all the evidence is in the opposite direction, showing that the relations between the various parties are of the most amicable description, that things are working smoothly ; that there are no wrongs to be redressed, and very few complaints to be made. Yet, in spite of this, the whole of that evidence is to be cast aside because one indi- vidual of the department thinks differently. His opinion is to be taken in contradiction to the whole mass of evidence, which fills up I do not know how many pages. It seems to me, Sir, that that is carrying legislation too far. I do not intend to take up the time of the Council over this matter, however, because I think we have all pretty well made up our minds as to

the necessity or otherwise of this Bill. My opinion is that, had it been brought out of Committee in a workable state, much debate would not have been necessary; but I say, Sir, without fear of contradiction, that it has come out of Committee in a most unworkable condition, and in a state which half the members of this honourable House do not understand. I think there are a great number of honourable gentlemen in the Council at present who cannot say absolutely whether the banks have been legislated for or not under the Bill. I confess at once I am not prepared to say whether the banks are in it or not, and I do not think any one else can say. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- I really would ask the leader of the Government in this Council whether he thinks this Bill is in a creditable state for the Council to pass. It appears to me to be utterly discreditable to us if we pass a Bill which is contradictory in all its terms. There is hardly a clause that is not a completely contradictory one. We had an instance yesterday, where an honourable gentleman called attention to another Bill that we sent up to another

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branch of the Legislature had to do the duty which ought to be particularly the duty of this Chamber-namely, to revise it. Here we are going to send up a Bill which would be a disgrace to any branch of the Legislature, and we are asked to read it a third time. I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to say a few words on the whole question of the attitude of the Council in regard to these labour Bills. It is time we spoke out about it. In Committee the other day I stated my opinion, and entered my most earnest protest against this class of Bills being initiated in this Chamber, and I now take advantage of your being in the Chair to place on record my opinion that this course is not only most improper, but it means or what it affects ; and the same may be unconstitutional-unconstitutional, because this and other Labour Bills which the Council has dealt with are Bills which affect the rights and liberties of the people, and which, therefore, ought first to be dealt with by the representative branch of the Parliament, and it should be then for the Council to exercise its proper functions, those of review. That is what the Council did in the past ; that is the duty it has carried out with honour in the past-the duty of reviewing legislation, and of putting on the brake if it is in advance of public opinion, and so performing the high functions the Council was constituted to perform. We are reversing all this, and in my opinion it is putting us in this position : that we are taking steps which are bringing the Council into obloquy and contempt throughout the country. I go so far as to say that I am not overstating the position in stating that to be the case. What have we been doing during the last year or two ? be the case. Nearly every Bill that we have What Bills are there which the Council has been asked by the Government to pass in advance of public opinion? What is the history of the Shops and Offices Bill? It was initiated in the Council last year : it passed the Council; it was not proceeded with in the House. It went up to the House, but those who represented the people did not want it, and the Bill did not proceed. This was a significant hint enough to us that we were asked to take upon ourselves the initiation of legislation which is in advance of public opinion. Then, there is another Bill which is creating great excitement in the colony-the Factories Bill. This Bill is in another branch of the Legislature this year, but it was initiated in the Council in 1899. deal with Bills of this kind. I might almost The Hon. W. C. WALKER .- It was never before the Council. said, who was speaking just now-have been the The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- I beg the honour-measures which have taken up its greatest able gentleman's pardon. The Hon. W. C. WALKER .- I never under-attention. No one can sit here without needed a Factories Bill. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- I have taken it place here when any other measure-no matter how great its importance-is dealt with and when out of our records, at any rate, as having passed the Council in 1899, and having left us an immediate live interest shown directly one of in Conference with the House of Representatives. The Hon. W. C. WALKER .- I do not re-state of interest in the Council as when this member it. their feet at once over a Bill which they know The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- Well, there is the has no possible chance of passing the representative record, and the honourable gentleman will find in my opinion, and it ought to have been

initiated in the other branch of the Legislature. It is there now. Undoubtedly if it had been brought down here we should have passed it again, but it has no chance whatever of passing in the other branch of the Legislature, because it is interfering with industries which the representatives of the people are beginning to recognise are in danger. Then, again, last year we passed the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill. There was another most important Bill initiated in the Council in 1898 and 1899, and passed last session. In regard to the Bill we have now before us, I have objected to it on account of its provisions being in such a condition that we do not know what it really be said with regard to the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act. We thought it did not apply to agricultural pursuits, and now the opinion is general that it does apply, and considerable consternation exists throughout all the agricultural districts of the colony in respect to it. It never ought to have been initiated here, and I protest against the Council being asked to initiate Bills of this character, the proper place for which is in the House of Representatives, where those who directly represent the people of the colony can best say whether they are necessary or not. I am going to say more about this. I am going to say that, so far as my judgment enables me to form an opinion, in most cases this legislation has not emanated from the Government itself, but it has been forced upon them by those bodies known as trade-unions of the colony, and it is an ignoble position that such should have, in one shape or other, come to the Government at the dictation of the trade-unions of the colony; and those trade-unions, what are they? A small minority of the people. The last return of their numbers shows that there were 26,067, and yet this Chamber has been practically engaged during many years mainly on legislation at the dictation of this very small minority of the people of New Zealand, ignoring the necessities altogether of the large majority, and imposing disabilities on those who do not belong to them which are utterly discreditable to the colony. I am well aware that the Council has shown during late years its readiness-the greatest possible avidity-to say these Bills-as an honourable gentleman sarily seeing the difference of interest that takes we come to one of these labour Bills. There is I have not seen such a Bill was before us the other day-a dozen on

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honourable gentlemen who claim to represent labour, but who do not represent labour - bound to consider their particular duty. Sir, the present opinion in this colony with regard to labour Bills is that they have gone so far that their effect at the present moment is most injurious and dangerous to the prosperity of the colony. I say that is the universal opinion. There is scarcely an industry in the colony at the present time that has not been threatened. You cannot take up a newspaper without seeing columns of judgments of the Conciliation and Arbitration Courts dealing with the different industries, and dictating to them as to the class of labour they shall employ, as to the wages they shall pay, and as to the number of young persons they shall teach their trades. Sir, the people are getting sick to death of this legislation, and the result is that a great revulsion of feeling is taking place. I have satisfaction in thinking that we have seen pretty well the end of this legislation. Sir, the working lately of the Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts has a very peculiar feature. You can hardly peruse one of those judgments without finding that the Court is dealing especially with matters which the House of Representatives particularly refused to legislate for. For the House rejected the Eight Hours Bill and the Master and Apprentice Bill. These Bills were before the other branch of the Legislature, which would not pass them. Now, what do we find the Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts doing under the urgency of the trades-unions? They are giving judgments dealing with the hours that are to be worked, notwithstanding the fact that Parliament by throwing out the Bills I have referred to practically said that they were not to be interfered with. They are further interfering in a most cruel way with the employment of the lads of the country as apprentices. No more brutal selfishness was ever seen than this action of the trades-unions in urging upon the Conciliation Boards to exclude young people from learning the trades. I say, Sir, that no greater selfishness was ever known than this. It is a great misfortune that these Courts should be

permitted to give judgments which are most cruel and hurtful to the young people of this country. In connection with this subject-and it is one of great interest to us all-I would ask whether this is not the most inopportune time to so interfere with our industries that people will be thrown out of employment ? I have noticed in reports of recent utterances of the highest Minister in the land that he pooh- poohed the necessity for caution, everything being most prosperous. I venture to say, Sir, that those who give expression to opinions like that are misleading the people, by causing them to believe that such is the case when it is not. I am no alarmist, nor am I one who has any dread as to the future of the colony. I have, however, sense enough to know that the condition "of the colony at the present time is extremely critical, and that we shall within the Hon. Mr. Ormond times for the workers. It will be just as well for me to put on record a few facts as to the present condition of affairs. During the last two or three years there has been a great loss to the colony in connection with its chief export- wool. The year before last the shrinkage was \$1,800,000. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- Loss on what ? The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- The honourable gentleman will probably not follow me if I explain. Last year the loss was \$2,000,000, and in this year it will be at least as much as that. These are stupendous figures, and it is a matter for wonder that the loss is not being more felt than it is. The fact that the first shortage of .£1,800,000 has not been felt more acutely can only be accounted for by the fact that the times which preceded it were prosperous through our having had high values for all our products. It is only now that we are beginning to have this shrinkage of \$2,000,000 brought to account. That it is beginning to be felt. all those who have any knowledge of what is going on are well aware. Sir, I might instance the case of the difficulty of finding employment for our returned troopers. What class of men are they? They are the very pick of our population-men who in ordinary times had plenty of employment, who were always sought for. They were the handy men of the colony. Now they have returned to us only to find things very different from what they were. A great many of them are unemployed, and some newspapers think it necessary to insert free advertisements to enable them to obtain employment. You will see letters from them complaining that the Government has brought them back here only to find that there is no employment for them, whereas in South Africa there was lucrative employment open for them. These facts cannot be contradicted. They are men of the best class we can have, and, unfortunately, they are the first to feel what is the beginning of the hard times that are coming in this colony. I say, Sir, it is, to my mind, most unthoughtful of the Government to introduce Bills of this kind, such as the Factories Bill in the other Chamber, which can only still further tend to interfere with the industries and throw more men out of employment. That men are suffering, and that industries are diminishing, nobody can deny. The Hon. Mr. Bolt contradicted this ; but in every town I have been in -- and during the last two months I have visited a good many-I have learnt particularly from those who are interested in the small industries that our legislation has hampered them, and that what is threatened is ten times worse than what they have already got. They complained mostly of this : that they are perfectly unsafe under the uncertainty of the decisions of the Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts. To put it shortly, they do not know when their industries will be destroyed. What is the condition of our iron-foundries to-day? Does my honourable friend not know that they are in a great

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honourable gentleman himself. The Hon. state of alarm, and that they may be seriously interfered with if particular judgments are given by those Courts ? What is the condition of our woollen-factories to-day ? They also are in a great state of uncertainty as to whether actions now pending may be so decided as to make that large industry unproductive. All this is as well known as I am standing here, and yet we go on with this insane legislation. Sir, I say that if we did our duty, instead of bringing in Bills of this class, we should set ourselves to work at once to pass such legislation as would restrict the operations of those Courts, and the operations of those unions. I would restrict the unions first, and then the Courts, from

doing further damage to the country. That being our duty we should do it. I feel sure that the country is arriving at a true knowledge of the state of affairs, and is determined to stop further mischief being done.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- In reply to the most extraordinary jeremiad we have just listened to, I hardly know how to address myself to the Council. One would have thought we had brought down a new Bill, a Bill of pains and penalties, that was going to change the whole course of labour ; whereas, to begin with, it is only a consolidation Bill. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI .- What about clause 2 ? The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- I would be much obliged if the honourable gentleman would cease his very rude manner of interjecting. At any rate, I shall speak to you, Sir, if he does it my word, how he has lashed himself, or how again. All the honourable gentleman's statements are exaggerated, and quite outside the mark. To begin with, he challenges the propriety of bringing down measures of this kind to the Council. Well, I say this Council is a very proper place in which to bring down consolidating proposals. We have plenty of time in the early part of the session, and I see no reason why we should not consider consolidating measures. I have yet to learn that other Chambers of the same sort do never originate legislation. I know that I sometimes cast my eye over the pages of the Times newspaper, and I read about the debates in the House of Lords, and I frequently find there that the Imperial Government finds it convenient to bring in very important measures in the House of Lords, and so also in other Parliaments in the colonies. It is a matter of convenience; and, although I certainly do not recommend or approve the bringing-in of measures which amount to a reform of a root-and-branch kind that might possibly only be practicable by the express approval of the electors of the colony deliberately expressed through their representatives, on the other hand there are very many measures which may reasonably and properly be introduced in a Chamber of this kind where there is plenty of time to be devoted to their consideration. As regards this particular Bill, the matter which apparently has caused more trouble than anything else is the clause relating to offices and banks ; and, curiously enough, that clause was introduced into this Council by the VOL. CXVIII .- 18. Mr. Ormond inserted in the Bill of 1894, when going through this Council, the inclusion of offices, and put it into the interpretation clause :- "' Office ' means any building or place used as a banking office, insurance office, or for any other commercial purpose." And really, with the exception of one or two words, the Bill now before us for the third reading is going backward rather than forward from the legislation of 1894. I cannot say I understand the change of mind. The Hon. Mr. ORMOND .- There is no change of mind. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Well, perhaps some gentlemen have got no mind to change. I think that must apply to some honourable gentlemen. I should say that the Hon. Mr. Ormond's condition is that he has got a sympathetic soul which sometimes carries his mind away from him and makes him express himself in extravagant language, because I contend that the honourable gentleman's remarks regarding this particular Bill, and the particular time he chooses to make them, prove to me that he does not know the value of words. Long before I met him in Parliament I heard that the honourable gentleman was a little too cold-blooded for live politics. He did not exactly know what the kinship of warm blood meant, and if he made mistakes he erred on the side of being too cold-blooded. Well, upon some one else has lashed him, into this extravagant state of excitement in regard to this Bill and the present condition of things is more than I can understand. We are justified in having this Bill here, and, more than that, we are perfectly justified in considering Bills of a much more original nature if the times are suitable. Now, the honourable gentleman referred to the fact of the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Bill having engaged our attention for two or three years, and he endeavoured to make out that was a measure we should never have considered. Why I cannot imagine. It was a measure that was put on our statute-book after it had been adopted at Home. It was a beneficial measure. It was a measure into which party politics in no shape or form entered, and it was a measure that would commend itself to any person who had got generous instincts and a desire to see the people properly protected. It was really, therefore, reduced to a question of machinery. Was the principle a good one; was the principle a

beneficial one ; was it a principle that could be extended in the interests of the workers of this colony, aiding both employers and employé -because I contend we cannot aid one without helping the others ? Was this Council not thoroughly competent to consider the machinery of that measure ? I say we were : and the trouble we took over it, and the manner in which we turned it out, reflected the greatest credit on the Committee and the intelligence of the Council. The honourable gentleman has

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the farmers are included under that Act, but I believe they are not included-that is to say, farmers pure and simple. But if the honourable gentleman chooses to drive a threshing-mill, or shearing-machines, or erects machinery, of course he has got to run the risk of paying for accidents. But we know very well that it is hard to please certain people-you cannot hit them exactly where they like to be hit, and if you hit them in the wrong place they immediately say so. Then comes this extraordinary cry that the country is going to the dogs, and that this Bill is going to help it to go there. I deny that there is any connection between legislation of this kind and what the honourable gentleman is referring to. The honourable gentleman is simply referring to a cry in which the wish is father to the thought. There is no reason for people to be more than ordinarily critical on matters of public expenditure ; more than is at any time exercised when the Treasurer has got to see that his receipts will overbalance his expenditure. There is no indication that the public credit is contracted in any shape or form ; and, while it is true there is a very large contraction in the value of the wool as exported Home, on the other hand there has been an enormous increase in the values realised for frozen sheep and for fat stock in the colony. I believe when the farmers make up their books this year they will find it has been probably one of the best years they ever had, because every hoof they could sell has realised perhaps 20 per cent. more than could have been reasonably reckoned on. And why should we not pride ourselves on the fact that our farmers have not got all their eggs in one basket ? Thirty-three years ago wool dropped to such an extent that we were nearly all ruined, simply because we had to trust to wool and nothing else ; but the condition of the farmers to-day is very different from the condition of the old squatters of those days; and if wool is lower, our expenses are lower. We manage our properties on different lines, and we have a great deal of other products which enable farmers now to make use of the products of the farm. So that, even though wool is reduced to the large extent to which the honourable gentleman referred, I maintain the condition of the farmers to-day is not such as to point to universal calamity, as the honourable gentleman apparently wished to prognosticate. As regards the Bill itself, I say it is a consolidation Bill. Really, the most of the opposition the Bill has met with has been to parts of the Bill which have been law, are the law at the present time, or have passed this Chamber on a previous occasion. The inclusion of offices, and the reduction of their hours, is the law at the present time ; banks are already included in the legislation of to-day; the new principle of paying overtime was introduced in the Council and carried last year. So that was not a new part of the Bill so far as the Council was concerned. I consider, therefore, that the Council in dealing with this Bill as regards offices has really Hon. Mr. W. C. Walker any shape or form commends itself, to my way of thinking, or that would make me understand why the opinion of the Council is so changed. Of course, an honourable gentleman like the Hon. Mr. Ormond, who has taken the opportunity to get up and rail broadcast at labour legislation and labour unions, and the ideas of those who sympathize with labour, causes me no astonishment. Evidently he has been waiting an opportunity, and thinks now is a favourable time for him to come and sail in on the top of the tide, as he thinks. But I take it he has made a great mistake. In the first place, he has made a mistake when he states his belief that the country up and down has come to the conclusion that labour legislation is a matter to be regretted, and that it is not only time to stop, but even time to go back and withdraw some of the legislation we have already got. I am afraid the honourable gentleman has naturally been led away by the fact that he lives in a district where labour is put on a very different level from what it is in other parts of the colony. If Hawke's Bay

were more of an industrial community the honourable gentleman would know a great deal more about it than he does now. He, unfortunately, looks at subjects from his own point of view ; and perhaps he thinks that because Hawke's Bay, so far as he knows, does not want labour legislation the rest of the colony does not. But I can assure him he has no reason to think that that opinion is general. He seems to think that because a certain case goes before the Board, or is before the Arbitration Court, and there are differences of opinion, therefore they are proofs of trade disturbance to a regrettable extent ; because possibly there are difficulties to be dealt with which will make a material difference either to masters or employés. Of course, the very object of the Act is that these matters should be settled ; but because they are settled either one way or the other it does not prove anything except that an agreement has been arrived at, and we hope it will be a settlement for the best. I do not know any decision of the Boards or Courts yet in New Zealand which has done anything except to give a certain amount of fixity on the points at issue to both sides. because no award is given without a certain amount of time being attached to it for the currency of the award. And I have been informed that is one of the most satisfactory parts of all these matters-that both employer and employed know exactly where they are. I can quite understand the speech coming from the honourable gentleman as it has, for I am afraid I must take it as the speech of an honourable gentleman who does not believe in labour legislation at all. I am only giving the impression I received from his words, as the words of a man who does not believe in labour legislation, who thinks that everything should settle itself without reference to anything more than mere greed of the master or need of the man. We hoped when this legislation was first promoted, and we have since been hoping, that by consolidating existing

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these questions on a little higher ground, and that both employer and employed were finding that it was better that matters should be settled on such a platform-that the meaner or less worthy considerations might be kept in the background. I think that has been the result, and that labour generally has been raised and dignified in New Zealand by the mere fact of these questions being settled in a way which has conferred dignity on the questions themselves, and rendered the decisions arrived at all the more worthy of respect and support. Of course, I regret that in certain points this Bill is not as perfect as I should like to see it. I contend that it is not a Bill which contains very much that is new, and anything that is new has been inserted after due consideration of the evidence submitted to us, and on the representations of the various parties themselves. I was sorry to hear the evidence that was given before the Committee referred to as being " of little account." I can assure the honourable gentleman who made the remark that the evidence was most carefully taken, and most attentively listened to. I believe the Bill was very largely modelled on that evidence-in fact, from one point of view, it was too largely modelled on that evidence, because I am not prepared to admit that the evidence regarding banks and warehouses was evidence which it was wise to take as intended to express the real mind of those concerned. As for myself, as regards those petitions, I prefer to read between the lines, and from the standpoint of human nature to conclude what I think those young people ought to have said for themselves. I may misjudge human nature, but, still, I cannot help thinking that I am right. Therefore I am sorry that the Bill proceeds without protecting them as completely as I would like to see them protected. At all events, the honourable gentleman who objects to the action of the Committee forgets that the Committee did listen to the evidence, and gave weight to it more than I could accept. As regards the other points, I challenge any one to say that effect has not been given to the evidence, so far as it was possible without destroying the principle of the Bill. We listened to the freezing companies, and we accepted their suggestions ; we listened to the butchers, and we extended the hours to meet their case ; I think and so right through the whole Bill. the Council will find that the Committee was most careful to give effect as far as possible to all the evidence that came before them. All that I can say with regard to speeches such as that delivered by

the Hon. Mr. Ormond is that I cannot understand the motive for it, and I cannot understand what purpose it was intended to serve. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- I was in hopes that before the honourable gentleman sat down he would ask the mover of the amendment to withdraw it, with the view of having the Bill recommitted. It would be an extraordinary thing for this Council to allow the Bill to go to the other House in its present condition. It here if this were done, and I hope the honour- able gentleman, as the leader of the Council, will see his way to have the measure put into something like decent order, and then take a vote as to whether it should be read a third time or not. At the risk of having it said that I am indulging in another homily, I desire to say that I claim the right to speak on this class of Bills more than any other member of this Council. I claim that I have been a good em- ployer of labour, that I have never sought to injure the working-man, and that whenever I could help him I have done so. I believe in a good deal of the legislation that has been passed ; but I have never failed in my posi- tion here to warn the Council of what they were doing when passing measures which could have no other effect than injury to the indus- tries of the colony. No honourable member can say that my predictions have not come true. It would be well, Sir, for us to call a halt with these Bills until those we have already passed have had a fair trial. There is a remark- able clause in the Bill under discussion, that compels the closing of every business-place in New Zealand at six o'clock. This is a serious departure, and may affect a very large number of poor and innocent people. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON .- It does not compel every place to shut, but only those within defined districts. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- Well, the honour- able gentleman says that they are not com- pelled, but by new clause 2A they are compelled to close their shops at six o'clock. The Minis- ter has excused himself for introducing this measure in the Council, on the ground that it is only a consolidation measure, which may safely be permitted to pass. There would pro- bably be something in that contention if the Bill had not a large amount of new matter in it which this Council should and intended to have excised, but which I doubt whether they have done. At all events, the Bill should be carefully examined to see whether this new matter has been excised before it passes. My friend the Hon. Mr. Bolt asks, What industries have been affected by legislation of this kind. I have only to point out to him that in Dunedin at his very nose there was one large establish- ment alone employing over two hundred hands about a year ago, and I will ask him to say whether they are employing more than one hundred now. What has caused this falling-off in employment ? An Hon. MEMBER .- What industry are you referring to, and was the collapse of the dredg- ing boom responsible for what you say ? The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- I am referring to the boot trade, and the collapse of the dredging boom had nothing whatever to do with the dis- charge of the people referred to. The result of all this will be the putting of these people on the "unemployed " list, or on the co-operative works. I said " unemployed," and that is the right term to use in many cases. I suppose we have nearly six thousand people so employed.

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ploved. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- Yes, they are all employed, but they are paid out of borrowed money. We have now scraped in every possible corner for money, and if we cannot get any more money at a reasonable rate to pay them with, and if half of them are thrown out of employment, what will, I ask, be the posi- tion of your labour laws then ? I desire also to say that the expenditure under the public-works estimates, apart from the general estimates, amounts now to nearly \$2,000,000 sterling. Will any one say that the colony can go on borrowing to spend money at that rate? It is impossible to do so. We have borrowed some up to 4} per cent., and we are lending to settlers at 4} per cent., and how are we to do that ? The Hon. Mr. Bolt says that money is not going out of the colony. I have never been one of those indulging in that saying, but I will say now that there are nearly two millions of money gone out of this colony within the year. The process of lending and this legislation has compelled some loan com- panies to start winding up, and they are with- drawing and sending their money out of the country, and it has gone out, at all events, to the extent of £1,750,000 this last year. Will any one in this Council say that that

will not affect the conditions of the colony? Are we as prosperous now as we were at the time of the Vogel loans, when we were then spending at the rate of two millions of money a year ? Was not the boom then greater than it is now ? And when we continue to spend money as now, the country will be prosperous as long as we can borrow the money and spend it. Then, Sir, a good deal of reference has been made by my friend to the Arbitration Act. One is very anxious to keep that Act on the statute-book, but I think it is being pressed too far, and if the friends of those people pressing it too far would advise them to ease down a bit until they see how matters are going on, then we might be able to keep that Act, which should be a benefit to the people of the colony ; but, Sir, it is being pressed and worked by the Arbitration Court in a way that is above the head of the Parliament of New Zealand. Will any one say who has studied the matter at all that it is a correct thing in a painters' dispute that only one apprentice to three journeymen should be allowed, so that when an award is given a man should be in the position that he cannot take his two sons into his own workshop and teach them his trade, so that they might follow him? That is one instance ; but there are a great many instances. What I have always objected to is to limit the people of this colony to learn the trade they wish to learn. I think no industry will be prosperous if we have not the people in the colony to do whatever we have to do, and if we have to bring them in from other colonies. That is not a condition we should have. We should not have to send away for our boots ; we should be able to manufacture what we want here, and be able to do it. My honourable friend said the country was going to the dogs. Sir, it would take a great deal to drive this country to the dogs. This is a very prolific country, and it would take a lot of bad government to kill it, and I think it will survive however bad the government might be, and it will come out of it all right. Now, my honourable friend brought in the question of wool. I am sorry to say I have no wool, and he said that if wool was down, frozen mutton was up. Now, unfortunately, they are both down. I do not believe, myself, that wool ever was as low as it is at the present time. Frozen mutton, with the competition from the Argentine, is getting low, I am sorry to say, also. But, Sir, even though wool is down and mutton is up, the one does not counterbalance the other, for the number of fat sheep forms only a small proportion of the sheep of the colony, while wool comes off the whole. Well, then, Sir, the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act has been brought into this discussion also, and it was said that it was only the English Act. Sir, that Act only applied to risky trades, which naturally should stand the risk of the accident. I have always felt, myself, that the principle of that Act was a very taking principle, and if you could educate the people up to it and get them to insure it would be all right ; but you have to get the farming class educated up to a certain pitch before they will think of insuring. I see in a report in the paper where, through an accident to one of his men, a man's all has been taken. I do not think that it does any harm to get into such a discussion as this. It opens up the question and gets it ventilated, and it may do a great deal of good. I never had any difficulty in dealing with workmen themselves. I have found them, as a rule, very reasonable. It is only some of the leaders that are unreasonable, and endeavour to sow mischief and get as much as they possibly can for the men. I do not say it is wrong for the men to get a fair amount. I think the working-men are entitled to get their fair share of what is made, and, so far as I am concerned, I have always endeavoured to give it to them. Sir, I would advise my honourable friend either to withdraw this Bill now or get the amendment withdrawn, and get the Bill put in order, so that we may know what we are doing, instead of sending away to another place a Bill in a position which is not creditable to this Council, and which will enable the people of the colony to look down on the Council, instead of what we should be a good revising House, as we formerly were. We have never sent a Bill away in a condition that we were ashamed of, and that is what we would be doing if we sent this Bill away in its present condition. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I have not so far taken any part in the debate, for really, like other honourable gentlemen, I have not a clear idea of what the Bill is like, and I think, with the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, that it would be as well to review it again. It

would be very discreditable to the Council to send to the other place a Bill that would be laughed at. I have no doubt it would come out right in the end if honourable gentlemen do not mind the other branch of the Legislature laughing at it. No one will dispute that the Hon. Mr. McLean has always been and is a good employer of labour-that is generally admitted ; but we have others besides him in the country, and it is those others who do not treat their employés well who render labour legislation necessary. I have no doubt if all employers were like the Hon. Mr. McLean there would be no necessity for labour legislation. But the fact that there are bad employers has rendered it necessary. I am not going to make a labour speech to-day. I will only refer to a few things. First of all, I will refer to the Hon. Mr. McLean's reference to the country going to the dogs. Of course, he only took that up from previous speeches, and he denied it was possible for the country to go to the dogs. But really some of his utterances were well calculated to have this effect. He told us we were going about every hole and corner trying to raise money to pay for public works. That is really language he should not use, for he knows it is inconsistent with fact, and he knows also that it is detrimental to the interests of the colony that such language should be used by a man in his position. What does all the scrap- ing and running about mean ? We wanted half a million ; the time for raising money in England was inopportune, and so as to tide over till such time as money became cheaper in the London market it was obtained from ourselves and the other colonies. Then, the honourable gentleman tells us we are borrowing at 4} per cent. and lending at 4} per cent., and how can we go on like that. The honourable gentleman knows that is only the emanation from - well, I will not characterize the officer who is the author #cc-zero of that extraordinary view about the 44 per cent. The money has been borrowed at 4 per cent., but it so happened that it was not wanted im- mediately, and a few days' grace was given to the lenders, and these have been calculated to make it appear that the money was borrowed at 4} per cent. But there is no cognisance taken of the fact that the debentures sold at £100 6s. 9d., and no cognisance taken of the fact that very little expense was incurred in raising the loan. All this is omitted, and the dark side put before us; and we are told that we are borrowing at 4} per cent., which is not in accordance with fact. The honourable gentleman ought to have been more care- ful, and not have allowed either party or any other consideration to influence him in giving expression to utterances which he knows are detrimental to the interests of the colony, and calculated to send the colony to the dogs if it could be sent. Another thing he pointed out was that the annual charge was getting tre- mendous, and made out it was £1,700,000. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN. - I never said any- thing about the annual charge at all. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- You said it was interest going out from this colony on the bor- rowing for public works. The Hon. Mr. McLEAN .- Will the honour- able gentleman allow me to put him right? I told him at least £1,750,000 had gone out of the country-the moneys of loan companies that were being wound up that could not carry on business in the colony, borrowing money in London and lending it at 4} per cent. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY. - I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon. I misunder- stood him. The figures I was going to quote will, then, not apply ; but there will be no harm if I point out that, though the debt is considerably increased, the annual charge is not. "The annual charge in 1889 was £1,866,5-8, and in 1893 £1,837,169." The amount this year is only £1,745,615 : so that the annual charge has been reduced considerably, notwith- standing the extraordinary increase in the pub- lic debt. How this has come about is that most of the money that has been borrowed has been used in the purchase of land for settlement and in advances to settlers ; and these are pay- ing for themselves and are no burden on the colony at all, so that really now there is noth- ing wrong that I can see with the finances of the colony. How people can go on as they have been going on, creating a scare, is more than I can understand. There we are, with half a million of a money surplus this year, and we are told there is no necessity for an increase of taxation, and the Treasurer tells us that he will have a surplus of £146,000 next year, and when he says that it means that sum multiplied by three. That is how his surpluses all work out, so that

everything is in a most flourishing condition. Of course, there have been increased expenses. But look at the Financial Statement. The revenue in many departments has absolutely doubled, and if you double your revenue you must increase your expenditure proportionately. The revenue of the departments of State has during the ten years of office of this Government increased 90 per cent., and in some cases 332 per cent. This debate has been sprung on us to-day as a surprise. There is a point that I would like to refer to here, and that is accident insurance. Now, we all know the theory on which that has been built. It is that every industry must pay for its own accidents, and it is the fundamental principle on which accident insurance has been built in England. In that case, I would ask, why should the farmer be exempt from the operation of the Act? Am I to pay for an accident in my business, and also to pay taxes for hospitals and charitable aid to support persons who meet with accidents on farms? That would not be right. I am sorry that the Premier did not tell the farmers this instead of telling them what he did. He ought to have told them the principle upon which accident insurance is built: and also that if they are to be relieved of the responsibility in connection with accidents in other industries, then it is only right and proper that they should pay for their own accidents. What did I do in my own case? I took out a policy, for which I was charged 4s. per cent.; and why should I go into hysterics because I have to pay that small amount for

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employers' Liability Act were practically the same as in this case, but a scare has been created for political purposes. I warn those who are doing this that they are bringing down a hornets' nest about their ears. "What will happen?" This is what, in my opinion, will happen if those people go on as they are doing: the labour party will get worse and worse, and will take in with them the farm labourer; and you will see that this action to create alarm will, if continued, result in harm being done to the colony. I certainly regret it very much, and I am afraid of it. An Hon. MEMBER.- Do not be afraid. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY.- I am afraid, because I think the matter is very serious. If we have two antagonistic parties determined to fight each other to the death the colony must suffer. I think, therefore, that if the employers of labour were wise they would take things quietly. They know that I am in a small way one of themselves. If all employers suffer, I shall suffer, and consequently I have the same interest in the matter. There is nothing more dangerous to the community than the attempts that are being made to create unrest, irritation, and dissatisfaction. Suppose I were a candidate, and on moving about the constituency I found that the Farmers' Union was opposing me, what would I do? I should take care that I would make my speeches appeal to the agricultural labourers. That is what candidates will do, and that is why you will find that action such as I have pointed out will have a very bad effect. I think that farmers have any amount of things in common necessitating their binding themselves together, but to do this they need not become antagonistic to the unions. The Arbitration Act is one of the grandest measures on our statute-book. I am satisfied of that, but I say that the labour party are driving it to death. That is where the danger lies. We have now, however, got a Judge of the Arbitration Court who, I think, will keep the labour party in their place, and that is what was badly wanted. If we did not have that Act the workers would be ground down; but we want to have a Judge administering it in such a way as to check the wantonness of the labour party, for a good deal of wantonness has been shown on their part. Another thing that we want is a change in the constitution of the Conciliation Board. When a certain Bill comes before us, which I believe it will do shortly, it is my intention to move that a change be made such as that suggested. There should be no Conciliation Board at all, but, whenever a dispute arises, two of the operatives and two of the employers should be appointed by both sides, and they should be presided over by a responsible Magistrate. You would then have a Board that would understand exactly what is required, and would administer it judiciously, and not make it a source of profit to themselves, as is being done at present. With regard to the Bill itself, I must admit that I got confused over the way it was being muddled up in Committee, Hon.

Mr. Twomey vote. I do not believe in going back, but, so far as I can see, the Bill has gone back a step, and this is what I object to. The Shops and Offices Bill has been working fairly enough. If the Hon. Mr. Shrimski would withdraw his amendment, and the Hon. the Minister would postpone this question and move the adjournment of the debate, and let us go back into Committee again, we could then put the Bill in a decent form. We set ourselves up as a body that gives close attention to Bills, instead of distinguishing ourselves by making speeches. That is where our strength lies, and that is what we pride ourselves on. Can we honestly claim these virtues if we send down to another place a Bill that is likely to be laughed at? That is my trouble. I know the Bill will come out all right in another place, for they will put it right; but I have a feeling of pride in this Council, and I do not like that anything should go out of it in a slipshod manner, so that other people would be laughing at it. I would therefore ask the Minister to do as I have requested him. Virtuous indignation was aroused because we send out of this country for goods which we should manufacture in the colony. Very well, that is a problem, and a very big one. We never can manufacture for exportation in this colony so long as the standard of living remains as high as it is. We never can compete with countries that are working twelve hours a day and paying half our wages. It is impossible that we could compete in the markets of the world with our manufactured products. An Hon. MEMBER .- We are doing it now. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- We are not to any extent. We might send a few blankets or rugs over to Australia. An Hon. MEMBER .- We are sending butter from Taranaki. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I mean manufactured goods, the result of factory labour. I know what I am talking about very well ; and if you want to drag butter in, very well. We cannot manufacture for export, and that fact staring us in the face, what should be the policy ? We should say to ourselves, "We cannot export, then we will import as little as we can ; we will protect our own industries so that it will be impossible for the product of cheap labour of other countries to come in and compete with us." That is the only successful way to do it. You scream here because a Chinaman comes in to compete in the labour-market, but you do not say a word about the cheap products of labour coming in here under free-trade. Is that sense ? No, it is not. Our policy should be protection. If we want our industries developed, if we want to increase the population of the country, if we want the country to grow in prosperity, and if we want it to carry a large population, there is no other possible means of achieving that except by protecting our industries. I hear a certain honourable gentleman laugh. Well, I am willing to discuss this subject with any one. There is a limit to the land, and as soon as the land is settled on you cannot

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reduced to misery? Because her industries were destroyed. The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS .- I rise to a point of order. I have been here all the afternoon with the intention of dealing with the Shop Hours Bill. Honourable gentlemen, and even the Hon. Mr. Ormond, have brought in questions entirely foreign to it. I ask you whether Ireland has anything to do with the Shop Hours Bill. The Hon. Mr. TWOMEY .- I admit the whole discussion is very wide of the mark. But if the honourable gentleman will permit me to say so, I was not the one that first wandered away from the path. I was only just replying to utterances of the Hon. Mr. McLean, and I was working out this free-trade, because one of the planks of the policy of this Farmers' Union is free-trade. I do not know how they will do it. I suppose they want to increase the tax on land. Honourable gentlemen will, I hope, pardon me for the discursive disconnected utterances I have made. Really when I got up I did not intend to say more than to ask the Minister to reconsider the motion, and give us a chance of putting the Bill in better shape, but somehow I got away. The Hon. Mr. McLean's remarks on finance got me off the track. Debate adjourned. The Council adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock p.m. # HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Friday, 6th September, 1901. Breach of Privilege-Financial Statement. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past ten o'clock. PRAYERS. BREACH OF PRIVILEGE. Major STEWARD (Waitaki). - Sir, I presume that, as a matter of privilege, it will be my duty at this stage to bring up the report of the Privileges Committee, together with the minutes

of the proceedings and the evidence. The report is as follows :- "1. Your Committee have the honour to re- port that they have inquired into the matter remitted to them by the order of reference of the 28th day of August, 1901, in regard to the publication in the Dunedin Evening Star on the 23rd day of August of certain evidence given on the 15th day of August before the Goldfields and Mines Committee of the House of Repre- sentatives ; and also into the matter remitted to them by the order of reference of the 30th day of August, 1901, in regard to the publica- tion in the issue of the same newspaper of the 27th day of August of certain further evidence given before the same Committee on the 22nd day of August. been taken. "3. Mr. Albert Elias Cohen, representative in the Press Gallery of the Evening Star, ad- mitted before your Committee that he for- warded in both instances to the said newspaper the evidence the publication of which is com- plained of. He stated before the Committee that ' the evidence was obtained in a thoroughly honourable manner, and that no amount of pressure would induce or compel him to state the source of his information,' adding, however, that he had not obtained it from the Clerk of the Goldfields and Mines Committee, nor from the shorthand reporter, but that 'the report had got into his hands.' "4. Your Committee beg to report that in consequence of this refusal they are unable to state by whom the evidence was communicated to Mr. Cohen, and, in accordance with pre- cedent, they now inform the House of the fact that a witness-namely, the said Albert Elias Cohen-is in possession of material evidence which he has declined to disclose to your Com- mittee. "5. The publisher of the Evening Star, Mr. John George Moody, appeared before your Com- mittee. He admitted the publication in that newspaper of the evidence on the dates above stated, but said that, as such publisher, he had no knowledge of the contents of the newspaper prior to publication. He, however, pleaded that the publication of the matter in question was in the public interest. "6. Under these circumstances, your Com- mittee submit that the House should now determine as to what steps should be taken in regard to the above matters. "WM. J. STEWARD, Chairman. " 6th September, 1901." Sir, I beg to move, That the report lie on the table, and that the report, minutes, and evidence be printed. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Sir, I have not bad time to look into the report and evidence. I would like to have time to do so. Members of the House should have the same opportunity ; and as the motion is to lay the report on the table, and that, together with the evidence, it should be printed, an opportunity will be given to all to read the report and the evidence. Then, at our next meeting I shall bring up the ques- tion of what should be done. Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- I, as one member of this House, enter my protest against the course proposed by the Premier. The Premier understands as well as any of us that a most important question is involved in the report of this Committee. Sufficient time has been given to every member to understand the full import of the question raised in this particular matter of privilege, and the Stand- ing Orders themselves declare that any question of privilege must be taken at once as a matter of urgency-that course being deemed essential to the protection of the interests of members of this House and of Parliament itself. There are no sufficient reasons why the House should

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adopted. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why should not every member speak as well as you ? Mr. FISHER .- The Premier has been long enough in Parliament to understand what is at the bottom of this matter. There have been cases in the history of this Parliament in which the honourable gentleman has taken a very prominent part, and this case differs in no way from other cases in which the honourable gentleman himself, as the head of the Govern- ment, has led the House. This case, I take leave to say, is the most flagrant breach of the privileges of the House that could possibly happen. Every member understands exactly what has taken place. Delay is unnecessary to enable members to understand the question at issue, and how it ought to be determined. There appears to be a general acquiescence in the suggestion of the leader of the Government that this matter should be postponed. That, I think, is a pity. But, even if the House neglects its pressing and primary duty, I hope, at any rate, that it will fix upon a definite day,

and a definite time for the discussion of the question. If the object of delay is that members of the House other than members of the Committee shall have time to become fully informed of the full nature of the report, and of the evidence upon which it is founded, then all that can be done between now and the next meeting of the House. Mr. SEDDON .- I fixed it for next Tuesday, when I will move it. Mr. FISHER .- Will you make it the first order of the day ? Mr. SEDDON .- Yes, certainly. Mr. FISHER .- Very well, that meets my objections to some extent, but I now say that the report of the Committee ought to have been in the possession of the House nearly a week ago. To my mind no reason has been disclosed why the report should not have been presented to the House a week ago. An Hon. MEMBER .- That is the fault of the Committee. Mr. FISHER .- The member for Bruce need not believe that I am under any misapprehension in regard to what I am saying, for I understand the meaning of every syllable I utter. Will the honourable gentleman accept my assurance ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Certainly. Mr. FISHER .- That delay having taken place, I think it time the House moved in the matter, because I believe in striking the iron while it is hot. I think the House, if it is endowed with a proper sense of its duties and its rights and privileges, ought to move without delay in a matter of this kind. When the question of privilege was first mooted in the House in this case, I said that no good purpose could be served by proceeding to extremes. I have often said that in this House; but the members of the Committee, and I am sure the House as a whole had no conception of the extent of the offence committed in this particular case. It differs from all other cases Mr. Fisher before the House: I do not wish to go into the full facts of the case at this stage, but I am prepared to prove, whatever views may be held by honourable members in regard to previous questions of privilege, that this case stands alone in the history of this Parliament and that it has no equal in its defiant offensiveness. That is why I speak so strongly. If the House agrees to the postponement, I hope it will at least insist upon its being discussed at the next sitting of the House. The honourable gentleman should certainly be held to his promise. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- Sir, I would like to point out this : that printing the evidence or reading the evidence will not alter two facts, and they are the only facts that this House has any right to deal with at the present juncture. The first is that a breach of privilege has been committed : that has already been decided by the House, and nothing can alter that phase of the question. The second fact is that a witness in possession of material evidence has refused to disclose that evidence. That is plain, and the reading or the printing of the evidence will make no difference in that matter. Mr. SEDDON .- That ought to be brought up as a separate matter. the same as in Mr. Watson's case. Mr. PIRANI .- I am glad the Premier has said that, because that was just the attitude taken on the Committee by the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher), and myself, and opposed by the Postmaster-General, the Acting-Speaker, and the Chairman of the Committee (Major Steward). I am very glad the Premier and I do agree sometimes. I moved that motion, and it was rejected by three to two. I think the action of the witness ought to have been kept separate altogether from the report of the Committee, and I took very good care that the voting on that was recorded in the minutes of the Committee. Therefore, I say it is only a waste of time to adjourn the matter for the printing of the evidence. If the Premier had stated what his real reason was, there would not have been a word of objection by the House. His real reason is, I suppose, that this matter shall not delay the conclusion of the financial debate. But the Premier has not given us that as his reason; and he has given an extraneous reason altogether-the printing of the evidence. Now, personally. I do not think any good would be done by printing the evidence : the evidence practically amounts to nothing. But there is another matter that I think ought to be dealt with after the offence itself-or the presumed offence-has been dealt with, and that is the question as to what attitude the House will take up in regard to matters of this sort in the future. Mr. SEDDON .- That is an amendment of the Standing Orders. Mr. PIRANI .- That is so. But my remedy I would be that the evidence taken before Select Committees, where such Committees think proper, should be laid before the House day by day. That would do away altogether with a good many grievances that

are complained of.

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public to know really what is going on in Committees, where the subject is of a public nature. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) .- Sir, there is one remark that was made by of the country to the best of their ability. I the honourable member who has last spoken in connection with this matter which, personally, I decline to allow to go on record without stating what took place. The honourable member has put on record the fact that both himself and the member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) were desirous, after the evidence of Mr. Cohen, the reporter of the Dunedin Evening Stir, had been taken, that we should report to the House his refusal to disclose the source from which he obtained this information. Sir, the honourable member ought to have stated so short a memory. The remark I made in my the reason why the majority of the Committee took a different opinion to both of these members on this point. At that time we had only examined a small section of the Goldfields and Mines Committee, and we believed it was desirable that every member of that Committee should be asked whether he had personally disclosed the information referred to, before we put the House to the trouble and inconvenience of dealing with the matter again. That has been done now in the report of the Committee; and the majority of the Committee then stated that what was now done was the right course to follow-namely, first take the evidence of the remaining members of the Goldfields and Mines Committee, and then in our final report inform the House that Mr. Cohen refused to disclose the source from which he obtained his information. Mr. HERRIES .- You have not examined them all now. Sir J. G. WARD .- The only person who has not been examined is the Premier, and in that case it was put on evidence that the Premier had never attended a meeting of the Mines Committee and had not been furnished with any information by the Committee. As the honourable member for Bay of Plenty is apparently very anxious to get that fact out, I put it on record with the greatest pleasure. Sir, I think the course that has been suggested by the Premier is the better one. Every member of the House ought to have an opportunity of perusing the evidence taken by the Privileges Committee; for if the evidence is simply to be in the hands of the members of the Committee and those few members of the House outside the members of the Committee who attended the sittings of the Committee during the course of the investigation, it would not be fair to other honourable members, even though the whole business is focussed in this report, to ask them to consider it in all its details without having an opportunity of perusing the whole evidence. Even though the privileges of the House have been assailed, what extra harm can arise by consideration of this being deferred from Friday till Tuesday? None give evidence is concerned, but not as regards whatever. Whenever matters of this kind arise in this House, precedent after precedent is thrown at us, and suggestions are made that the precedent of twenty or thirty years ago. We get it in every direction until it becomes absolutely nauseous to men who are trying to carry out in a common-sense way the business merely rose to say that this has been magnified to a mountain of impropriety by the honourable member for Palmerston, Mr Pirani, because of the fact that the majority of the members of the Committee thought differently to him and Mr. Fisher. We may be just as right in our judgment as those honourable members, and they should do us the credit of believing that we acted in what we believed was the best course in the circumstances. Mr. PIRANI .- I regret that the Minister has speech about the report, and the refusal of this witness to give evidence to the Committee, was in reply to an interjection by the Premier. He said that the witness ought to have been reported to the House directly he refused to give evidence. In reply to that I informed the Premier that a motion to that effect had been moved in the Committee, and I gave the voting on it. As far as the opinions of the different members of the Committee are concerned, I did not give them, because they were not stated. They had a right to their own opinions, and I give them just the same right to freedom of thought as I claim for myself; and if the Minister thinks that I was intending to cast any reflection on him in that respect he is entirely mistaken. Mr. McNAB (Mataura) .- Until I came into

the Chamber a few minutes ago I was under the impression that if the consideration of this question was adjourned it would be lost, and we would hear no more of it, and I therefore thought that the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) was right in the stand he took up. But since we know that the question is to be put down as the first order of the day for Tuesday, that puts a different complexion on the matter. In regard to the question of the printing of the evidence, we decided when the subject was last before us that a breach of privilege had been committed. There cannot, therefore, be a suggestion that the Committee was set up to decide any question about the breach of privilege ; and if it was not set up to decide that question it must have been set up to get some information to lay before the House. If it had that object in view the proper course to adopt, always making sure that we are not going to lose hold of the matter, is to have the evidence printed. I think, therefore, we ought to have it printed before we go any further. I do not hold the view expressed by the Premier that this is a parallel case to that of Mr. Watson Mr. SEDDON .- The refusal to give evidence is. Mr. McNAB .- Yes, in so far as the refusal to the action the Committee should have taken when the refusal was given ; because honourable members will remember on that occasion

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the Committee, and it was not a subject such as this which would be followed by some person appearing at the bar of the House. In this case the chances were certainly in favour of the contention that the very party who would appear at the bar of the House was the person who refused to give evidence. In that respect it is a very different case from that of Mr. Watson. I still think the majority of the Committee were right in the contention that when the refusal to give evidence was before the Committee it was not the proper course to at once report it to the House, but to report it along with the report of the Committee. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- I think it is right to reply to one or two of the remarks made by the honourable member for Palmerston and by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher). First of all, it is asserted that there has been an improper delay in bringing down the Committee's report. In answer to that, let me point out to honourable members that, as will be seen by the evidence when it is printed, we only exhausted the members of the Goldfields Committee yesterday. On the occasion when the Privileges Committee held the first meeting three or four members of the Goldfields Committee were absent at the funeral on the West Coast of the late Hon. Mr. Kerr, and the honourable member for Bruce had gone South. The latter gentleman could only be examined yesterday on his return, and it follows that we have not lost very much time in bringing up the report. It is suggested, also, that we ought to have at once reported Mr. Cohen to the House as a recalcitrant witness. Now, I am in the habit of using my common-sense, and I ask members of the House whether it would have been to the public advantage that the financial debate should be interrupted by, first of all, the procedure of bringing Mr. Cohen to the bar of the House, and our going into the question of privilege from one point of view, and then three or four days afterwards again dealing with the question of privilege upon the Committee reporting on the main issue. The Committee, in determining to deal with the whole matter in one report, used its common-sense in the interests of the public business. Further, let me point out that there was no fear of Mr. Cohen running away ; that he can be just as well dealt with by the House on Tuesday next as he could have been on Thursday last ; and that there is no possible chance of any harm happening through the report having to be brought down a day or two later than was proposed by a minority of the Committee. The report itself could not have been brought down as to the whole facts until we had exhausted all possible witnesses. We have examined the reporter and the Clerk of the Committee; we have examined every witness who came before the Mines Committee on the particular occasion, and every member of the Mines Committee with the exception of the Right Hon. Mr. Seddon ; and the reason we have not examined him was this : namely, that it was given in evidence that he was not pre-Mr. McNab Committee, and therefore did not hear any of the evidence given before that Committee, and was

not supplied with any copy of 11.0. the evidence. What on earth, then, was the use of delaying the proceedings in order to call Mr. Seddon ? Even had his evidence been taken it would not have been of much value to the House as bearing on this issue, at all events, seeing that he knew nothing about the matter. What the Committee was asked to do was to endeavour to find out in what way the evidence came to be published in the Evening Star-how, in fact, it reached that paper. It is true that after we had examined several witnesses we came to Mr. Cohen, and he then admitted that he knew -as, of course, he knew-who gave him that evidence. And, although he declined to state who that person was, it still remained for us to see whether any member of the Committee would be able to inform us. Any member giving evidence before a Committee of the House is bound to tell the truth. And if it be true that any member of the Mines Committee supplied the evidence to the Star and denied it before the Privileges Committee, then that honourable gentleman is only open to one term. and that term is one which is not parliamentary. That is all I desire to say. Motion agreed to. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I have now to move, That this question of privilege, and the refusal of Mr. Cohen to give evidence before the Committee, be made the first order of the day for Tuesday next. I made that suggestion when the resolution and the report of the Committee were to be laid on the table, and I am following the course that I followed in the Banking Committee's report when that Committee reported that Mr. Watson had refused to give evidence. I then moved that it be taken into consideration at half-past seven. I had no copy of the report of the Committee or of the resolution of the Committee until I heard it read by the honourable gentleman, and therefore I require some time to consider what course should be taken; and I would also like to see what has been done by the Committee, and for that purpose, more than anything else, I ask for the postponement of the consideration of this question until Tuesday. There is no harm in that, because it is generally known that Mr. Cohen has refused to give evidence. and the House itself has affirmed that a breach of privilege has occurred. Having so affirmed, why we should send it to the Committee I do not know. What I want to make clear is that you must separate clearly and distinctly Mr. Cohen's position. He admits having obtained the evidence and having sent it away. That, of course, is the question of obtaining the evidence. Then you have the responsibility of the publisher, which is one phase of the question, but the other phase is the refusal to give evidence before the Committee. Now, that is a separate and distinct offence from the question of privilege, and, in my opinion, will have to be dealt with separately. If it had been simply

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a matter of dealing with the question of privilege to take up that attitude, because the legislature there would have been no necessity for Committee has reported ; because the matter delay at all. But, as the other question has now is merely a question of the punishment of been raised, the wisest course to adopt would be that witness, and of the person who has come to postpone it as I have suggested. In the meantime the breach by the publication. Under meantime I ask members to think over the the circumstances, I maintain that, notwithstanding course we ought to follow. Sir, I believe we standing the argument of the Chairman of the ought to insist on our Standing Orders being Committee, the attitude taken up by us in our observed, and if people will offend against them, desire that the House should be at once informed then they must express regret or take the consequences of the position in regard to a material sequences. What has pained me more than witness was a proper attitude, and that in what anything else is the levity with which was re- the Committee has done since it has practically received the statement of the Chairman that stultified itself. Of course, it may be possible members going before the Committee are exempted from the evidence to gather a very good impression to tell the truth, as though we did not insist as to who the person is whom this witness consider it proper and honourable so to do. is protecting. I have no doubt in my own mind, and the probability is that other members may come to the same conclusion ; but admit, with the

honourable member for Wel- still the opportunity of altering the report of lington City (Mr. Fisher), that a question of the Committee has been lost by not taking up the privileges of the House being infringed the proper position. must be dealt with at the earliest possible date. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston). - I wish to say in regard to the statement of the Chairman one word in reference to what the Premier has of the Privileges Committee. The honourable gentleman said it would be impossible, indeed said, as to separating the refusal of a witness to give evidence from the actual thing itself ; and improper, for the Committee to have reported at the stage at which the witness declined to I want to point out clearly the reason why it is necessary and proper that that course should give evidence, because there were other wit- have been followed. In all British communi- nesses yet to be examined. Sir, the point of ties it is understood that before a man is impingement between this Parliament and the convicted he should get an opportunity of offender was reached when one witness, the defending himself. Therefore, if the witness person who received the shorthand report of the evidence taken at the Goldfields and Mines who has refused to give evidence is given an opportunity of appearing before the bar of the Committee, refused to furnish the name of the House. of purging himself of his offence, it person who supplied him with that report. In would probably give the Committee another plain language, in the very plainest language, opportunity of taking evidence from him, and he said -- his evidence is there to prove it-"I coming to a different conclusion from what received the shorthand report of the evidence taken before the Goldfields and Mines Com- they would come to without his evidence. The mittee from a person whose name I refuse to circumstances may be such that a witness, to protect somebody else-because it is not to disclose." Now, what necessity was there to protect himself-refuses to give certain evi- proceed further ? That was the exact point at dence, and when he is brought to the stage which Parliament ought to have been asked to step in and to perform its duty in the of being punished for that refusal, that some- matter. As to the levity with which the body might be manly enough to come forward and absolve that witness from the consequences statement of the Chairman of the Privileges Committee was received in this House this of his refusal to compromise that third person. morning, when he stated that if the word of a. Mr. FISHER .- It is impossible now. Mr. PIRANI .-- Exactly ; but if the consti- member of Parliament were not to be taken tutional course had been followed, and the wit- whose word could be taken, I say, in answer to that-and I feel the whole seriousness of it ness had been brought before the House before as much as the Premier himself - I say, in the final report had been brought up, then the answer to that, what are we to think of the third party would have had an opportunity of evidence of the person who received the short- disclosing to the House that he was the offend- ing person. The witness would then have been hand-writer's report of the evidence taken be- able to go back to the Committee and give his fore the Goldfields and Mines Committee, and evidence in accordance with the changed posi- who says he received that shorthand report tion of affairs, and the Committee would have from a person whose name he refuses to dis- been able to come to a proper conclusion. close ? Who is that person ? Every member I cannot understand any honourable member, of the Mines Committee denies that he is the person. The person who received the short- who has studied privilege at all, not seeing that that is the very reason why a witness should at hand report has kindly undertaken to absolve the officers of the Committee-the clerk and once be brought before the House when he the shorthand-writer. We took the evidence of refuses to give evidence, so that it should have four witnesses. including Mr. Cook and Mr. an opportunity of considering his attitude from Easton, the demeanour of all of whom satis- all points of view, and he has a chance of fied me in regard to the judgment which I changing his attitude and of giving the evi- ought to form respecting them. We have the dence he has previously refused to give. As evidence of every member of the Goldfields. t is now, it would be utterly useless for the Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) .- One word

on oath they all say they did not supply the information. An Hon. MEMBER .- It was not on oath. Mr. FISHER .-- Each witness was warned that his evidence carried with it all the responsibility of an oath, and each and all said, under the responsibility imposed on them by the Chairman of the Privileges Committee, that he did not supply the shorthand-writer's report of the evidence taken to the representative of the Dunedin Evening Star, nor did he know how it was supplied. Now, except the Premier, every member of the Goldfields and Mines Committee has denied all knowledge of how the report got into the possession of the representative of the Dunedin Evening Star. And yet the honourable gentleman wonders that we laugh at the levity resulting from the remark of the Chairman of the Privileges Committee. But, apart from the jocular view, does it not appear that the Committee - at all events, I will speak for the minority of the Committee-had the correct view of the subject when they said it is impossible on oath or otherwise to obtain from these witnesses any clue as to who it was who surreptitiously supplied the Committee's shorthand-writer's report to the representative of the Dunedin Star? Then, Sir, I put to you a question I am sure you will not be able to answer: Who is to blame? Who supplied that report to the Dunedin Star? We cannot find out by putting the members of the Committee under a responsibility which is tantamount to putting them on oath. We are satisfied as to the truthfulness and the honesty of the evidence of certain other persons examined by the Committee ; and yet we have one witness, a recalcitrant witness, who says, "I have the name of the person who supplied me with your shorthand report, and I refuse to tell you who it was." We may have the consciousness, as I have the consciousness, of who it was who supplied the report, but we have not the absolute proof requisite to satisfy all the members of this House. Therefore I say that this House is justified in resorting to the extreme course of taking any step, of proceeding to any extreme, to compel that witness to disclose the name of that dishonourable person, whoever he may be, who supplied the shorthand report of the evidence to the Dunedin Star. It is not as if a member of a Committee had supplied a précis of the proceedings, an abstract, to a reporter of a newspaper. That is the distinction I draw, and why I describe this as the most flagrant case that ever came under the notice of this Parliament. This is not a précis or epitome supplied by a member of a Committee. It is the actual shorthand-writer's report, paid for by Parliament, paid for by the people of this country ; and what right has that report, which is the property of the Crown-the property of the people - to be supplied in a surreptitious manner to any one newspaper to the exclusion of all the rest ? That is the point I ask the House to consider, and it is the point, I think, that ought to decide the whole question. Mr. Fisher the honourable gentleman has introduced so much debatable matter. I also regret that he should have cast a reflection upon a member of the Goldfields and Mines Committee. If he and other members of the Committee were of the opinion he holds-namely, that a member of the Committee had given the evidence to Mr. Cohen-it was their duty to put that in the report. Sir, I disagree entirely with such an opinion. I think it was not a member of the Committee at all; and I do not think it is fair to any member of the Goldfields and Mines Committee that this aspersion should be hung over them, or that any one of them should be looked on as a dishonourable person, and that such an insinuation should come from a member of the Committee. It is not just to the members of the Goldfields Committee. An Hon. MEMBER .- You are going to hang it over till Tuesday. Mr. SEDDON .- It would be much better to hang it over for a longer time than that, if you could remove that impression. I may say that one of the gentlemen who gave evidence distinctly told me that one of his grievances was that the Press would not give publication to what he wished in reference to this matter, and he was bringing the matter before the Committee and the House so as to get his statements into the Press of the colony. When one of the witnesses has told me that, it might be inferred that he was just as likely to have connived at the Press getting the information as any one of the members of the Committee. I believe in fair-play. The promoters of the petition desired to get this matter into the papers, and it has got into the papers. It may not have been given by any member of the Committee or by a witness, but it may have

been put in such a way that it could be obtained and used. The only persons who had an opportunity of seeing the evidence were the witnesses and the members of the Committee. I do not wish to pass a reflection upon any one, but I am not going to sit here and hear the members of that Committee reflected upon -the whole Committee-because until it is proved who gave the information, it has been suggested, they are all to be held as being dishonourable. An Hon. MEMBER .- Under suspicion. Mr. SEDDON .- " Under suspicion." I do not think that is right. I shall now reply to a part of the speech of the member for Palmers- ton. I know Mr. Albert Cohen, and he told the Committee deliberately-without any feeling - that he would not disclose the source of his information. I know him to be an honourable man, and a journalist who takes a pride in his profession, and it is one of the tenets of all honourable journalists that they will not disclose the source of information received in any way. Then, I saw there was no doubt as to the position which would arise. You might bring him to the bar of the House, you might put him in the tower. and you will find yourselves ultimately just in the same position as when you began. I have known journalists brought up for contempt of

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bility-who are horrified at what has been done of a single case, after a journalist has been done in this case, but who have yet re- brought up for contempt, where he has altered peatedly given information to the newspapers. his position ? I do not know a single case in Moreover, they have said they will continue to this colony. So that, as to bringing the matter before the House, and as to bringing the wit- do so. They have been known to attend Com- ness up, that matter should rest with the Com- mittees for no other purpose than to ascertain mittee, and not with the House. I find that what was going on with the view of giving it to the newspapers. I say, Sir, that that has been the honourable member for Hawke's Bay sup- done repeatedly. I have now shown the dis- ported me in the attitude I took respecting Mr. Watson. The question was whether he should tinction between the two cases. In my opinion, appear personally or by counsel, and it was one of two courses must be taken : either throw ultimately agreed that he should appear by open the Committees altogether to the Press, counsel. Therefore, if you are going to deal or so amend our Standing Orders that if any- with Mr. Cohen because of his refusal as a wit- thing like this occurs again, we will know how ness to give certain information, you will have to deal with it, and those who offend will have to allow time for notice to be given to him, and to put up with the consequences. All I ask for now is time to think over the matter, with to decide as to whether counsel shall be per- the view of bringing down proposals such as will mitted. Mr. ATKINSON .- Move a vote of thanks to uphold the privileges of the House, and I think, be consistent with the desire of members. In him. That is about the way to meet the case. this case, we should deal with it as one body, Mr. SEDDON .- I think honourable members who as the representatives of the people have had will find, when the question of upholding the their privileges infringed. We must, naturally, privileges of this House is concerned, that protect ourselves ; but in the meantime I do not neither Mr. Cohen nor any one else influences think it fair to cast suspicion on the members me. At the same time I believe in doing what of the Goldfields Committee, for, according to is fair, and I will not depart from that course. the practice amongst members, and also accord- Some members have spoken of parallel cases. ing to our Standing Orders, once a member has We have had reports of Committees postponed denied making a statement, or has denied being on the merits of the case. There was a similar case in 1874, where the report of a Joint Com- mittee of Privilege was laid before the House. final in this House ; and, therefore, if it is final It had reference to the publication in the Tribune so far as the House is concerned, it is final so newspaper of the 4th August of certain infor- far as the Committee is concerned ; and no . mation. The Committee was known as the Ward-Chapman Inquiry Committee. The Com- member has any right to say that, because he mittee found that Mr. Ward had given infor- has been unable to obtain from Mr. Cohen the mation to Mr. Luckie, a member of the House, name of the person who gave him the papers, he should say it must have been one of the who

telegraphed it to the Southern Cross news- members of the Committee. I appointed a paper ; and, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. O' Rorke, it was resolved,- Royal Commission at one time to deal with the "That, in the matter of breach of privilege celebrated Fox correspondence. I do not know that has arisen through the publication of the to this day who did it. purport of certain evidence given before the Ward-Chapman Committee, the House, having case that allowed it to be copied. considered the report of the Select Committee, another Commission, and I shall have to bring accepts, as satisfactory to this House, the the honourable member for Waitemata before apology of Mr. Luckie for having been the that Commission and make him disclose who means of publishing this evidence, and the ex- pression of regret made by Mr. Ward before the it was who obtained that precious document. Select Committee for divulging his evidence : and this House resolves to proceed no further plied the Fox correspondence. in the matter." An Hon MEMBER .- That is not a parallel atmosphere much clearer than most members. I do not know, and I have often wished that case. Mr. SEDDON .- That brings me to the dis- I could have found it out, so as to remove altogether any suspicion I had. tinction between that and the present case. In the case to which I have just referred, the evidence which a witness had given was given I wil tell you that privately. by himself to another party, who transmitted it Commission appointed, and I am brought to a newspaper. In the present case it is the publication of the report of the evidence holus- before that Commission, look at my position. If this information is given to me privately I bolus in a newspaper; but I myself do not see cannot in honour use it. I must either have much difference between the two cases. Mem- the information openly or I cannot have it at bers of the House are in the habit of telling the all. However, the motion is that this question newspaper reporters what transpires, not in one be postponed until Tuesday, and I shal) make Committee but in several of them, and it is only this a first order of the day for Tuesday. It a question of degree. The practice has been may be, of course, that we shall require to growing from time to time, and there may be a party to a transaction, our Standing 11.30. Orders insist upon that being taken as Mr. MONK .- It was your negligence in that Mr. SEDDON .- Now I shall have to appoint Mr. FISHER .- Everybody knows who sup- Mr. SEDDON .- I must confess I live in an Mr. FISHER .- You mean the Fox business ? Mr. SEDDON. - But if there is another

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with this question according to our present Standing Orders. Mr. PIRANI .- Will you make the printing a matter of urgency ? Mr. SEDDON .- Yes ; I hope to get it com- plete and in the hands of honourable mem- bers as soon as possible. Motion agreed to. # FINANCIAL STATEMENT. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. HOGG (Masterton) .- I ask, Sir, before the debate proceeds, to be allowed to make a personal explanation. Last evening the honour- able member for Waihemowho, I am sorry to see, is not in his place to hear what I have to say-made some reference to the speech that I delivered on Friday last, when I contrasted the condition of the colony ten or eleven years ago with its present condition. He stated that on that occasion I said that the women were re- duced either to starvation or the street. After- wards he altered the word " women," and said it was girls, and he also mentioned that he had taken a note of my remarks. I challenged his statement, and was allowed to make a personal explanation. I said he placed a misconstruc- tion on the remarks I made, and that I never denied the fact that women had a fair choice of employment. I went on to say that no doubt what I said on that occasion appeared in Han- sard ; and he retorted to that, " You have al- tered your proof." Now, Sir, I have obtained the proof of that portion of my speech this morning, and am willing to show it to the honourable member for Waihemo or any other member of the House. I am not in the habit of allowing my tongue to run away with my head, and I am always prepared to accept the responsibility of any utterances I make in this House. There is no alteration in #cc-zero the portion of the proof he refers to, with the exception of the insertion of the word "the" before "atmosphere." What I did state on that occasion was this: I stated that the employ- ment of girls at that time was very limited. Mr. Mackenzie asked, " How did you survive ? " I replied, "I did not happen to be a

girl. Possibly if I had I might have developed into a nurse. and then there would have been trouble with the honourable gentleman who has just spoken. But, Sir, the girls at that time were left to go into the warehouses to sweep the floors, to pick up pins, and to live on the atmosphere, and when old enough they had to choose between the broom and the scrubbing- brush, and the streets in many cases." That is an entirely different version from that given by the honourable member for Waihemo. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- As personal explanations are the order of the day, I should like to make one- to say two or three words in reference to a misrepresentation of myself made by the honourable member for Egmont. In commencing his speech last evening he referred to some remarks I had made, practically ac- cusing me of inconsistency, in that I had been pointing out that it was not expedient that Mr. Seddon to interfere with the agriculturist while I had voted for the second reading of the Eight Hours Bill. It is true I voted for the second reading of that Bill, but in speaking on it I was careful to point out that I did so because it was intended in Committee to make it quite clear that the Bill did not apply to agriculturists, and that if that provision were omitted I should vote against the third reading. Mr. SYMES .- I hardly think that is a personal explanation. I said the honourable gentle- man voted for the second reading of the Bill. and he said he did so. Major STEWARD. - But the honourable gentleman accused me of doing so to catch an extra vote or two for my Elective Executive Bill, whereas the honourable member in charge of the Eight Hours Bill had already expressed himself in favour of the principle of the elective Executive; and, as a matter of fact, the debate on the Elective Executive Bill took place before the debate on the Eight Hours Bill. Mr. LANG (Waikato) .- In common with the honourable member who has preceded me, I recognise that at this period of the debate there is not much new to be said about the position of the affairs of the colony. But this debate gives members an opportunity of bringing before the Government matters of importance affecting the colony and the interests of their own elec- torates, and on these grounds I claim the indul- gence of the House. In the first place, I should like to condole with the Premier on account of the severe criticisms he has received at the hands of members who at one time were his most faithful supporters, although I am quite aware that the Premier does not much object to severe speeches so long as the members go into the lobby and vote in the right direction when his Bills come down. I think it is a matter for congratulation that we have no Opposition in the House at present. But, though we have no Opposition, there are several parties. One party is composed of those who have practically given their very souls to the Government, and vote and speak for them in the way they are directed. Then, there are the members who speak very strongly against the Government, but come up to the scratch when the division-bells ring. and go into the lobby and vote with the Go- vernment. Then, there is another party. mostly represented by members on this side of the House, who are quite willing and ready to support the Government whenever they think their measures are right, but will op- pose them when they believe them to be wrong. There are many reasons why there should be no Opposition at the present time. Perhaps the principal reason is that the Go- vernment, for the most part, are carrying out the suggestions that members of this side of the House have been advocating for years. Take as an instance the labour legislation- and here let me refer the Right Hon. the Premier to the Government Whip's speech last night, in which he said that we want a rest from labour legislation. Was it not members on this side of the House that brought that under

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reviled because they insisted that labour legis- lation was going too far. I maintain that the members on this side of the House have been working in the true interests of the work- ing-men. They saw that the legislation intro- duced by the Right Hon. the Premier would react on the workers themselves, and they told land. Then, there is the Ohura Valley, in them so; and now the Government party are beginning to realise it, and the Government Whip now says that we want a rest from labour legislation, and that there was a danger of going too far. For my part, I hope they have not gone too far already. There is another

case in point if we take the case of the Native legislation. The Native legislation introduced by the Right Hon. the Premier in 1894 is altogether contrary to that which is proposed at the present time. The lines on which we are going now are more in accordance with what was advocated by many of us on this side of the House at the time that the legislation of 1894 was introduced. Even if we take the case of the very-much-talked-of penny post, did not nearly every member of the Opposition advocate the penny post long before it is the first time since I have had the honour was introduced? I do not want, Sir, to take away from the credit which is due to Sir Joseph Ward for introducing the penny-post system, but I feel sure he himself would give credit to members on this side of the House for having supported him in that reform. More particularly do I not wish to take credit away from Sir Joseph Ward, because I realise, if Mr. Seddon had remained Postmaster-General, in all probability we should not have had the penny post at the present time, for at the time many of us were advocating the introduction of the penny-postage system the Right Hon. the Premier was only in favour of allowing it to be introduced in and near our large cities, leaving the inhabitants of the country districts out in the cold altogether. So I say in that respect the credit is due to Sir Joseph Ward for actually being the Minister that inaugurated the penny post. In my own particular district, when Sir Joseph Ward visited it a presentation was made to him by the Liberal and Labour League in commemoration of the introduction of the penny postage; but, although the presentation was made by the Liberal and Labour League, it was subscribed for by people of all political distinctions, and I feel sure the Postmaster-General will value a presentation made in that way more than if it had come from any individual set only. Now, one of the most important matters by the Government. It is not only the laws dealt with in the Statement, I consider, is the actually passed, but it is the state of uncertainty settlement of the people on the land. The settlement of the land, the Premier says in his happen next. That tends in the direction of Budget, is of paramount importance. Since I have had the honour of holding a seat in this House I have always endeavoured, to the best desirable class of settlers are debarred from of my ability, to advocate the importance of opening up the country for settlement, the from starting industries in the colony, even if it importance not only for the colony, but also does not go further than that and cause people for the Province and City of Auckland, and the electorate in particular that I represent I wish to bring under the notice of the House. I look upon it as a disgraceful thing been shut up so long. The Government were going to open up a hundred thousand acres last year, but up to the present time only about five thousand acres of it were opened up; and for that block of five thousand acres no less than fifteen thousand applications were put in, showing the immense demand there is for which thousands and thousands of acres of land belonging to the Crown and suitable for settlement are lying idle. There is a good road leading from where the railway nearly touches it at Kawakawa down the Ohura Valley; and I would urge the Minister for Public Works to do the best he can to get the railway authorised from Kawakawa to Stratford, so that that land, when it is cut up, may be of greater value, so as to encourage the Government to go to the expense of constructing that line of railway. Mr. HALL-JONES.- That is not being done. Mr. LANG.- Certainly not. Why you should authorise the Stratford end and not the Auckland end also I cannot understand. I am very pleased that the Minister of Lands visited my electorate during the recess. It of a seat in the House that the Minister of Lands has visited that district. It is perhaps one of the most important electorates so far as the Minister of Lands' Department is concerned, in that there is a large quantity of unoccupied land in the district, and a great portion of it Crown land. I can assure the Minister that his visit to the district was very much appreciated, and I hope he will visit it again during the next recess, so that he may see some portions that he had not time to see during the last visit. Now, I think the Crown and Native lands should be settled before land is taken under the Land for Settlements Act. And it seems to be a great pity that Parliament ever consented to the compulsory clauses of the Land for Settlements Act, because I consider it has done as much harm to the settlement of the colony as labour legislation has to the starting of industries in

the colony ; for it goes without saying that any one from the who wish to come to New Zealand to settle will not do so if there is a possibility of their home being taken from them after they have lived upon it for years, and have expended a lot of money upon it. And so it is with the industries. People will not start industries in New Zealand when they know they may be hampered at any time by the labour laws passed they are in. They never know what is going to keeping capital out of the country. So far as the settlement of the land is concerned, a very taking up land ; and people are prevented also to sell out and go to other parts. The next

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The Budget on the subject reads thus :- "The construction of roads to the back blocks, the roading of lands prior to settle- ment, and the endeavour to improve the means of communication, so as to permit the settlers to bring their produce to the main roads and realise, is of paramount importance." The Premier admits this is a matter of para- mount importance, but he does not say what he intends to do. I would remind honourable members what the Premier said in his Budget of 1899-that was the Budget immediately before the general election. The Premier said,- " In many parts of the colony we have settlers who have been placed on the land for years, but have no roads leading to their homes, and the privations and difficulties they have to en- counter are heartrending to endure. Having personally made myself acquainted with the true condition of affairs, I feel this standing reproach should be removed, and every expedi- tion exercised in making roads next summer to the back-block settlements. The settlers have a right to insist that the State shall keep good faith." Then he goes on to say,- " In winter-time these settlers are completely isolated from the outside world." Now, we are in just as bad a position, so faras roads to the back blocks are concerned, as we were in 1899, when the Premier apparently first made himself acquainted with the true condition of affairs. It is true that there was a certain spurt put on just previous to the general election, and I only wish the roads in my district were now being pushed on at the same rate as they were just before that election, for I feel then I should have very little to complain of in regard to roadwork in my district at the present time. Mr. HALL-JONES .- The work has never gone on as fast as it has since last session. Mr. LANG .- You are speaking of railway- works, but I was not referring to railway-works. I believe the Minister for Public Works has done his best to keep his promise so far as the North Island Main Trunk Railway is con- cerned. I was speaking of the construction of roads to the back blocks, and what I say is absolutely correct. You will find that there are very few men employed in road-making in that district at the present time. It is im- possible to construct the necessary roads out of the money available. I maintain that a loan should be raised in New Zealand expressly and solely for the purpose of making roads to the back blocks, and just sufficient should be raised as can be profitably expended in one year ; and the money should be placed in the hands of the Minister of Lands to expend, and should not be interfered with by the Premier or any other department. Sir, I feel certain of this : that if the House were to authorise a small loan to be raised in the colony, sufficient to construct roads in the back blocks, and let the Minister of Lands have the sole handling of it, we should have little reason to complain. There is no better or , expenditure. Wherever it is possible I think Mr. Lang or of borrowed money, than in the direction I have indicated. The Premier, in his Budget, has pointed out that these loans can be raised in the colony easily. I will read his words : "The difficulty of raising money in London has not been without its advantages, for it has shown us that it can be easily raised locally." With reference to State aid to local bodies, I think greater assistance should be given by the Government in this direction, and in the direction of giving more aid to the weaker bodies. As it is at present the largest sub- sidies are given by the Government to the local bodies that have most wealth. There are some local bodies in the colony that do not strike a rate at all, or possibly only one in many years, and there are others that only strike a halfpenny rate, and that halfpenny rate is the whole tota' rate of local rating ; and on that rate they are not only able to keep the roads in good repair, but to do permanent work, such as the erection of

concrete culverts and bridges. and have a large credit balance at the bank. While this is the case with some, other local bodies strike the very highest rate the law will permit, and on these rates they are unable to keep the roads in even passable condition. It is local bodies such as these that the Government ought to help. The Government ought to bring in a scheme providing that the subsidies should be paid upon a graduated scale- that is to say, if a local body struck only a farthing rate it should receive a subsidy of 5s. in the pound, advancing up to £2 when a three-halfpenny rate is struck. Then those willing to help themselves would be assisted by the Government. With reference to the public works estimates, the present system is, I think, exceedingly unsatisfactory. It conveys no idea of how the accounts stand. No one looking at the estimates can tell, when they look at the liabilities, whether that means that so much money has been actually expended, or whether it has not been expended at all, and is going to be revoted. I maintain that when this House passes any sum on the estimates it ought to be available, and that it should not be in the power of any Government to keep back the expenditure, as is the case at the present time. Money is often voted over and over again, and grants are diverted to other purposes than those to which they were intended, and a large proportion is deducted for the office expenses. What should we have thought if last session, when a certain sum of \$40 was put on the estimates, honourable members had been unable to draw it, and if honourable members had been told that it was to be voted again next session ? Mr. HALL-JONES -It is the fault of the local bodies if they do not apply for it. Mr. LANG .- That is not so in my electorate. Mr. HALL-JONES .- It is so in many cases. Mr. LANG .- It may be so in isolated cases ; and, at any rate, I am glad to have the assurance of the Minister that it only requires an application from the local bodies to insure the

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grants should be handed over to local bodies to expend. For the most part, where the local bodies have grants handed over to them they are expended better and cheaper than when the Government do it, because when the Government expend it a large amount is deducted for office and other expenses; but if the money is handed over to the local bodies generally they expend the whole of it without deducting anything for expenses, and they often add something to it also. They also know where the expenditure of the money is most wanted, and they expend it cheaper and better. Now, with reference to the system of disposing of the Crown lands: at the present time there are three systems in vogue-occupation with right of purchase, lease in perpetuity, and the cash system. Now, I want to point out one peculiar thing in connection with these systems. In occupation with right of purchase there are " thirds " granted, and also under the lease in perpetuity, and when tenants under occupation with right of purchase convert their lands into freeholds the "thirds " are available. But in the case of cash sales there 12.0. are no " thirds " devoted to the roads. I think this must have been an oversight, and the Government should alter it. It is to their advantage from a financial point of view to get the cash purchase, and surely it is only fair that a third should be handed over in the same way as in the occupation with right of purchase and the lease in perpetuity. With regard to the leasehold system, I would point out that, in spite of all we have heard of the popularity of the lease in perpetuity, the occupation with right of purchase is far and away the most popular form of taking up land. Honourable members need only look at the Crown Lands Report of this session to see that fact for themselves. Settlers are so anxious to have the right to procure a freehold that they will pay 1 per cent. more rent to be able to procure it; and I venture to say that, if the rent under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase scheme were reduced and put on even terms with the lease in perpetuity, we would find few settlers, if any, taking up land under the lease in perpetuity. Then, Sir, I consider that all tenants of the Crown should have the privilege of converting a leasehold into a freehold. It has often been said by members who oppose this plan that those of us who advocate it wish to urge the settlers to convert their leaseholds into freeholds. It is nothing of the kind. We only wish them to have the privilege of doing so if they feel so inclined. They should have the right to acquire the freehold by paying

instalments, their rent being reduced in proportion to the instalments paid. Now, with reference to the ballot system, it has been acknowledged by the members of the House generally that that system is nothing more nor less than gambling. If honourable members will look at the speeches of the Right Hon. the Premier, Captain Russell, and others delivered in this House on the 19th July last, it will be seen those honourable gentlemen spoke strongly against the ballot VOL. OXVIII .- 19. Under that system the bona fide settler has little chance of taking up a section ; and, on the other hand, the speculator who draws a lot will immediately get a large sum of money for his lucky draw. With reference to the telephones to the back blocks, I agree with what the member for Waihemo said in that respect. I think there should be more accommodation given to settlers in the back blocks, and I cannot see why, if the Government are making new roads to freshly opened-up country, they should not erect a telephone line along the road at the same time as they are constructing it. It would mean very little extra expense, and it would be a great boon to the pioneer settlers. I wish now to say a few words about our railways. In the first place, the Hon. the Minister for Railways and his department are to be congratulated on the manner in which the railways were managed during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. There was great stress laid on the Minister and the department at the time, and as far as I have heard everything ran smoothly and well. I also wish to congratulate the Minister on the general improvement of the railways since he has had the control. I venture to say that more improvements have been made during the time he has had control than in many years previously. As far as the reduction of passenger fares is concerned, I would point out that the concessions have been of little benefit to the farmer and the country settler, because the farmer and the country settler, who probably live many miles from a city, generally used to take a return ticket, and the reduction on that return ticket for, say 100 miles, means only a few pence, whereas the single-fare reductions are greater and of more advantage to the tourist and the stranger in the country, who is usually well able to pay a higher price for his ticket. But if the Minister could see his way to reduce the freight on farmers' produce he would be doing far more good. A very little reduction made in that respect would put the farmers in a better position. In the case of a farmer going into town the small difference in his railway-fare is not of so much importance as the loss of time and the expense he has to bear when he is in town. Since I have been a member of this House I have continually urged on the Minister the importance of fencing in the railway-line. Speaking now more particularly with respect to my own electorate, I am glad to see that the Minister for Railways has now started the fencing-in of some of the most dangerous parts of that railway-line, and I hope he will continue the work of fencing in that line. I think the time has now arrived when we should have two trains a day, at any rate, on the line from Frankton Junction to Te Awamutu. I wish to protest against the manner in which the Railway Department treat applications for goods-sheds or stock-yards. When a member of the House sends in an application for a goods-shed or a stock-yard he usually gets a formal reply from the department giving the amount of stock and goods shipped, and stating that the amount of traffic at that place does not justify it. But

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no goods - sheds, there and no stock-yards ? Does the department think that the farmers are going to lift fat bullocks into the cattle-trucks ? And, in regard to produce, the farmers will not take produce to stations where it will be exposed to the weather. They would far rather cart it a greater distance to another station where there are the ordinary facilities. I think the Railway Department might be a little more generous in granting concessions to settlers in this respect. There is another matter which I desire to refer to in connection with the railways, and that is the damage done by sparks from engines. I maintain that the owners of properties destroyed by fires caused by sparks from railway-engines should be compensated. I, myself, together with other members representing country districts, worked for many years before we could induce the Government to compensate farmers for stock killed by order of the Inspector. We

pointed out that it would be much fairer that the loss should fall on the whole colony than on a few unfortunate farmers, and the same argument applies to damage done by sparks from railway-engines. I do not suggest that the compensation to be paid for such loss by fire should be paid out of the railway revenue-I think that would be unfair ; but I cannot see, in cases where the department have reason to believe that the fire was caused by sparks from an engine, why a sum should not be placed on the estimates for that purpose. I will give three instances which occurred in my electorate, and they are only three out of many which have occurred in the colony. In the first case a settler had his fence destroyed by a fire caused by a spark from an engine ; and, in consequence of the destruction of his fence, his cows got out and they strayed on the railway-line, and the train ran over the cows and killed them. That settler was fined for allowing his cows to stray on the railway-line. They burned his fence, they killed his cows, and then fined him. The next case is that of the owner of a swamp. The owner bought that swamp entirely on account of the flax growing on the swamp. Sir, no less than three times that flax has been burned, the fire being caused by sparks from the railway-engine. Just as the flax was ready to cut, a spark from the railway-engine set it on fire. The result of that has been that the owner has had to move his mill a long distance from his home, and has had to pay a royalty on other flax. I visited this place during the last recess, and, even although it had been a wet summer, I noticed three or four places where fires had been started by sparks from the railway-engine ; but fortunately, the season being a wet one, the fire did not spread. Now, this case was heard by the Commissioner, Mr. Poynton, and three witnesses gave evidence that they saw the fire start. I will read what the Commissioner himself says in reference to it. He says, - " A large area of growing flax was destroyed by a fire spreading from the railway. The swamp containing the flax runs close up to Mr. Lang probable such was the case. The total value of flax destroyed would be somewhere about £1,800." That is the loss to this settler simply on account of damage done, and I think it is right he should be compensated. It is true the Commissioner said that if a drain had been made for about 30 or 40 chains the fire would have been prevented from spreading. Any one knowing the nature of swamps knows that it is exceedingly doubtful if the drain would stop the fire from spreading ; but, even if it did, why should the settlers be put to the expense of preventing fires caused by the Railway Department ? If any one should do this it is the department itself. Or, at any rate, they should have done what the owner of the property would be quite willing to do-that is, for each party to pay half of the cost; but this the department refused to do. The third case was that of a wattle plantation at Wairangi. I now come to the question of defence. In his Statement the Premier says, " Some honourable members may have misgivings respecting the large amount asked for for defence." And I certainly think that some honourable members have misgivings on account of the cost of running this department, for it is now three times what it was a few years ago. I ask, Can we afford this lavish expenditure ? Where does this money come from ? Does it mean, as the Premier said with reference to the money required for the old - age pensions some sessions ago, " A few less roads and bridges " ? Does it mean that the settlers who have no roads leading to their homes, and have to put up with all sorts of "privations and difficulties that are heartrending to endure," are to continue in that condition ? I would say, let the Government provide the roads first, and then they may, if they think fit, go in for what we may call luxuries. The money should be expended on useful works, and not on what is only ornamental. We do not want a standing army in New Zealand. It is recognised that our first line of defence should be the navy ; and if the Government will only encourage the Volunteers to attend drill regularly, to make themselves proficient, they will be going in the right direction. They should further encourage rifle clubs, especially in the outlying districts where regular Volunteer corps cannot be formed. At present not half enough inducement is offered to those clubs. Mr. HALL-JONES .- They have got a start now. Mr. LANG. - It is not enough. A session or two ago I asked the question in the House, but the Premier did not see his way to give much encouragement. Assistance is now being given, but it is not nearly enough. There would be no more useful body of men in the colony

than those to be found in the rifle clubs, and they ought to be encouraged. The expense in doing so need not be great. Nearly a year ago the Government had placed a sum on the estimates for the purpose of purchasing flags for

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Most schools in that had proper flagstaffs. my district have erected the necessary flagstaffs, land. Hitherto the farmers have not been able but, I would ask, Where are the flags that the Government promised to supply ? legislation has been forced upon them by unions Mr. HALL-JONES .- Did they apply for them ? Mr. LANG .- They have applied for them over and over again, and I believe that only a few not. In the electorate I have the honour to dozens have been sent out to the different Education Boards in the colony, but nothing like enough to go round. And I hear-I do not know whether my information is correct-that these flags are so small that they will look very By joining in a body they have been able to get insignificant at the top of the substantial flag-staffs these schools have erected. I believe they will look something like a small handkerchief. Mr. HALL-JONES .- The delay has occurred with the contractors. Mr. LANG .- One year's delay is a very long while. However, I will pass on now to another matter in the Statement, and that is referred to under the heading of " Our boys at the front : Returned troopers." The Premier makes a laboured excuse why the men did not receive their pay when they returned. He says, " There is no real foundation for this statement whatever "-whatever he may mean by that. Afterwards he admits there has been delay, but he lays the blame with the Imperial authorities. pay the utmost attention to their wants, be- But my object is not so much to draw attention to that as it is to the manner in which troopers have been .-- I was almost going to say deceived, so far as receiving billets is concerned. The Premier undoubtedly led them to believe that more members will be returned to this House they would all receive billets when they returned more directly representing agricultural interests. from South Africa. I regret to say that there are so few in the Mr. HALL-JONES .- No. Mr. LANG .- That was the impression the Premier conveyed, whether he meant it or not ; member for Franklin who, when speaking of but. even supposing he only promised that he are twenty-nine members for the South Island, would give them the first show, I will show how they are treated in this respect. I have certainly heard that one or two of the returned members of contingents have been somewhat fastidious, and they have wished to pick and choose what billets they should get. I think that farmer or the small farming class, and I hope is wrong, but a great many returned troopers are ready and willing to accept the first billets makes fresh appointments to the Upper House. offered to them, and this is the way they have been treated : They are told to send in an appli- This heading sounds very well, but it is rather cation, and when the application is sent in they vague. It is something like the heading one are told their names are on the list, and that when a vacancy occurs and their turn comes they sometimes sees to cablegrams. One sees some- will be further communicated with. Then they thing in the heading that is very sensational, are afterwards told that if they do not hear but when what follows is read one finds that within a given date they should renew their there is not very much in it. What does the applications annually. Now, do they expect troopers to wait year after year before they get these appointments? It is far better to tell the Premier intends sending a trade expert to South Africa. If this expert does nothing them straight out whether they can give them more than the trade experts in the past have work or not; and, if they cannot give them done, the farmer will have little to thank the billets, I am sure the men would be willing to Government for in this respect. Then, with go and look for work elsewhere. But they reference to the reduction of the mortgage-tax, should not be kept hanging on, expecting to get a billet day by day, and, as the department the Premier, in his Budget, says,- say in their own memorandum, " Applications considerable time the interest on mortgages has should be renewed annually." Now, Sir, I want to say a word in reference to the Farmers' steadily decreased. During the past ten years Union has been formed throughout New Zea- to unite, and, in consequence of that, injurious that represent industries of far smaller im- portance compared with

agriculture, and simply because one body has united and the other has represent -- the Waikato-the farmers have been uniting in the way of forming farmers' clubs, and, so far as their own private business is concerned, they have greatly advanced it. certain business concessions which they endeavored to obtain years and years before, but could not do so because they were not united. I venture to say that the farmers now will make their wants felt and their importance recognised. The Premier says that the Farmers' Union is a political organization, and so the Premier, and the member for Masterton, and the member for Geraldine went up to Pahiatua to form a non-party union. Just fancy a non-party union being formed by the Premier and the member for Masterton and the member for Geraldine! The Premier in the first case tried to burst up the Farmers' Union-there is no doubt about that. But now I think he will cause there is no man who is more willing to listen to the wants of settlers than the Premier, provided they are backed up by sufficient votes. I venture to say that at the next elections present House considering the importance of the agricultural industry. I think it was the . the Upper House, pointed out that there against only eighteen from the North; but I would like to point out that in the members of the Upper House we have only eight or nine who represent agricultural interests, and out of that eight or nine only about half represent the the Premier will bear this in mind when he "Help to farmers and producers : Cool-storage." Premier say in reference to this? The only thing we can glean from this paragraph is that " In my last Budget I stated that ' for some

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fourth; this makes the penny in the pound on capital value a very heavy tax.' I have not altered my opinion, and still consider that the mortgage-tax is too high, and that some relief should be given, provided the finances of the colony permit. Whilst desiring to keep good faith with Parliament, to do so this session would be imprudent, unless the loss of revenue occasioned thereby is recouped." The Premier says he regrets he cannot keep his promise of last year to reduce the mortgage-tax. I agree with the member for Wairarapa that " the mortgage-tax is a punishment to the small settler." There is not the slightest doubt that the borrower has to pay the tax, and that the mortgage-tax keeps up the rate of interest ; and I would ask, is the Government in such straitened circumstances that they cannot keep their pledges? They must have had trouble to make both ends meet when they have to break a promise that involved only a matter of £25,000. Now I will pass on to the Native legislation. I think it will be generally admitted that the Native legislation of the Premier during the time he has been Minister of that department has been a total failure. And what is the reason ? Simply because he would not listen to the recommendations of the Native Affairs Committee. That was a Committee set up by himself, and consisted largely of members representing portions of the colony in which there were many Natives, and who had a good knowledge of Native affairs. The Premier had his own way in the House as far as the pre-emptive right was concerned. Though he had the Native Affairs Committee opposed to him, the Premier carried his wishes in this House by the aid of the "lobby brigade." The Premier claimed that his Native land legislation ' would do away with the evils of the past, but instead of doing away with the evils of the past it has increased the injustice to the Natives and kept their lands locked up. If the old system had been maintained, I venture to say that the greater portion of the colony would have been settled, and the Natives would have been in a far better position than at the present time. The Premier has so often spoken about the dreadful way the Natives have been treated in the past -- previous to 1894-and how they have been robbed of their land and left landless by the land-shark and the pakeha- Maori, and the Premier's strong supporters have borne him out in this opinion, although I must say most of the support he got came from members with very little knowledge of Native affairs. But I maintain this : that if the treatment was bad before 1894, when the Native Minister acquired the pre-emptive right, it has been ten times worse since. the old time it was a case of give and take. Sometimes the Natives got the best of the bargain-in fact, they frequently did so-and sometimes the Europeans; now the Government always

get the best of the bargain. In the past there was competition ; now there is none. In the past sufficient land was retained for the Natives ; before any one could buy land Mr. Lang Government buy the last acre, qualifying the Natives for the old-age pensions. They also buy children's interests-minors' rights have been bought since the Government had the sole right of purchase. It is very easy to show that the Natives have been worse treated by the Govern- ment ; and to prove it I do not intend solely to give my own views, but will read several extracts from the speeches of members whose words will be received with respect, more par- ticularly as most of them represent the Native race, or are staunch followers of the Government. First, there was a speech by Sir Robert Stout in 1894, who said, speaking of the pre-emptive right :- "Apparently the Government is offering something like 12s. 6d. an acre for land worth £3 an acre. The land was assessed at \$3 an acre, and there was a person in the district who would have given that price for it ; and I say it is entirely unfair for the Government to say to the Natives, ' You must give us this land at 12s. 6d., although an outside purchaser would give £3 for it.' " Then, the present Native Minister, Mr. Car- roll, brought down a report of the Commission to inquire into the best way of dealing with the Native difficulty. This report has been so often mentioned in the House that it is only my in- tention to read one or two clauses. Speaking on the pre-emptive right, he says :- " Such a proceeding on the part of the Legis- lature would, in my opinion, intensify the mis- trust the Native population too long have had in colonial Governments. Such a pro- ceeding would be regarded by the present gene- ration of Maoris as simply confiscation. Evidence adduced before the Commission proved conclusively that where the Government inter- posed with its pre-emptive right, as was the case in the King-country, the Natives could not obtain a fair price for their land. The Govern- ment offered 3s. an acre ; at the same time pri- vate purchasers were in constant communica- tion with the owners, and willing to pay them €1 an acre." Then, there is a speech by Mr. Kaihau on the Native Lands Administration Act (Hansard, Volume 110, page 759) :- "The only real benefit that I see in this Bill is this : that in it provision is made to put a stop to Crown purchases of Native land." Then, at page 760,- " Why should a Maori's property be tied up so that he cannot utilise it to his advantage, when it is his own and belongs to him," et cetera. Then the same speaker, on the Financial In Statement (Hansard, Volume 103, page 166) says,- " In former times each individual hapu was the happy possessor of large areas of country. but when this House began to make laws for Native lands, those lands began to slip away bit by bit from the hands of the original Native owners. That must satisfy honourable mem- bers that it is as I say : the lands of the Maori

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people are slipping away from them rapidly. those of their lands that they did not require No ; their unfortunate position is this : themselves, and, as a consequence, Europeans that their lands are slipping rapidly through were welcomed to the district. But with the their fingers at the command of the Govern- advent of the Europeans, I am sorry to say, I consider the Natives are there was also the introduction of liquor, and ment. suffering injury under the present law." the police have been unable up to the present time to keep down sly-grog selling. I must He goes on to point out the expenses heaped upon the Natives in connection with survey say, with all justice to the Police Department, and Land Court expenses, and mentions that that I believe they have done their best to keep when the Native gets paid for his land there is it down, and I believe it is the opinion of the very little left, for he says,- majority of the people in the district that it " The land passes from the Natives, and they is impossible to keep down the sly-grog selling virtually get nothing in return for it." in the King-country under the present circum- Then there is a speech by Mr. Wi Pere (Han- stances. sard, Volume 86, page 375),- were in favour of prohibiting licenses in the " The Natives ask to be emancipated from King.country are now of opinion that the licenses would be the lesser of two evils. Now, their present state, so that they may in future look to the Queen only." the Prohibitionists should surely allow the Here is a reflection on the legislation of the same privilege to the inhabitants of the King- present Government : that the Maoris ask to be country that are at present

enjoyed by the placed in exactly the same position as the natives in other parts of the colony. If natives of Fiji occupy at present, in order that the other parts of the colony the electors they may be relieved from the tyranny of the of any district carry a vote in favour of Government. I am glad to see that Native licenses, the Prohibitionists would not object legislation in the hands of the present Native at some future time to reverse that vote Minister is going more in the direction it should and carry prohibition. Then, why not extend go, and which I believe he himself believed in the same privilege to the inhabitants of the I have advocated in the King-country ? A large number of petitions many years ago. House that the Natives should have a free hand have been presented to this House against in dealing with their land, with certain restrictions - the issue of licenses, and I would just like to point out that the people of the King-country Native point of view : from the European point do not ask that licenses should be granted, but of view, that no one should be allowed to buy more than a certain quantity, to prevent the purchase of too large blocks; and, from the Native point of view, that the Natives' in other parts of the colony. A great many 12.30. interest should be maintained, taking care to see that they get fair value for their land, and that they retain sufficient to maintain few Europeans, and that nearly all the Natives sustain themselves. That is what I advocated years ago, and I think it is somewhat on the lines of the Government legislation which is proposed at the present time. Now, Sir, I and one-half Natives. Soon there will be a would like to say a few words about licenses in the King-country. This matter has been brought forward on more than one occasion in this House more particularly by way of petitions presented to the House ; and, as the King-country is in my electorate, I would like to say a few words with reference to this vexed question, because it is one that is very much misunderstood, not only by members of the House, but also by a very considerable portion of the people of the colony. Some Natives. The evidence given before the A to L sixteen years ago, at the turning of the first Petitions Committee showed that there is only sod of the railway, there was an agreement a population of from one thousand seven hundred entered into by the King-country Natives and the Government that no liquor should be introduced into the country, and that there is more than double introduced into the King-country, and that there should be no sale of Native land there-that is to say, the King-country was to be kept apart for the Natives who were settled there. Just a short time previous to this it was not safe for Europeans to go over the boundary, or, at any rate, no European was allowed to go over the boundary unless he was a pakcha-Maori, or on good terms with the Natives. The Natives, however, very soon found that it was to their advantage to dispose of Many of the persons that formerly they ask that their votes should be taken, and that they should be placed in an exactly similar position to that enjoyed by their fellow-settlers people seem to have a very vague idea of the King-country. They seem to think that there the Natives are huddled together, that there are are located in that part of the North Island ; whereas the population of the King-country at the present time is nearly one-half Europeans very great preponderance of Europeans. Now, the Waikato electorate may be divided into two parts. The northern part is the part in which licenses are granted, and the southern part is the prohibition or non-licensing portion. In the northern or licensing portion of the district there are about four thousand Natives; but in the southern part, where no licenses are granted to two thousand Natives in the King- that population of Natives in the northern portion of the district where the licenses are. Now, no evil results are complained of in the northern part of the Waikato; nor do they say that there are any evil effects from the licensed houses close to the boundary, as regards the Natives who live just over the boundary. But, Sir, I do not stand here to advocate licenses, for I have nothing to do with the liquor party. They have never done anything to help me in my election contests,

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nor have I ever asked for their assistance; but I say, in all sincerity, that the people of that district should be placed in exactly the same position as their fellow-settlers are in other parts of the colony. If a man is

living in the South Island, and he thinks fit to come to the North Island to reside in the King-country, he at once loses the privilege he enjoys in other parts of the country ; and I do not think that is a right or proper state of affairs. Now, with regard to national education, capitation, and teachers' salaries: So far as the scheme recommended by the Commission is concerned, there is no doubt it improves the position of the town teachers, and also of the female teachers in most cases in the Auckland Education District. But in that education district it is of little or no advantage so far as the male teachers of the country schools are concerned ; that is to say, the schools whose average attendance is small. In the Auckland District there are a large number of schools of this kind. Now, those schools are conducted for the most part by married men with families, and, though they have responsibilities quite as large as the teachers of the larger schools, their salaries are miserably small. And yet, Sir, under this scheme they are not considered at all, or at any rate very slightly, and I hope some consideration will be given to this class of teachers. I regret that the Government cannot see their way to adopt the second scale recommended by the Commission, which I think would be far the better of the two. With reference to technical instruction, I think a great deal more might be done in the country schools. Some Native schools set a good example in this respect. There is one school established at Kawhia, where the master and his pupils have erected a substantial building, which is well furnished with tools and appliances, and where he teaches the Maori boys carpentering and leather-work. Now, I would like to say a few words about the old-age pensions. I think the Premier, if he is fair, must admit that many of us who prophesied that the scheme would cost over \$200,000 were right, and that the Premier himself was wrong. He appears to have treated this matter in rather a light-hearted way, without considering the consequences. My reason for speaking on this subject is that I regret the Premier cannot see his way to amend the Act in the direction of making it more fair. The Premier seems to me to be quite satisfied if he can only get an Act on the statute-book. In this respect he is very like some globe-trotters who go to different parts of the world, not to see the beauties or the wonders of the places they visit, or for any scientific reasons, but simply to be able to say that they have been there ; and all the Premier seems to care about is to be able to boast that he has placed a certain Act on the statute-book, and he is indifferent as to whether it is going to work well or otherwise. Now, in the Budget he says, " There are reasons for believing that imposition is practised, and that evasion of the law to some extent prevails." Sir, it is time some alteration of the law was made. There is no doubt that there are many deserving cases, but, on the other hand, there are a lot of pensioners who have rich relations who could well support them if they desired to do so. As to those who are deserving cases, and yet do not get pensions, I know the case of a poor old man aged about seventy-five, and who has been in the colony about sixty years, and, simply because he has been out of the colony for a few years during the last twenty-five years, he is debarred from receiving the pension. Now my time is nearly up, and I had several other matters to deal with, so I shall not be able to devote as much time to them as I should have liked to. First of all, as to the public debt : There is no doubt that since the Government have come into office they have increased the public debt out of all proportion to the increase of population or of trade. But the point I want to lay stress upon more than anything else is the fact that we do not get fair value for the money expended. If the same care was bestowed upon the disposal of public money by Ministers as they would bestow upon their own private affairs, our finances would be in a more satisfactory condition. The debt per head of population has now reached the highest point at which it has ever been. It is £62 16s. 10d. per head. Then, as far as cutting down salaries is concerned, I regret that the Premier hints he will have to go back to the old days, and again attach himself to the skinflints for the purpose of cutting down the salaries of the Civil servants. I regret he hints at such a thing being possible. I assert that if the Civil Service is to be maintained in an efficient state its members should be paid a good and fair salary for the work they do, and such as will compare not unfavourably with what is paid in the other colonies. Otherwise, we shall lose our good men. I should like to have said

something more at length in respect to the North Island Main Trunk Railway, but I will congratulate the Minister for Public Works on the fact that during the last year he has pushed that work on to the best of his ability, and has endeavoured to carry out, and I believe has carried out, the promise he made. The honourable gentleman deserves credit for that. It shows what might have been done in the past. I only wish the present Minister for Public Works had been on those benches in 1894. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Or in 1890 ? Mr. LANG .- I will not go so far back as that. I should be quite content if the railway was completed now, and if five or six years ago the same progress had been made as that of last year, I think Wellington and Auckland would be connected at the present time ; but I am afraid, notwithstanding the energy that has been shown, the railway will not be completed within the four years as promised. I congratulate the Premier on the good hours that we have been keeping this session, but I do hope it is not the calm before the storm. and that he does not intend to make up for it at the end of the session. But while congratulating the Government upon the hours

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they are keeping, I cannot congratulate them | main road to Taranaki and Napier. It is upon the great amount of business they have | got through, considering the number of weeks we have been in session. There are a few other matters I wish to mention. One is that the honourable member for Invercargill complains that the replies to questions asked by members in this House are from the departments, and not from the Ministers. Now, I take quite the opposite view. I only wish we could get the replies of the departments and not of the Ministers, for the replies of the Ministers frequently have no reference to the questions asked, more particularly as far as the Premier is concerned. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Time is up. Mr. FIELD (Otaki) .- Sir, I must begin by congratulating the honourable member for Wai-kato upon the excellent speech he has delivered, far and away the best speech, I think, I have heard him deliver in this House-a speech of which any man in this House might be justly proud. There is much in it with which I entirely agree, and we all here lament the fact that he is on the wrong side of the House. At the same time there was much with which I disagree. It is needless for me to mention points on which we agree ; but, as I have said, they are many. Whether it had been my intention to speak on this debate or not, I would, in any case, have been compelled to do so by certain remarks of the honourable member for Bruce. affecting my own district. That honourable member accused the Government of bribery in one particular glaring instance - that of providing the full cost of the Otaki Bridge. Now, when I have finished my remarks on this subject I think even the member for Bruce will admit that if there was any district that was entitled to be provided with the entire cost of any work that district was certainly the Otaki district, and that work was certainly the Otaki Bridge. The Government have set up a policy-a very wise policy-that districts that require help from the Government should first help themselves. That is a policy such as the honourable member for Bruce, according to his remarks, approves of. But there are cases, and that of the Otaki Bridge is certainly pre-eminently one, where the settlers have a right to ask the Government for the full cost. Now, these are the reasons why it was, beyond doubt, justifiable in the case of the Otaki Bridge : First and foremost, the district was one which had never received anything, although it had been settled for upwards of fifty years. It had never received any help from the Government. Up to a very few years ago the road that was used for the purposes of the West Coast was the beach, and if there had been no beach the colony would have had to provide a main West Coast road when settlement first began. The settlers for over fifty years had put up with the inconvenience of having to use that natural highway as the highway to Taranaki on the one side and to Napier on the other ; and during all those years, instead of paying £1 for £1, they had probably contributed in loss and inconvenience not £1 for £1, but £20 for £1. pass on to the remarks of the member for The second reason is that the bridge is on the therefore a national road ; and, that being so, the colony as a whole should pay for the cost, and not the district, which really derives far short of the whole benefit from it. The third reason-and a very cogent reason-is

that the whole of the Crown lands on the coast had been given to the Manawatu Railway Company. If they had remained in the hands of the Crown they would on their disposal have earned the "thirds " which so materially assist local bodies to make roads and bridges. Instead of that, however, the lands are in the hands of the company, and that company, when cutting up their lands, showed roads on their plans, but omitted to make them. Therefore the settlers who had improved properties in the district had themselves to bear the main burden of making roads to open up the Manawatu Company's lands. The fourth reason-also a cogent reason-is that the road, of which the bridge forms part, for long distances runs through Native lands, and therefore full rates cannot be collected. Native lands are not liable to pay more than half the general rates, and are not liable to special rates at all, and we all know the difficulties in collecting Native rates even when due. Under these circumstances it would have been most unfair-indeed, impossible-to ask the district to raise a special loan for this bridge. Therefore there are these four reasons, each one of which would be sufficient in itself to justify the Government in erecting the Otaki Bridge. The member for Bruce comes from a specially favoured locality. In Otago and Canterbury they had their land-grants-334 per cent., I believe, on agricultural lands and 25 per cent. on pastoral lands-out of all lands sold by the Crown, which provided them with roads and bridges. The local bodies in those parts of the colony had no trouble at all. Now, I ask, What is to be the natural outcome of the remarks of the honourable member for Bruce? His remarks on the Otaki Bridge prove conclusively that we should go back, if the Opposition were in power, to that unfortunate state of things when no money whatever was supplied to provide the urgently 'needed roads and bridges for the country settlers of the colony. Take the instance of the Otaki district itself. Up to the time of this Government coming into office practically no money grants had ever been provided for the Otaki district by the Government. A good story was told at the opening of this same Otaki Bridge by the Chairman of the Horowhenua County Council, himself a staunch Oppositionist. He said that when a Conservative Government was in power the member for the district, on returning to his constituents year after year, and on being asked what he had obtained for his district, was forced to reply that he had got nothing. But one year he returned with his face wreathed in smiles, the reason being, as it afterwards transpired, that he had got a new pair of blankets for the Foxton Gaol ! That is the position we shall come back to if the Opposition again get into power-the pair-of-blankets system. Now, leaving the Otaki Bridge, I will

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quired under the Land for Settlements Act at the Lower Hutt. First and foremost, as mentioned by the member for Wairarapa, the member for Bruce made some suggestions that a member of the House was interested in the purchase. At first I regarded the remarks as affecting myself, but on second thoughts I decided they could not be meant for me. They must have been meant for somebody else. But the member to whom I presume they were intended to apply has since spoken, and, though I was not in the House at the time, I trust he treated the remarks as they deserved, with silent contempt. and did not refer to them at all. The member for Bruce said the Epuni Settlement was a failure ; that the land was not being taken up ; that too much was paid for it ; that it was too far from a railway-station to be of any use ; and, generally, he asserted that it was a glaring instance of the rotten land-acquisition policy of the Government. He said that this settlement was between three and four miles from the Hutt Railway-station. As a matter of fact, it has not been a failure; more than half of the sections have been taken up, and if it had not been for the fact that there are no roads to the land, and that you have to clamber over fences and other obstructions to get to it, the whole of it would have been taken up by this time. Far from being the case that it is three or four miles from the Hutt Railway - station, the actual truth is that it is only a mile and a half from the railway-station, as proved by a memorandum of Mr. McKerrow, Chief Land Purchase Officer, which I hold in my hand. And, even had it been three or four miles distant from the railway-station, I do not think that would have been a fatal objection to selecting it for this purpose. I contend, as Mr.

McKerrow contends, that in the case of flat land three or four miles or even more from a railway-station is not too far away to establish such a settlement, because of the ease in getting to and from it by bicycle and otherwise. The honourable member for Bruce further said that too much was paid for this land. The price paid for it was, he said, £90 per acre, whereas the Government valuation was only \$35, and the real value £60. As a matter of fact land in the immediate vicinity was sold recently at a far higher price than \$90 an acre. And beyond McNab's Gardens, practically as remote as is this land, open paddocks without improvements have been sold at the rate of over \$200 an acre. Land in the Hutt Valley close to the Epuni Settlement has fetched upwards of \$300 per acre, and land further away still has sold for \$200 per acre. This is one of the cases in which the Government have purchased land at a cheap rate. It has been suggested that in other cases the Government have paid too much for the land. I hope that is not the case. I have always urged that under the Land for Settlements Act the Government should be most careful not to pay too high a price for the land, because I think the time is not far distant when, in some localities at any rate, we will have to face a reduction in land-values. Then the member for Bruce re- Mr. Fielder for Auckland City that wool was not one of our chief industries. What the senior member for Auckland City actually stated was that wool is not at present our chief staple industry. The remarks of the member for Auckland City were challenged by the member for Waihemo last night, as to whether wool is or is not our chief staple industry. According to the returns for 1900 it is true that wool appears as our chief staple industry ; but it remains to be seen whether, with wool down to 4d. a pound, the returns for the current year will not disclose that it must take second place to frozen meat. Very possibly such will be the case, and the statement of the honourable member for Auckland City will be found to be correct ; probably it will. Now, coming to the question of the Farmers' Union, the intermediate member for Wellington City stated, so I am told, that Mr. Moore and myself were the only members of the Producers' Union. I am one of those members who, before I ever heard of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, did my utmost to get the farmers to combine. Before I was a week in this House I saw that a combination of the farmers was the only method by which they could get their rights. I addressed meetings, wrote letters, did everything in my power, and I spent many pounds over it, and at last I got the farmers in my district to move. The farmers in many parts of my district were ripe for combination when the Farmers' Union came along. I at once joined the Farmers' Union, even before I was acquainted with its platform, and am still a member of it, and intend to give it my entire support so long as it is worked on non-party lines. But, on seeing its platform, it was quite plain to me that originally it was an Opposition organization. This will be amply shown by reading two short sentences of that original platform. One sentence is as follows : " All Crown leaseholders to have a clause inserted in their leases giving them the right to purchase at any time during their lease." Well, there is the grant of the freehold, which is contrary to the policy of the present Government. I am one of those who approve of the freehold, and differ from the Government in this point of their policy ; but that does not alter the fact that this was a direct attack on the present Government's land policy. I go on to the next plank : "No land to be taken compulsorily while there are Native and Crown lands in the hands of the Government." This, again, directly assails the land-for-settlements policy of the present Government. Looking at these two planks alone, I say no member can come to any other conclusion than that the Farmers' Union was an Opposition organization in its inception. Well, it may be said that the proposal to start a non-party union at Pahiatua was premature. Possibly it was. But it was owing to the Opposition nature of the Farmers' Union platform that the Pahiatua meeting was called. It was the conference at Palmerston of the delegates of the New Zealand Farmers' Union which first placed the platform on a satisfactory basis, and that was subsequent to the date of the Pahiatua meeting.

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ing. The moment I saw the new platform at | and homely speeches made by the Premier Palmerston I

said, "This is a satisfactory union for me, and I will support it." As to the Producers' Union, I am in no way connected with it : I have nothing to do with its management. I have never been a member of it, and the remarks of the member for Wellington City (Mr. Atkinson) on the subject are not distinguishable in point of accuracy from his remarks on the Porirua Bill of last year, and many other speeches he has made. He made a statement which was wilfully incorrect to suit his own purpose. Mr. HERRIES .- I rise to a point of order. Is it in order to say a member's remarks are wilfully incorrect ? Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable member must withdraw the word " wilful." Mr. FIELD .- Very well, Sir, I shall withdraw the word "wilful." Returning to the Producers' Union, I understand that the main centre of the organization is at Pahiatua, and that it comprises something like a hundred members, and that its main platform is the improvement of our markets, and that at the present time does not seem to be the main platform of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, although it is one of their planks. If that is the main platform of the Producers' Union, then, I say, that union deserves the support of every man, woman, and child in the country, and I shall be proud, if it comes to my district, to become a member of it. Whether it is called a producers' union, or farmers' club, or farmers' convention, or whether it is run by Mr. Moore or anybody else, so long as it has the interests of the farmers at heart I am with it heart and soul. I do not care whether there are forty organizations, I will support every one of them so long as they are on the right lines. At the same time I feel that it is far better to have one large body, and that is why I strongly urged amalgamation when speaking at Palmerston. I am a member of the Farmers' Union in two places, and, to show that there cannot be any truth in the suggestion that I am in any way opposed to the Farmers' Union, I have all along encouraged, and am still encouraging, the formation of branches throughout my district; and in the case of the Otaki branch, which is the main branch in the district, the chairman and secretary are both my personal friends, and probably two of my strongest supporters in the whole district. Every resolution which comes from the various branches of the Farmers' Union to me, to be laid before the Government, has received and will receive my immediate and cordial attention. If the foregoing are the class of facts upon which the Opposition base their criticism of the Budget, what is that criticism worth ? I could not help being struck with and sorry for the remarks made by the same member for Wellington City last night on the subject of certain words and exhortations the Premier used to some South Sea Islanders on the occasion of his recent trip to their part of the world. The honourable member endeavoured to belittle the Premier, and hold him up to ridicule in the eyes of the House, by reading in his own way certain simple to the islanders. I venture to say any right-thinking person who might have been present would have said after the words were uttered that they were exceedingly appropriate to the occasion. Now, coming to the question of the words used by the Premier upon the occasion of the deputation of West Coast members : a good deal has been said about it, and the most has been made of it by the opponents of the Premier. Apparently there has been a misconception concerning the words. It is quite true that, unfortunately, what is apparently an exaggerated form has been cabled all over the world, and this may have caused some damage to our securities and loss to our security-holders. I hope and trust no harm was done. It appears to me that the whole matter was satisfactorily disposed of by the explanation made last night by the member for the Buller. As to the statement made by the member for Nelson City, what he said was this : that after reading the words in the Lytteleiton Times, they brought back to him the statement made by the Premier. Well, now, had the Premier made any seriously significant statement affecting the financial position of the colony, such as that appearing in the Lyttelton Times, surely it would not require the reading of them in the Lyttelton Times or any other newspaper to bring back to the mind of the member for Nelson City these significant words. It was an absurd thing on the face of it. Whether the words were made use of 2.30. or not, it was certainly an immense relief to every honourable member on this side of the House to find that things were not as bad as were pictured. I can understand, of course, that on the other side of the House there would be a great deal of chagrin and

disappointment felt when they learned the colony was not in a bad way after all. I can assure the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer that his long Budget was listened to not only with interest, but with satisfaction, from beginning to end, by Government members, notwithstanding the interjections, more expressive than refined, of the middle member for Wellington City of "Tie it up," and so forth. Now, coming to the financial position, as was said by the honourable member for Rangiora, the large increase in our income-tax revenue indicates beyond all doubt that the colony is still in a prosperous condition. We could not have a better weather-gauge of our prosperity than the condition each year of the earnings of the income-tax. As for the public debt, we have heard from the other side of the House that the debt has largely increased, that it is increasing by leaps and bounds, and that the colony will never be able to overtake its obligations. Well, Sir, I have here some figures which are very instructive, showing the increase of the national debt during the last ten years—that is, during the tenure of office of the present Government—as compared with its increase in the preceding ten years. I find that in March, 1880, the total net public debt was £26,036,147, and that the increase for the years from 1880-81 to 1889-90 were as follows :-

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£ 1880-81	1,072,122	..	1881-82	207,324	823,895	1882-83	1,497,145	1883-84	1,026,905	1884-85	1,600,018	1885-86	2,050,898	1886-87	..	1,099,556	1887-88	1,570,125	1888-89	..	297,629	1889-90	..	11,245,617
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Total for ten years Comparing that with the last ten years, the tenure of office of the present Government, we find that the increases made to the public debt during that term, starting with a net debt of £37,281,764, were as follows :- Annual Increase. £ 61,544 1890-91 .. . 331,898 1891-92 .. . 468,864 1892-93 .. . 1893-94 730,421 760,541 1894-95 2,636,857 1895-96 1,280,435 1896-97 529,197 1897-98 1,999,206 1898-99 849,350 1899-1900 .. Total for ten years .. £9,648,313 The total for the last ten years amounts to £9,648,338, or a difference between the two periods of ten years of £1,597,304 in favour of the present Government. I do not know how the Opposition can possibly answer that, and how they can support the statements that they have made that this Government has been running the colony into debt more than any previous Government. Mr. SEDDON. -- And more than half our increase is interest-producing. Mr. FIELD .- I am just coming to that. The country is told by honourable gentlemen on that side of the House that this money is earning nothing, and that nothing comes back from it. They might just as well say that because a farmer owns a farm worth \$1,000, upon which he owes a mortgage of £500, and sees next door to him another farm worth £1,000 that he requires, and finds he may purchase for £750, of which he has only £250 in cash, and because he borrows £500 more to buy it—they might just as well say in that case he is a very silly man, that in one act he has increased his indebtedness by \$500, and that in doing so he is rushing headlong to destruction, forgetting altogether the excellent bargain he has made for himself, and the clear profit he has earned by the transaction. So it is with our public debt at the present time. Every penny has been well invested, and most of it, such as moneys lent by the Advances to Settlers Office, is earning more interest than we are paying for it. I think in the case of Native land purchases our investments are almost too good. In many cases we Mr. Field have been bought. Now, coming to our railways, I will just take a few extracts from the Railways Report which is just to hand. The excess of earnings over working-expenses for 1900-1901 was £599,389, as against £571,533 for the previous year, showing an increased net return for the year of £27,856. Is that an indication that our expenditure is ahead of our revenue? Further, it is estimated that the value of the concessions which have been made to the public in various ways by the reduction of railway fares and charges was equivalent to a rebate of £75,000, based on the traffic and charges for the previous year. The gross revenue for the year amounted to £1,727,236, and the net revenue to £599,389, increases over the previous year of £103,345 and £27,856 respectively. The gross revenue exceeded the estimate by £167,236. The total revenue derived from goods and live - stock traffic was £1,109,548, an increase of

£69,166 over the receipts for the previous year. That surely does not look like rushing headlong to ruin! I ask honourable gentlemen, Do not these figures speak for themselves, and show that our position is a very satisfactory one indeed ? Now, in speaking of railways, I should like to read for the information of those members who complain that we are rushing into debt, and who are at the same time urging the Government to spend all they possibly can on railway construction in their own particular districts, & few figures showing the expenditure in the June quarter of 1901 as compared with the expenditure in the June quarter of 1900 :- 0 B. d: 6 7 1,457 18 10 4377 6 2 883 15 4 2 543 16 11 Increase. 2,869 14 5 2 235 15 1,134 15 5,743 17 7,986 11 6,884 32 7,606 236 € 2,068 18 3 d. 5 00 1,024 17 0 7,820 1 7 8 0 6 543 16 11 4 9 1 5 Quarter, 235 15 2,916 13 8,035 19 8,298 3 1 9 92 13 8. June 1901. 1,411 1,221 14,097 £ 6 5 4 7 d. 46 18 10 240 11 10 8 86 13 9 OH CO 5 5 9 Quarter, 7 60 11 10 610 19 788 10 6,490 19 June £ 8. 1900. 527 2,554 745 49 Catlin's-Seaward Bush . . . Helensville Northwards .. . Kawakawa-Grahamstown .. Wellington-Woodville Marton-Te Awamutu Stratford-Kawakawa Blenheim-Waipara Blenheim-A watere Heriot Extension Waipara-Cheviot Midland Railway Paeroa-Waihi .. Otago Central .. Vote. Orepuki-Waiiau .

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The Helensville Northwards line is a railway in the district represented by the honourable member for Waitemata, and yet, while complaining of the extravagance of the Government, he would object, no doubt, if the Government proposed to reduce the expenditure on that line. The Blenheim-Waipara line is in the district of the loudly complaining member for Ashley. Is he prepared to ask the Government to cease expenditure on this line ? And the Otago Central is in the district of an Opposition member. Will he ask that it be reduced ? The total net increase, including necessary rolling-stock, is \$212,248 10s. 11d. Surely in the face of these facts it is very plain that our railway system is increasing fast, to suit the requirements of the country, and I venture to say no member will publicly advocate its reduction. Notwithstanding our expenditure, we are still far more than able to keep on the right side of the ledger, and we are improving our position every day. Now, on the subject of railways, I have one request to make to the Minister in charge : that there should be no further delay in bringing down the long-promised superannuation scheme, and an amendment of the Classification Act, for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the railway servants. This reform is much needed, not only for the sake of the railway servants, who are a very excellent body of men, but also for the sake of the Government and the colony itself. This matter certainly ought not to be longer delayed. Take the single case of Guard Hicks, who was very seriously injured, losing two limbs and being otherwise injured on the Kaitoke Section last year. No provision whatever, Sir, is made by law for his future or for that of his wife and children. He had no legal claim on the department for anything whatever. However, the department has dealt fairly liberally with him, and will, I am sure, continue to do so. But that it should be left in doubt when a man is injured whether he or his wife and family are to receive anything is a state of things that should not exist. The present system is most unsatisfactory to the Government and the railway employés alike. On the subject of land for settlements, as I have said before, it behoves the Government to be extremely cautious lest they pay too much for the land they are about to acquire. We have to face the fact that the wool-market is down, and, with the competition of other countries, a possible drop in the butter market, and the possibility of a further drop in frozen meat, land-values will almost assuredly fall-for a time at least. With that fact before us, the Government must exercise more than ordinary care as to the price they pay for any land acquired under this very excellent system. There are, however, cases of extreme urgency where land must be acquired. In the case of Porirua, in my own district, particularly in regard to the men engaged in work at the Porirua Asylum, it is absolutely impossible to find houses for those men to live in at a rental commensurate with the wages they earn. It is therefore the bounden duty of the Government to acquire land in the vicinity for workmen's homes. I know cases where some of the tenants have to pay a

rent of 10s. a week for their cottages, and their wages are 30s. per week. Therefore one- third of their earnings go in rent. On the question of the increase in the estimates, it is quite true that at first sight the heads of depart- ments seem to be getting a large share of the increases, but it is satisfactory to learn from the Minister for Railways that a large number of the increases were being granted to those whose incomes are under £300 a year. That, no doubt, is quite true; but it is within my own know- ledge that there are numbers of men in the public service- very excellent men, doing their work well, and who have enormous responsi- bilities thrown upon them-whose pay is quite inadequate. There is, for instance, the case of those working in the Land Transfer Depart- ment, whose business it is to protect the As- surance Fund. Those men are in a very respon- sible position, as it lies with them to save the colony from great losses in connection with possible claims under the Land Transfer Act on the Assurance Fund. They perform their work well, and they do not receive adequate remu- neration for their services. Another thing which requires to be set right in the Civil Service is the question of compassionate allow- ances. Take the case of a man who has a wife and family, and who is in a position to retire on compensation in case of sickness. Although he may be suffering in health, he elects to go on working, feeling, as in most cases it is felt, that if he should die in harness the Government will look after his wife and family. Suddenly death overtakes him, and his wife and children are placed in the position of having to go to the Government for a compassionate allowance, practically a charity, and possibly may not get a penny- piece ; whereas if that man had a few days before his death left the service he would have been entitled to compensation to the extent of one month's pay for every year he had been in the service. Now, in regard to the question of the mortgage-tax, this is considered, particu- larly in the country districts, to be a very unjust tax, and it is pressing very hardly on a number of people who have small sums of money in- vested on mortgage. Take the case of a woman left a widow with £6,000 and a large family to bring up. She wishes her £6,000 invested on mortgage. That at 5 per cent., which is the utmost she can hope to get, amounts to \$300 a year. The tax on that amounts to £25 a year. Whereas if the £6,000 was invested in a busi- ness and in stock-in-trade-say, on leasehold premises which are not valuable enough to be liable to land-tax, and out of which she was earning an income of \$300 a year-she would pay no tax at all. A poor widow might be left with a much smaller sum-say, £2,500-and a large family to maintain. If she invests that money on mortgage, the income, \$100 to \$125, will nothing like support her and her family, and yet the mortgage-tax runs away with about \$10 a year. If it becomes necessary to impose some other tax to recoup the Government for what

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it seems to me that, if we are to tax those who are best able to bear it, the best course would be to put an additional graduated tax on land, and thus take a further step to prevent the aggrega- tion of large estates, which apparently is still going on unabated. Then, something has been said about the unequal distribution of Ministers throughout the colony-that is to say, the South Island is far better represented than the North Island in the Ministry. That, though undesirable, does not seem to me to matter so much. A turn of the wheel may show that the North Island is far better represented on the Ministry than the South. But, on the question of the representation in the other Chamber, I consider an attempt ought to be made to equalise matters, and more particularly the farming districts should be represented. They are not at the present time adequately represented in the Upper House, and as vacan- cies occur Ministers ought to bear in mind this fact. On the subject of education one fact has come very prominently before my notice during the term I have been in the House - namely, that there is a want of small schools in remote districts. In two cases in my electorate there has been urgent need for years past for the establishment of small schools : but, notwith- standing the disadvantages under which the settlers are placed in that respect, no schools have been erected. I know in one case if a school had been erected in the proper place every child in the district would have been able to attend. As it is whole families are allowed to grow

up without any education whatever. And it is manifestly improper that young children should be asked, as they are now asked, to walk long distances-say, four miles every morning and the same distance back every evening-to and from school. Walking long distances robs the children of the energy they require to do full justice to their school-work. This is particularly true in the dairying districts, where time in the morning and evening is of great value to parents. They have to get up practically a couple of hours earlier in order to get their children away in time, whereas if the school were within a convenient distance there would be no need for such early hours, and the elder children might be able to assist in the working of the dairy farm, a thing which at the present time, owing to the remoteness of the school, they are in many cases unable to do, unless they neglect their education. On the subject of defence, I agree with the honourable member for Wairarapa that the staff seems to be costing too much money-that an unnecessarily large sum is being expended in this direction. It might very well, for the present at any rate, be reduced. And I am entirely in accord with those members who are of opinion that the citizen soldier is the kind of soldier that should be encouraged, and that the regulations affecting the formation of rifle clubs need relaxing very considerably, so as to throw those clubs open to a much larger section of the community than at present. The one main lesson the South African war has taught us is, above Mr. Field and there are no doubt many men, young and middle-aged, who do not care to join Volunteer corps, but who nevertheless desire to take part in rifle-shooting, and who in time of war would, for general purposes, prove almost as capable soldiers as the Volunteers themselves. It seems to me that not only should the regulations affecting the formation of rifle clubs be relaxed, but there should be some provision whereby the older men in the community might join Volunteer corps as honorary members, no drill being required of them, but rifles and ammunition being supplied to them on reasonable terms for rifle-shooting purposes. Something has been said by honourable members on the other side as to the certainty that our Customs revenue would be reduced. In answer to this, I may mention that I have before me one return which shows that the item of beer duty collected during the last five months has materially increased, and this is a fair indication as to Customs duties generally. It may not be pleasing to our Prohibitionist friends to discover this, but to those who are not Prohibitionists it will mark a very satisfactory increase. The figures are as follows :-

Month.	1901.	1900.	d. £ 8. d.
April	7,059	11	1
May	6,994	15	0
June	6,325	8	1
July	6,562	2	5,880
August	7,306	7,012	8
Totals	£34,478	11	9
	£31,819	2	2

.. That is a very satisfactory increase : and, as a matter of fact, the Customs duties are keeping up very well indeed. Then, coming to the question of the labour laws, there is no doubt a very strong feeling, throughout the country districts especially, that our labour laws have reached the very utmost limit to which they should go --- that the country should be given a rest, and that the present labour laws, so far as they are working unsatisfactorily, should be amended in the direction necessary to render them satisfactory. There is a desire felt, and certainly it seems to me not only reasonable but absolutely necessary, that a change should be made in the constitution of the Conciliation Boards, so as to prevent this everlasting, never, never ceasing. unhealthy, and expensive turmoil which we have evidence of every day in the newspapers. Under this head it is instructive to notice the leading matter on the subject in the Australasian Pastoralists' Review, a few lines of which I will read, and I commend these comments to the serious notice of the Government :- "The Compulsory Arbitration Bill which is now before the New South Wales Parliament has received both impulse and direction from the report of Judge Backhouse, the Commis-

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operations of the Act in that colony. Whilst pointing out that the New Zealand Act has ' never been put to any severe test, such as a decision adverse to the employés in a large strike,' and that 'disputes are sometimes fomented by agitators,' he reports that the Act has ' brought about better relations between employers and employés, prevented strikes of any magnitude, and is approved by a very large majority of

employers as well as workmen.' The fomenting and long duration of disputes drawback he attributes chiefly to the Conciliation Boards, and to the fact of their being paid by the sitting. " On the other hand, Mr. Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, who is the leader of the party which promoted and believes in the Act, has been telling a deputation of trades-unionists that he is 'anxious as to the future of conciliation and arbitration. He deprecated the wholesale summoning of employers. There was no necessity to do so, and it was riding the Act to death. In time both the men and the employers would get sick of it. That was what was going to happen. The employers did not want to be everlastingly in turmoil. What the country wanted was to have awards, and go on working. Some one had to stop what was going on. The law was a good law, but of late had been brought into disrepute. Great care must be taken or there would be a revulsion of public opinion.' " Mr. Wise explains Mr. Seddon's remarks by saying that the failings in the operation of the New Zealand Act noted by Mr. Seddon are due to (1) the Conciliation Boards; (2) the permission given to any seven men to form a union, with power to bring disputes before the Court ; and (3) the want of provision in the Act empowering the Court to lay down a ' common rule '-that is, to make a decision binding not only the particular dispute referred to the Court, but all similar cases that may arise in the trade. These failings are guarded against in the amended New South Wales Bill, and, as public opinion is so strong behind its principle that it is certain to pass, we make no further comment than that we strongly suspect the failing will be found in the principle rather than in any machinery of the Act, and that our information as to the disposition of New Zealand employers towards the Act differs considerably from Judge Backhouse's." Judge Backhouse was, of course, the Judge who was recently sent here from New South Wales to report on the labour laws of this colony. And now I come to a question that is of the utmost importance, the question of our markets. We have it from the member for Wairarapa that he is of opinion that the Government are insincere on the question of cold-storage in London and Africa. If that is so, I tell them emphatically that unless they are sincere, and unless they do take some steps to establish cold-stores, and otherwise to deal comprehensively with this important question of markets -and particularly a meat-market-in the chief market centres of the world, we are going to have a very bad time, and the Government may possibly be timid, if not insincere; but at the same time the country has nothing better to expect from the other side of the House. We had that amply exemplified in the debates last session on the subject of the meat monopoly. The Opposition, if in power, would not help to put down monopolies, middlemen, and other " fat " exploiters of our produce. They would be the very last to do it. They represent that class of individual, and would be very careful of his interests. On this subject it seems to me the Government might very well study, if they want a good example, what is being done in the other colonies in respect of markets. In South Australia they have their own freezing-works. They take charge of the produce, they kill the stock, they arrange shipping and insurance, they make advances at low rates, and they sell the meat in the Old Country. In Victoria there are Government freezing-works, and the Government there also pay the closest attention to the markets of the colony. In Queensland they have their Produce Export Acts, and other provision is made for the encouragement of trade. In New South Wales they have their Board for Exports, and other methods are devised for securing to the producer a fair market for his produce. There is no reason, it seems to me, why the Government should not take a firm stand and bring the producer and consumer closer together. It is not, as the Opposition calls it, interference with private enterprise ; it is the first duty of the State. At the present time the produce of the colony is subject to exploitation by a number of greedy individuals, rings, and combines, at whose mercy the producers commonly are; but the thing can be remedied if only the matter is dealt with firmly and in a businesslike manner. And it is not only the produce that goes outside the colony that is thus affected ; there is a very rotten state of things prevailing regarding many of our markets here. Take, for instance, the market-garden produce in this colony, where this market is largely run by the Chinese. We have boss Chinamen, and Chinamen rings, and they attend the produce sales in this city,

and the prices are kept down to starvation rates for European-grown produce. It is then sold at their own price, because they have command of the market, and there is no one to compete against them. The whole market is in their hands, and we are ruled by the Celestial. The remedy is not easy. No doubt it wants thinking over ; but doubtless it would be found in the establishment of proper municipal markets. Of course, cold water has been thrown upon this proposition ; but if the larger Municipal Corporations would only do as has been recommended by the honourable member for Masterton and myself over and over again, and establish regular markets on proper lines, we should soon have a very much better state of things existing than heretofore. As representing a district in which 30. there is one large lunatic asylum and another about to be established, I feel I must

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tration of the colony. It seems to me we might well spend a little more money in the Lunacy Department. Lunatics, we all admit, are the most unfortunate section of the community, and it behoves us to treat them with every possible consideration in the hours of their affliction. It seems to me we must have reform, for the sake of both patients and attendants. The first reform we ought to have, from the patients' point of view, is some kind of half-way house, where the milder cases of lunacy might be placed. At present a Magistrate is most unwilling to commit a person to an asylum unless he is certain that lunacy absolutely exists; and that usually means that it is in an advanced stage, and that the patient has gone too far for curative treatment. If there were a Government institution where persons might be treated for a time, I am sure there would be far less committals of lunatics to the lunatic asylums ; they would in many cases be cured, instead of being allowed to go on until they became incurable. It seems to me, too, that the large lunatic asylums are inadvisable. We should have cottage asylums, where better control could be exercised over the smaller number of patients, and where there would, of course, be less chance of a serious disaster by fire. Among lunatics, too, there should be a classification scheme. At present we find all classes of lunatics massed together in large numbers, the worst cases with the milder cases, which is grossly unfair to the latter, and very unsatisfactory in all ways. Of course, to do this would entail more room and more expense, but I think it is expense we ought certainly to incur. Then, from the point of view of the attendants, there is much that ought to be done. The attendants, it appears to me, are an overworked class. Their duties are very onerous, difficult, and responsible, while their pay is grossly inadequate, and their hours are far too long. They are subject to arbitrary dismissal, practically without appeal ; whereas there can be no good reason why a Board, such as the Hospital Board or other Boards of Appeal, should not be set up to deal with dismissals and complaints. I have here a suggestion, which has reached me from one of the lunatic asylum attendants, whereby, if followed out, the whole system of lunatic asylums, as far as the attendants are concerned, might be rectified at a comparatively small additional cost. It is as follows : - " I have taken the liberty of writing to you to give an idea of the hours worked and salaries received by asylum attendants; also, what I consider the staffs should be increased to, and what the minimum rate of their pay should be. We are debarred from forming a union and seeking justice by the aid of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Therefore our only chance is to appeal to the House, and we seek your aid in letting our position be known to honourable members. We represent about three hundred public servants, and our duties are irksome, monotonous, and mentally laborious. Under the present system our better spirits are crushed Mr. Field small amount of our remuneration. I have enclosed three papers for your guidance. The first is a true statement of the hours worked for one month, representative of eleven months of the year, the twelfth being an annual holiday. After allowing for all leave our average working-day is 10 hours 50 minutes. This fact speaks for itself, more especially so when you consider the number of hours we are confined to the building irrespective of duty. There are certain appointed times for meals, but the time so set aside is not our own, and we have to remain in our mess-room or in the wards, in order that we should be handy should any necessity arise.

The second paper shows the number of men necessary to increase the staff so that an eight-hour day could be instituted. Take, for instance, the Mount View Asylum : it would require seven men and four nurses extra for that purpose; and, as that asylum represents about one-tenth of the total staffs of the colony, the total required is easily arrived at. The arrangement of the men could be altered to suit the convenience of different institutions. The third paper shows the present cost in salaries of twenty-one men and thirteen nurses ; also, what the increased salaries of twenty-eight men and seventeen nurses would amount to. By reading over the salaries I have suggested, you will see the money asked for is very small. With regard to the nurses' salaries, I have simply put in what I think. and admit that I may be wrong ; but as they have as much chance of seeking an improved system as ourselves, I content myself by showing what I have done. The total increase of cost to the colony under my calculations would be about £13,580. No doubt the department would object to this extra expenditure ; but I hold that, as the Government is willing to provide for its insane population, it should not do so at the cost of 'sweating' its employés. About £6,000 a year goes towards the salaries and up-keep of the Superintendents. It is an accepted idea amongst many connected with these places that they could be better controlled by a Board of Governors. Such Board could be composed of men who can always be found eager to give their time and services gratis. Such a change would provide nearly half the extra expenditure I ask for. There are two points I would like to urge strongly upon you-namely. with regard to married men. Our present Government believe in a married-man policy. and such policy should be encouraged in asylums, for undoubtedly they are better attendants for the insane. The rent allowance I suggest-\$15 a year-is on a very low basis. Their freedom to go home after duty is a necessary reform. At the present time there are only three married men, who are debarred this right. They could easily be spared out of the institution at night, and yet it not infrequently happens that they cannot visit their homes for sometimes three or four nights in succession. Such a state of affairs is not right. when we know it could be arranged otherwise. I have given you, Sir, the plain facts of our case so

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your hands to fight for us. That I have implicit confidence in you as a believer in the rights of the workers is understood by the trouble I have gone to in my calculations, and the fact of placing our troubles with you. trust that your endeavours on our behalf will be met with success, and that you will be rewarded by the gratitude of all asylum attendants throughout the colony. Personally speaking, I would like you to know that I have been several years in the service, and I have been well and fairly treated by those holding office over me, and I have not the slightest ground for personal .. complaint. I have approached you solely on behalf of our common cause." Then comes a table showing that in one month of thirty-one days the attendants worked 373½ hours. Their hours of leave are eighty-seven, and their hours of confinement to the building, in addition to hours actually worked, are 283½. Those figures alone show a state of things that should not exist. The hours are too long, and the pay is certainly too small. I will now give in short form the contents of the papers referred to in the foregoing communication, and which the department might consider for the better working of the asylums by a small increase of staff :- " The present staff consists of twenty-one men ; if you increase it by seven men, and allow four men away each day for leave, it will leave an increased working staff of twenty-four -- namely, eight junior attendants, one cook, and one fireman, all to commence at 6 a.m. and finish at 2 p.m. ; three charge attendants and one tradesman, to commence at 8.30 a.m. and finish at 4.30 p.m. ; eight junior attendants to relieve morning shift at 2 p.m. ; one night attendant, to commence at 10 p.m and finish at 6 a.m. ; and one head attendant, to work at various hours. " From 6 a.m. till 8.30 a.m. there would thus be ten men on duty, and from 8.30 a.m. till 4.30 p.m. there would be fourteen men on duty. At 2 p.m. the juniors would relieve. From 4.30 p.m. till 10 p.m. there would be eight men on duty, and from 10 p.m. till 6 a.m. there would be one man on duty. "The above shows clearly that a staff of twenty-eight men could manage the duties and

allow for four men on leave. The leave should be a day and a half per week and fourteen days at end of twelve months. " The arrangement of the men for duty purposes could be altered in various ways to suit the convenience of the institution. " Present Salaries. One head attendant .. 120 . . 110 One head carpenter .. 300 Three charge attendants, at £100 200 Two gardeners, at £100 . . One fireman 100 . . 100 One cook .. Two tradesmen, at £80 160 . . Two junior attendants, at £80 160 One nightwatch 80 .. Seven junior attendants, at £70 490 .. £1,820 One head attendant .. 150 One head carpenter .. 120 Three charge attendants, at £120 360 Two gardeners, at \$120 240 .. One fireman 110 . . . One carpenter 110 . . One cook 120 .. One painter 110 . . One nightwatch 110 .. Sixteen junior attendants, at £100 1,600 . . £3,030 "Nine men should be married, and have rent-allowance of £15 a year = €135. There are thirteen nurses, at present average \$45 = \$585. Increase to seventeen nurses, say, average at £50, \$850. "The increased salaries would be-Male attendants, £1,210; rent - allowance, \$130; nurses, \$265 : total, £1,610. "The nine attendants who are married would only be entitled to one meal a day, thus saving eighteen rations per day for 280 working-days= £252. . "The extra expenditure would be £1,610, but, the saving being #252, it would only amount to £1,358, which could also be saved. "Mount View represents about one-tenth of the New Zealand asylums, therefore the cost to the colony would be €13,580." That seems a very feasible scheme, and it reduces the hours practically to an eight-hours system. It divides the day into three parts, which is a very proper thing to do if it can possibly be managed. Under this scheme there would be far more encouragement given to the men to work and to improve themselves. They would be more satisfied with their lot ; and they would be more patient, because they would be more satisfied. There would be less of the undesirable changes of attendants which are constantly occurring, and there would be less liability to retaliate in the case of violent treatment by patients, and altogether a more satisfactory state of things would prevail. Furthermore, there would be more comfort to the patients. It is dreadful to think that in the asylums of the colony all the patients indiscriminately should have to go to bed at seven p.m., when there are among them men and women, many of them having lengthened intervals of sanity, who would like to read for a few hours ; yet they are forced to go into a ward with a number of others and lie awake with chronic patients and the attendant horrors all round them. No wonder that the percentage of recoveries is small. The whole subject wants carefully inquiring into by a strong Commission. I regret that there is no reference in the Budget to the purchase of the Wellington-Manawatu Railway. I was in hopes that some satisfactory announcement would be made with regard to the purchase of that line. I trust that the time is not far distant when the Government will see their way clear to purchase it. I am, however, convinced that the proper mode of purchase would be that provided under the

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Land Act, 1881." The opinion of the Crown Law Officers should be taken by the Govern- ment on the point, as to whether under that Act we should have to pay for certain works which were undertaken by the company and abandoned, such as the tunnel at Paikakariki, and other expensive works which are now abso- lutely useless. I did not expect that in the Budget there would be any reference made to the Hutt Railway-line, but that is a work of the greatest urgency. The cost of the work has re- cently been set down at \$90,000, but I maintain that a very large amount of that money, if not the whole of it, will be covered by the reclaimed land along the line, which will be of a very valuable character indeed ; in fact, a very few acres of that land will make up the \$90,000. There are permanent streams of water and all facilities for manufactories along the line, and there is no doubt the land will be greedily taken up for manufacturing and other purposes. Therefore the \$90,000 spent would be well in- vested, and rents of the lands reclaimed would pay much more than the current rate of in- terest on that sum. There seems to me to be no good reason for delaying this urgent work. With reference to the Rimutaka deviation, it appears to me that the purchase of the Mana- watu Railway-line would obviate the necessity for that deviation ; but if the Government do not purchase the Manawatu line, then the Rimutaka deviation should be proceeded with.

At present the enormous cost of running trains over the Rimutaka robs that line of a large amount of its earnings. Therefore, although the expenditure on the Rimutaka deviation would be very costly, I think it ought to be proceeded with. While speaking on this question I would again urge the Government to be very careful, and examine every proposed route #cc-zero carefully before adopting any particular route for the deviation, and so not make a similar mistake to that which was originally made. I sincerely hope that care will be taken and the best route be selected. With reference to the legislation passed last year, it has been said that several very bad Acts have been placed upon the statute-book. I am quite prepared to take my share of the responsibility for the passing of those Acts. I am quite prepared to admit that some of those Acts go rather beyond what was intended when they were passed. Take, for instance, the Workers' Compensation Act. A great deal of capital has been made out of that. It is said that the country people are going to suffer under that Act, and that they cannot move hand or foot without involving themselves in great liability. There is no doubt about it, that Act does want amending, and I think the amendment should be in the direction of bringing it more into line with the English Act of 1897. As to whether it should apply to agricultural and pastoral pursuits or not, it is instructive to know that last year the English Parliament passed an Act specifically extending the application of their Act to agricultural and pastoral pursuits. My opinion is that it should Mr. Field the Act should be restricted, so that it should only apply to hazardous occupations. I do not see why a builder employing a carpenter, who runs the risk of falling from scaffolding, should be under any greater liability than a farmer who employs a man in the dangerous occupation of bushfelling. As I have said, I think this Act should be amended on the lines of the English Act. I regret, Sir, that the time-limit prevents my dealing with a number of matters which I had intended to touch upon. Mr. BENNET (Tuapeka) .- I do not intend to detain the House very long, because I have not had an opportunity of preparing myself for this debate on account of having been very unwell during the last few days ; but, like many other honourable members, I would like to place upon record in Hansard my views upon certain subjects dealt with in the Budget, so that my constituents may know that I am not neglecting them altogether. I shall not trouble the House with a long array of figures as a good many honourable members have done. In opening the debate the member for Hawke's Bay criticized the actions of the Government very mildly, considering his position as leader of the Opposition ; but, coming to members on this side of the House, I must say that the member for Riccarton denounced the Government in the most unmitigated terms. I was not quite sure when I heard him whether he was not right in practically saying that the country had gone to the dogs, or even lower than that. He was followed by the member for Nelson City, who was also unsparing in his criticism of the Government. The member for Ashley and the member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) followed on much the same lines. It is a remarkable thing that those honourable members have hardly made their appearance in the House since they made their speeches. This reminds me of the story of a Judge in America who was trying a case. He heard the argument of the lawyer who represented one of the parties, and then he started to give the decision upon the case, whereupon the counsel for the other side asked if the Judge was not going to hear the other side of the case, and if it was right to give judgment without hearing the other side. The Judge said, " I have heard one side, and I can decide the case now, but if I hear the other side I might not be able to decide the case at all." Most of those honourable members have indicated that the administration of the Government has been bad for the last ten years. I may point this out : that last year the honourable member for Hawke's Bay made a short speech in criticizing the Budget, and he was followed by the Minister of Justice, and in a few minutes the debate on the Budget was over. I therefore came to the conclusion that our finances were in a good and sound position, and that everything was in order. If that was so last year, it is very strange that things should have so changed since then. If you believe the statements of members on the Opposition side of the House, our finances are not in a satisfactory position, but if you believe

members on the Government side our finances no less than £369,439, and to 31st March, 1901, are all right and satisfactory. The land-for- to £420,239." settlements policy has exercised the minds of the people in my district for a considerable my opinion is this : that if the rates had been time, and I must say that very little attention kept up for a few years, and the revenue spent has been paid to the requirements of the people in opening up lines into the back country, it in that district under this Act. The Treasurer would have been better than reducing the rates says in the Budget,- at the present time. The Minister for Railways "The purchase of land for close settlement does not think that the railways should be run is being vigorously pushed forward, and it is on commercial principles. Well, I differ from him. I think there should be always some- pleasing to know that the estates which have been hitherto purchased have been satisfactorily thing coming out of the railways to help to settled. During the last year approximately make branch lines and feeders for the railways, 177 farms were provided, and about 170 work- or in making railways into the interior. In men's homes." this way we would give assistance to those who Now, I think that all members of this House are helping to construct the railways, but who at the present time are getting no benefit for will agree with me that the cry that has always been raised that the South Island is getting all themselves. No doubt a great many people get the money is without foundation. I will give a benefit from the railways, and so long as the members the figures here showing the acreage reduction in rates increases the revenue there of the land and the amount paid for it, and I is nothing to be said. But I have some little think it will be seen that nearly all the money doubts as to whether that will continue. I say has gone to the North Island :- that even at the present time some of the pro- duce that is carried on the railways is charged Price. Acres. twice the rate it should be- and that is wool. £ Hawke's Bay 45,900 229,593 And it is not only that the railways are losing .. Wellington 11,158 58,946 by the extortionate rate that is charged for .. Marlborough 3,600 8,250 wool, but in my district the teams are taking . . Canterbury 50,398 9,023 the wool down to Dunedin at the present . . Otago .. 1,152 3,000 time for the same money that the rail- way is charging, and they are going off the That is all we have got in Otago, and members road to get it. I think when this can be here in the North Island have got nearly the done there is something wrong somewhere. whole of the money. And when the teams go down to Dunedin they Mr. FOWLDS. -- What about the railways ? bring goods of all descriptions back, and the Mr. BENNET. - The North Island got railways lose that freight also. I think wool more for railways last year than the South should be charged in the same way as grain Island. Mr. FOWLDS .- We did not get much more -namely, by weight. At the present, from Lawrence to Dunedin, a distance of sixty than half last year. miles, wool is charged at the rate of 5s. 4d. a Mr. BENNET .- Well, we shall see by-and- bale, and it does not matter whether the bale by. I think there are no grounds whatever weighs 2 cwt. or 3 cwt., and the teams de- for the complaints made in the North Island. liver it at the stores. Before the railways were We have been longer settled in the South Is- made the carriers went considerable distances land, and no doubt there has been more ex- off the road to the stations for wool, delivering penditure in the South Island than in the it in Dunedin at 5s. per bale. I am sorry the North up to the present time. We will all Minister for Railways is not present, because admit that; but, on the other hand, as time he would sce the neces-ity for making an altera -. went on, the North Island has been getting its tion in this case. I do not know whether the share of the expenditure. same thing applies to the North Island or not. Mr. FOWLDS .- We are only getting half of Now, the honourable member for Auckland what is spent nowadays. Mr. BENNET .- I do not know who is get- City was complaining about the small ex- penditure on railways in the North Island. ting the other half ; it is not coming to the Sir, I think that will apply to the South South Island, at all events. Therefore I think Island also. At the present time in my this shows conclusively, so far as the settle- district the' traffic on the railway stops at ment of the lands of the colony is concerned, Lawrence, and has to be carried to the interior that the North Island is getting the lion's by teams. At the present time the machinery

share. Of course, the North Island cannot get for dredges is stacked nearly as high as the the railways and the lands as well ; you cannot railway-station, and they cannot get it re- get all the money, that is certain. In connec- moved on account of the bad state of the tion with the railways the Statement says,- roads. Yet they have never got a railway " In connection with results of working the there, notwithstanding all the money that has railways for last financial year the large con- been received from the sale of land and all the cessions in rates granted by the Government gold that has been got. So I do not think the since resuming control of the lines should not district has been fairly treated. be lost sight of, as they have a very material effect on the results for the year. The total than the North, and we have the greater popula- reductions made since the Government took over the railways amounted, up to last year, to tion. VOL. CXVIII .- 20. Well, Sir, so far as the reduction is concerned, Mr. FOWLDS .- You have two millions more

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Mr. BENNET .- The North is getting the | years. Now, although an enormous amount of money as fast as it is possible to spend it. Mr. FOWLDS .- I say you are getting twice as much money in the South as in the North. Mr. BENNET .-- You are trying to make us believe that we get the same amount spent on roads as in the North ; but I am coming to that by-and-by, and we will see what is the real position. I really think, however, that a little more attention should be given to these outside districts, even if the railway rates were kept a little higher. It would be better than cutting down the rates to bed-rock, and leaving these districts without railway communication, al- though they have contributed as much towards the promotion of the working railways as those that live convenient to them. We are in the same position as the Auckland people: we could not decide on the lines that we want ; but that now will have to be left to the depart- ment, and then probably it will be settled. That has been the bone of contention with us, as it has been in the North Island. Now I will come to the mines question, and I think honourable members will see whether there is any reason to complain :- "Gold-mining generally is steadily progres- sing, and, although many companies which were floated more for the purpose of collect- ing calls from shareholders than for the pur- pose of winning the precious metal have been and are being wiped out of existence, the yield of gold is increasing. The quantity and value exported for the half-year ended 30th June last was 217,478 oz., valued at £844,888, being an increase of 38,175 oz., valued at £150,029, over the first half of the year 1900." Well, let us see what it is for 1900. 3.30. I will give you the returns : The gold and silver produced from 1853 to end of 1900 was £57,721,648, and the production of mine- rals, including kauri - gum, was £18,383,945, giving a total wealth produced of £76,105,593. The value of machinery employed in all classes of mining was £1,736,036. In dredging, for the nine months ended the 31st December, 1900, the banks purchased gold worth \$400,000 in Otago, the greater portion of this having been obtained from dredges. The total number of dredges in the colony, both in Otago and West Coast, either working, under construction, or tenders for which have been called, is 305- Otago, 240; West Coast, 65. Including the coal- miners, carters, and those actually employed in working the machinery, each dredge employs eleven men, so that the number of men em- ployed in this industry, when all dredges are completed, will be at least 3,355. The North Island quartz-mines produced in 1900, £635,053, and the South Island \$123,754, making a total production from quartz of \$758,807. The gold produced during the first eight months of the present year, ending 31st August, was 279,585 oz., valued at \$1,079,476; and the production for same period in 1900 was 242,755 oz., valued at \$938,047 ; the increase for eight months over last year being 36,830 oz., valued at \$141,429. If this rate continues, the production for the present year will be the highest for twenty-eight gold has been got during this season, which has been one of the worst winters for dredging we have had for many years, yet these returns show they have done good work, and one therefore may imagine what it would be under better cir- cumstances. Now, the return goes on to show that the number of men employed in gold- mining in 1900 was 13,502, as against 13,291

in 1899 ; and in coal-mining 2,460, as against 2,153 in 1899: the total in all classes of mining being 15,962, or an increase of 518 over 1899. Now, in spite of the value of this industry to the colony, very little has been done to assist the men who are engaged in it. During last session the Premier proposed to reduce the taxation on mining machinery, and there was at once a great clamour raised against it, and all the town members voted against that. Now, I think that was very unfair, for, although there is a duty of 22 per cent. on machinery used for industrial purposes, the goods manufactured by such machinery is protected to the same extent. I think the case of the miners ought to have received a little more consideration. There is another matter that I think they have great reason to complain of, and that is in respect to this Inspection of Machinery Act. They have been urging me to get an amendment made in that. I am pleased to say that the Minister of Marine has taken in the situation, and has not forced a strict compliance of the Act. Had that been done a large portion of the dredges would have been stopped. There was no reason for that being passed. for, although dredging has been going on for thirty years, never once has there been an accident from want of efficiency of the drivers. Any accident that has taken place so far has been in connection with the machinery of the dredges. However, the Minister wisely enough recognised that the thing would be unworkable. There is not one of the managers of these dredges that would allow a man to be left in charge of the engine until he had got a good knowledge of the business. Now I come to the subject of establishing a State coal-mine. There has been a great deal said about this project of a State coal-mine, and the Government have stated that it is their intention to go in for the purchase of a coal-mine, and to get steamers to carry their own coal. Now, for my own part. I have some little doubt about the advisability of doing this. Judging from circulars sent to members it is clear enough that the owners of these coal-mines have not got all the profits. and that it must be amongst the retailers of the towns that we must look for the profits. We have information from America, from Texas and other parts, that they are going in largely for using oil instead of coal as a fuel for motive- power. There are two steamers being built in Belfast which are to use oil instead of coal. and they can contract to run at a speed of twenty knots with oil-engines. If that is the case, and oil is replacing coal in this way, I think it would be unwise for the Government to srecu- late in any undertaking of this kind. We all must be perfectly well aware that the con-

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will run out sooner or later, and if it runs out there would come a collapse that we would not like to see, at all events. Now I come to that part of the Budget which is headed " Help to Farmers and Producers : Cool-storage," and also to that part referring to "Trade with South Africa." Now, there is not the slightest doubt that the South African market has been a very great help to the producers of the colony. If it had not been for the demand that sprung up in that quarter for our pro- duce many of our farmers would have been in an awkward position at the present time. pare the two together, and you will see you are Although it would be of great advantage to getting the lion's share. get our produce to South Africa, I am not lion's share. The railways in the South are so sure if South Africa is the proper place for the erection of cool-stores. I am of opinion more than paying for themselves, so that that it would be far better to erect cool-stores does not come into the question. Now I will in London. If cool-stores were erected in deal with new roads. The following are the South Africa, as soon as that country be- figures :- comes stocked with cattle again they might be used there against the interest of the people of this colony. We know that in South Africa they grow far more cattle than they require for their own consumption, and these cool-stores might be a disadvantage rather than an advantage to this colony. My own impression is that if the Governments of the various colonies would get proper cool-storage erected in London, and place a thoroughly competent man or men in charge, so that they could regulate the output and see that it was sold at a price that would benefit the farmers who send meat Home, it would be of great advantage. At the present time their The fact that Otago does not get its fair share produce has to go, no matter what

may be the of this is very strange to me. Then, the Premier state of the market, and at whatever price they in his closing remarks, says,- can get. The farmer is in a somewhat in-vidious position. When he has anything to is of paramount importance. What we have sell he has to go to the store and ask what done, are doing, and must do is to extend our price they will buy at, and he has got to take operations and increase the number of our whatever is offered. But if the farmer wants settlers ; and to those going on to the back to purchase stores he asks what they are selling blocks and the bush lands easy terms must be given by way of relieving the tenants from at, and he has got to take them at whatever price is asked. He has no say in the matter payment of rent for the first few years, and also whatever. If cool-stores were erected in London by way of insisting on improvement conditions or Glasgow, or some other large centre in the being complied with ; at the same time afford- United Kingdom, under the conditions I have ing relief from rent until the tenant is enabled stated, the farmer would get some share of the to get his head above water and to pay his way spoil. Now, Sir, I will give the honourable from the produce of the land itself." member for Auckland City a list of the moneys that have been spent as between the North recommendation I made to the Premier last and South Islands during the last year : - year when he introduced his Bill for the rebate of rents to Crown tenants. I think the member Roads- Miles. for Auckland City will agree with me in that. I Mileage made 949 .. then pointed out to him that he was taking Miles improved 912 . a wrong course, and that the thing was un- Mileage maintained 3,304 . . workable. I stated then that the proper course was to allow those back-block settlers to have Total mileage 5,165 .. their land rent-free until they were in a posi- tion to make something out of their holdings. Cost .. £310,660 . The Premier, however, at that time was deter- This amount of roadwork was apportioned as mined to go on with his Bill. He made all follows :- sorts of threats, by telling us that there were Miles. Cost. local Bills to be passed and other matters to £ be attended to at the time, to try to force the 1,883 Auckland 92,255 .. Bill through. He tried to make the rebate Hawke's Bay 317 31,336 .. universal, but members would not be bounced Taranaki 476 33,088 .. Cost. Wellington 1,252 72,039 .. Nelson .. 250 9,278 .. Marlborough 344 13,933 Westland 236 11,452 Canterbury 140 8,014 .. Otago 122 15,902 Southland 143 20,298 . . General .. 3,065 2 .. Total 5,165 £310,660 .. Mr. FOWLDS .- Look at railways, and com- Mr. BENNET .-- No, we are not getting the Miles. Cost. Auckland .. 365 37,026 Hawke's Bay 13,137 81 Taranaki .. 86 30,099 . Wellington 146 51,036 Nelson 47 3,248 Marlborough 59 6,839 Westland .. 20 6,461 Canterbury 2,201 5 Otago 31 13,141 Southland 108 14,715 Total £176,923 948 "The settlement of the people on the land Now, this is bringing the thing exactly to the

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who were not in a position to pay rent got no assistance at all. That Bill was brought down without any classification as to who should get assistance and who should not. It is pleasing, at all events, to know that the Minis- ter of Lands has now come to see what the position is, and is following the advice I gave the Government last year. I believe if this is carried out it will make Auckland as prosperous as the South. I have not been to Auckland myself, but from what I have heard from others there is a bright future in store for that part of the colony. I think the Government last year distributed the money as fairly as possible on the large works. There is the Otago Central Railway. We have an enormous amount of machinery to be conveyed to the interior, and on that account the railway ought to be pushed on, so that some revenue would be derived from the line. Now, here is another matter :- "In respect to industries, however, the horizon is somewhat clouded, but in a short time this cloud will pass away. The employers and employed should shake hands, and both work together for mutual benefit. What will help our industries more than anything else will be to have complete technical and manual instruction for the young of our colony. This education is being afforded, and the country will be recouped for this expenditure a thousand- fold." Now, this is an important matter. We know that there has been a revolt all over the country, and I suppose this is what is referred to. What is it that has brought about this

discontent? I say it is the Eight Hours Bill that was brought down by the honourable member for Riccarton. As it was brought down by the honourable member for Riccarton it would not have had much effect, had it not been that the Premier announced that he would support it. That is what has caused the revolt. The Bill was quite unworkable, and the people would have resisted it by every means in their power. During the time I was in the South not long since a number of people came to me and spoke about this and other measures. There is the Factories Bill : that has had something to do with causing this revolt, and if these Bills were passed into law there would be no end of trouble. Farmers do not come under these laws, but they do not know when they may be brought under them, and they are making arrangements to protect themselves with reference to this Eight Hours Bill. There was one man came to me who has a contract for ploughing. He has twenty horses and some six or seven men, and he had been waiting in camp for some five or six weeks, and up to the present time, I believe, has never had a horse in a plough. He was under contract to have the work finished by a given time, but I do not think he has got any- thing done up to the present time ; and he said that when the men commenced work, if they were restricted to eight hours a day, and he had to pay extra for overtime and give a half-holiday, he could never possibly get the work done. The same applies to farmers who Mr. Bennet threaten for the night. Then, there is the case of the mail-contractor. He has about two hundred horses employed to carry mails, and one thing and another, and he said that where he now employs one man he would have to employ two, and where he employs two he would require three ; and the same thing would apply all along. Then, there is the manager of the Blue Spur Consolidated Claim, that employs about eighty or perhaps a hundred men. When there is extra work to be done they have sometimes to work long hours, and he said if he had to pay extra wages for those hours he might as well shut up the claim. In addition to that the men were only too anxious to be allowed to work a little overtime to make up for lost time. The bank clerks that I have conversed with have also said that they are opposed to the Shops and Offices Bill, and say that if the Bill was passed it would do them a great deal of harm. At present they get a week or two off, and if they are sick they are paid, but if this Bill comes into force all that will be withdrawn. And the Act, too, provides that they shall work hours in excess of the hours they are required to work now. These are the things that have brought about this great revolt in the whole of the country. If the Premier had not supported it it would not have been taken much notice of ; but when he told us that he would vote for the second reading, and would try to improve it in Committee, the whole of the people thought it was going to pass. The Factories Bill. again, has caused some disturbance. There must have been hundreds of people before the Labour Bills Committee giving evidence about it. Of course, I have not been there, and it is only hearsay, but I know a great number of people have come to the room, and I know a lot of them have said that it is impossible for them to go on with their work if that Act came into force. One man stated that he was a tanner, a fellmonger, and he said he was employing some seventy men, and intended to employ double the number, but that if the Factories Bill was passed he would have to shut up his business and get the work done in England-that that would be the result. I think, seeing the effect that these laws have had and are likely to have, it should show the Premier that he ought not to force more labour legislation upon the people for some time to come. I think that we have had enough of this legislation for many years to come, and that we should now let the thing go down, and the people will then, perhaps, be able to shake hands ; but if he keeps on with this legislation I am afraid there will be a lot of trouble arise through it. Now, we have heard a great deal about the settlement of the back blocks, but there is one road between myself and the honourable member for Wakatipu that would open up a very large extent of country. It would save a distance of twenty miles each way, and an expenditure of about 19,000 would open that road. All that we got last year for it was £1,000, but I hope the Minister of Lands will complete that road this year. Much of the land round about has been lying

idle for many years, and until this idea. How is the money their own ? Once it 4.0. road is provided it will remain in a gets into the possession of the Government it useless condition. but if properly opened up I certainly does not belong to the people. It am sure it would be occupied. Now, I wish to ought to be at the disposal of the representa- say I would like to see an alteration made in tives of the people, but since I have been the method in which the estimates are made a member of this House all public revenues up. Another column, I think, should be added have been at the absolute disposal of the Go- to show the proposed new expenditure. As the vernment, to dispense as they please. And estimates are now compiled it is almost im- although I have been consistently an opponent possible for any one to understand them. Last of the Government, I must say that, in regard session, when I asked the Government to take to most of the votes I have asked for, I have over the main roads, the Minister of Lands told been fairly well treated. Still, there is one public work in my district which year after me there was a large amount on the estimates for the work. He said there was \$500 set apart year I have advocated, and asked the Govern- for the county boundary. That was perfectly ment to fulfil a promise made of old in regard correct. He also said there was a sum of £1,300 to it. Money was borrowed specially for this for the road to Clyde, but the county got only work, and yet it has never been expended. As \$125 of that amount. That shows the position a matter of fact, this money has been expended we are in. Even the department cannot tell, elsewhere. I refer to the Riversdale-Waikaia apparently, what the real position is. I urge, Railway. That line ought to have been made therefore, that another column should be added years ago. Then, again, apart from the old to show the exact amount of the vote, so that promise, there was a distinct promise made by members would know what amount they were the Premier at the last election to the people in really entitled to have spent in their districts the district that the railway would be made. In after the estimates were passed. fact, they were given to understand it would Mr. W. FRASER (Wakatipu) .- Sir, I must have all the better chance if they voted for my say I have been very much amused during the opponent. No doubt a good many people in the progress of this debate. We have witnessed district did vote for my opponent on that under- what I do not think I have ever witnessed standing ; but, so far, the railway has not been before in my experience as a member of the made. More than that, last year I got the first in- House. A number of Government supporters stalment of a redemption of that promise to the got up, one after the other, and criticized the extent of having a couple of thousand put on the Government very adversely, both in regard to estimates for a bridge across the Matura. But their policy and in regard to their finance and it has taken twelve months to draw the plans for other matters of administration. Afterwards that bridge, and they have not been completed a number of other Government supporters took yet, as far as I can learn. I intend to say more their fellows to task for what they called their on this matter when we are discussing the Loan disloyalty to the Government. But, strange to Bill-for we are informed that there is to be say, these members had not got very far into another loan this year. Now, Sir, I desire to their own speeches when they fell into the same draw attention again-I shall continue to do so error, and commented very adversely on the until a change is made-to the manner in which Administration. I could not belp thinking that the interest and sinking fund is set out in the it was an example of the action of Balaam of abstract of accounts for the year. In 1898 I old, who, when called on to curse the enemies drew attention to it, and the answer I got from of those amongst whom he lived, proceeded to the Premier was that the items were all included bless them. These honourable gentlemen are in the estimates. doing the very reverse. They have been called the interest and sinking fund stated does not on by the Whips to bless the Government, but, represent the whole of the interest and sinking instead, they are cursing them. Why is it that fund paid out of the Public Treasury. We members on the opposite side are acting in this ought to know the exact amount. The amount way? It must be evident that these utter- there set forth is the net amount, and is ances are merely the echo of the murmurs of short of the real amount by close on £130,000. discontent they hear among their constituents, It is perfectly true

that from the Advances to and it is this which has emboldened them Settlers Department and the Land for Settle- to speak out. The member for Auckland City ments Department there are recoveries for (Mr. Napier), in criticizing the speech of the interest on the total sum of their loans. Still, honourable member for Hawke's Bay, began by I contend that the total amount under this saying that the statement that the Premier had heading should appear on the debit side, and bribed the people would cost the Opposition that on the credit side there should appear the something like ten thousand votes. Well, I recoveries from those two departments. I am think if the people of this colony respect one glad to see this year that other members are person above another it is the man who will following suit, and are recognising the import- say fearlessly what he believes to be the truth. ance of this point. Already three or four mem- A man does not lose by it in the long-run. The bers in this debate have urged that this should word " bribery " was not intended by the mem- be done in future. I hope that other honour. ber for Hawke's Bay to be used offensively. able members will follow their example, and The member for Auckland City asked, "How that the pressure will soon be so great that the can you bribe the people when the money is Government will not be able to refuse the de- their own "? Well, that is rather a novel mand. My contention is that the people of the What I complain of is that

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colony have a right to know what is the real | amount that they have to pay to the public creditor. It is all very well to say that these departments are well able to provide the interest on their own loans ; but suppose that bad times come, and those depart- ments are not able to meet the demands, then where must the money come from ? From the public Treasury, of course. The honourable gentleman opposite knows perfectly well that if the price of butter, cheese, and frozen meat should fall a great number of the farmers will find it very difficult to meet their engagements, either for rent or for in- terest upon the money they have borrowed. Of course, the difficulty would only be a tem- porary one; I know that perfectly well ; but, still, this difference would have to be made up by the public Treasury. I shall now say a word or two about the surplus. The surplus is set down at \$532,564. That amount is over- stated. The total liabilities this year exceed the liabilities of last year by \$69,252. You must, therefore, deduct that amount from £532,564, which thus makes the real surplus \$463,312. I admit the difference is not great, but it would be just as well if that point was mentioned somewhere in the Budget. Let me here say something in regard to the rumours of financial difficulty current during the fortnight preceding the delivery of the Financial Statement. I confess that personally I was some- what amazed at the credulity of the public and of the Press in accepting to the extent they did these rumours, especially those referring to the Consolidated Fund Account. The least con- sideration might have shown anybody who looked up the Gazettes what the position was. We had been informed by the Premier from the public platform what the surplus was. The Press and the mercantile community at least knew, or ought to have known, the amount of revenue that was coming in ; and I really do not understand why the people should have become so suddenly alarmed with regard to the financial position of the colony. Sir, I do not think any good is done by that kind of thing, and therefore I personally expressed my incredulity at the whole affair to many people and to many members of the Press. On the very afternoon when the Budget was brought down I was asked, " What further taxation do you expect "? I replied, "None." So that I was not the least surprised when the Premier brought down the Budget and when we found what the position of matters was. But, satis- factory as the position is up to a certain point, I say there has been no time since I have been in Parliament when caution was so much needed on the part of the Government as at present. Mr. HALL-JONES .- We are always cau- tious. Mr. W. FRASER .- The honourable gentle- man says they are always cautions. Let me tell the honourable gentleman this: that a grave responsibility lies upon the Government, and that a heavier responsibility will rest upon them during the next year or two than has Mr. W. Fraser rested on the shoulders of the Government for many years past. Sir J. G. WARD .- They know that. Mr. W. FRASER .- I

am glad to hear the honourable gentleman say that they know that, and I hope the Government will act up to it. For a good many years past the price of produce has ruled very high. There is no doubt that the good prices obtained for butter, cheese, and frozen meat have given an impetus to this country which was never contemplated by the most sanguine. The price of land has risen owing to the satisfactory price obtained for dairy produce - a price for land which, I think, is a fictitious one. But how long is that going to last ? The member for Waihemo last night gave a very graphic description of the competition that we must expect, and the probability of lower prices. We know that frozen meat is now not so high in price as it has been lately, still it is at a very fair and a paying price. There is one product, however, which has gone down to what is really a ruinous price, and that is wool. Let me tell the House this : that the colony has not as yet felt the effect of the fall in wool. The reclamations on last year's clip have not yet been demanded from the farmers. But when that demand is made, and when to that is superadded the reduced amount which merchants and banks will advance against the coming clip, then we shall see the effect of the fall in price of wool. It will mean a reduction of two millions and a half in the spending-power of the people. Of course, that reduced spending-power will affect the Customs revenue. In saying this I merely wish to emphasize the absolute necessity for extreme caution on the part of the Government in looking after the finances during the ensuing twelve months. The difficulty the Government has had to contend with so far has not been with the consolidated revenue ; it was with the Public Works Account. They have been unable to borrow the money necessary to meet their engagements as quickly and as easily as they desired. I do not think it is conducive to the credit of any country to be borrowing money in small sums of \$50,000, or even \$100,000. Selling debentures over the counter is a thing which I do not think is likely to raise the credit of the colony on the London market. I think, myself, it will have the reverse effect. The Government, I know, have been in a difficult position : that in consequence of the South African war it would have been impossible for them to have raised a 3 or 33-per-cent. loan at a reasonable figure in London. We have been told that they were not going to do it, but would raise the money locally. Well, Sir, I think they have found out the folly of that. They have raised a certain amount locally, but I venture to say they will find some trouble in endeavouring to repeat that operation. We have evidence of that in the fact that they have since had to go Home and raise \$500,000 in London. We have no particulars about that loan yet, and I think we ought to have had them by this time. We ought to know what the loan realised, and what it cost to raise it. But we know nothing

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about it. All we know is that in the Gazette it giving them authority largely in excess of what is stated that a £500,000 4-per-cent. loan has we know they can spend, we are giving them a power which I think this House never intended been issued since last March. Sir, while dealing they should get. I must draw attention to the thing with this question of the Public Works Fund, we are told in the Statement that after fact that out of the proposed expenditure this taking into account cash in hand on the 31st year of £1,950,000 have to be deducted liabilities - March, the unexhausted power to borrow under ties to the extent of £1,292,095. Thus there previous Acts, a new loan of £1,000,000, and can only be provision for \$657,905 for new the contribution of \$500,000 from the Consolidated votes. We must remember that. Well, how consolidated Fund, the Government will have much of that \$1,950,000 is going to be spent ? If relatively the same amount as last year, the sum of \$2,532,515 to set against the proposed expenditure for this incoming year. then it will simply mean that during this year The estimated expenditure they state at the Government will do very little more than complete and pay for the works representing £1,950,000, thus leaving a credit balance of the liabilities on the 31st March, 1901, or else \$582,515. But, Sir, I wonder whether this estimated expenditure includes the whole expenditure the works we voted for last year will remain on the estimates to swell the liabilities and expenditure which they contemplate to take authority to spend. Last year we had in the coming year after year, deluding the consolidated Public Works Statement the intention to

spend £1,938,000, but after the supplementary esti- so much money granted every year; but this mates were completed we found the authority money is not spent. to spend rose to \$2,196,000. How much higher is this £1,950,000 to rise before we are done not spend it, because they have not got it. with it ? There is another feature in the Public Works Account that is worthy of notice. On would not ask them to spend it. That also is the 31st March, 1900, the liabilities were a point on which I desire to warn the Govern- \$494,895; on the 31st March, 1901, they have ment. I hope they will see that they have the mounted to £1,192,195. Now, what does that money in hand, or have a certainty of being able to get it, before they incur liabilities which mean? It means that the House is doing that which I think is not wise. Year after year it would involve expenditure. That would be a is authorising the Government by the public very serious and dangerous position to get into. For the Government to incur huge liabilities works estimates to expend a sum of money which it knows perfectly well that the Go- without the certainty of being able to pay them Vernment cannot spend during the twelve would mean that they would be forced to bor- row money at rates that would not be at all ad- months, and has no intention of spending ; and what is the effect of that? The result is vantageous to this colony. Though the people that we are giving to the Government the of this colony are anxious to have roads and power to discriminate between votes, and of bridges, I think they would rather wait twelve saying which they shall spend and which they or eighteen months, and even two years, for shall not spend. Now, to a certain extent you them than that we should imperil our credit, or must give that limit, but when we make that put ourselves in such a false position. Sir, I will not pursue my remarks in regard to the Public limit as large as we did last year, and probably will be asked to do this year, then I think we Works Fund further, as there will be another are doing an unwise and indiscreet thing. and a better opportunity afforded to us later Parliament is losing the control of the public on to go very fully into that subject when dealing with the Loan Bill. We will know then expenditure. Of course, that is no new thing in this House. Last year the authority to what the proposals of the Government really are, and we will know then really that which spend was #2,196,365; but what did the total we are expected to authorisa them to do, and actual expenditure amount to ? It amounted we can then discuss and criticize the whole to \$1,307,511-that is to say, we authorised them to spend £888,854 more than they did position more properly. amazed at the paragraph in the Financial spend. Of course there are liabilities ; we know that. But what I do contend is that the Go. Statement referring to the report of the Mid- vernment bring down public works estimates land Railway Commission. I really must refer and these estimates are overloaded with votes. to it, because I should not like it to remain on Members are pleased because they see the record uncontradicted. The Treasurer says, on votes there, and they go back and tell their page xiii., that " after a very exhaustive inquiry a Commission has reported, practically, that the constituents they have got so much money, company and debenture-holders have been very and, lo and behold, at the 31st March how much of that is spent? Members all know that what I am stating is correct. Now, would could have found a single word to justify that it not be very much wiser for the House to come statement. Certainly they could not have to some decision as to how much money really found it in the report of the Royal Commission. can and will be spent before Parliament meets Why, if there is one thing that the Royal again ? Vote that amount and say, " We leave it to the Government to see if they can borrow Commission was prevented from saying any- the necessary money. If you can borrow this thing at all about it was as to what the money you may spend this amount." But I debenture-holders or the company were en- titled to receive from the colony. I am not say that by going on as we are doing now and tuencies into believing that they are getting An Hon. MEMBER .- The Government will Mr. W. FRASER. - If they have not got it I I was somewhat well treated." When I heard that read 4.30. out I wondered where the Government

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this is certainly not the time to do it ; but I de- sire to place this question in its right light. The

Commissioners were asked to find out what the several constructed lines of railway had cost. Secondly, they were asked to find out what the said lines ought to have cost. We were then enjoined to ascertain what the selling value of these lines, subject to certain specific conditions, would be. These conditions were very stringent ones. Having ascertained such selling values, we were asked to allocate the same between the debenture-holders, the company, and the Government. All this we did do. We were not asked to say what the debenture-holders or the company were entitled to. We were not asked to say what these lines were worth to the colony. Nothing of the kind. We expressed no opinion thereon, and very properly so. We simply performed our duty as Royal Commissioners. But we were asked and expected to do this : to provide full information for Parliament to deal finally with this matter, and that I believe we have done. But, Sir, to let it go forth to the public that the Commissioners have expressed an opinion that the company and the debenture-holders have been very fairly treated I say is not a fair thing to be put in the Financial Statement. As a matter of fact, the Commissioners said nothing of the kind. I speak for myself, and I think the honourable member for Nelson City (Mr. Graham) the other day spoke for himself, and I know that I can speak for both Mr. McKerrow and Mr. Hudson, that such a statement as that published does not represent our individual opinions. I trust I shall have another opportunity of speaking on this subject, and will then do so with no uncertain sound. I object to the inference that the Commissioners reported that the Government is equitably justified in using the lines constructed by the Midland Railway Company without paying a reasonable sum therefor. What the Government ought to pay is a matter, I say, for the consideration of Parliament. My reason for referring to the matter at all just now is that I have seen it alleged in the public prints that, in the opinion of the Commissioners, the debenture-holders were entitled to nothing. I told the House just now what the scope of the Royal Commission was. But there was also a supplementary Commission issued ; and why was that done? It was only issued at the eleventh hour, just before counsel for the Crown was about to address the Commissioners upon the subject. It then dawned on the Government that the answers that must inevitably be given to the interrogatories in that Commission were such as did not quite suit their views. And so a supplementary Commission was issued, which enjoined us to answer certain specific questions, hedged round by conditions in such a manner that the answer could only be " Nil. nil, nil." Why set up a Commission for that? If the answers given by the supplementary Commission were all the Government wanted, why appoint Commissioners at all? It was not necessary, and Mr. W. Fraser much time and money thrown away. An Hon. MEMBER .- How do you know ? Mr. W. FRASER .- If the honourable member wants to know I will tell him. Counsel for the Crown said that before addressing the Commissioners he would write out what he intended to say, and would submit this for the consideration and approval of the Cabinet, and it was only after Mr. Bell's views had been submitted to the Cabinet that the supplementary Commission was issued. Sir J. G. WARD .- That was not wrong. Mr. W. FRASER .- Oh, no ; but the answers to the supplementary Commission misled the public generally, because it was telegraphed to the southern papers, at any rate, that the report of the Commission was that the debenture-holders and the shareholders were to get nothing. Sir, I have spoken more than once in this House on the subject of the remission of the mortgage-tax. Now, I hold that it is a most unjustifiable tax. Other members besides myself have urged that people in this colony are prevented thereby from lending their money in small sums at 3 low rate of interest, and that the Government are thus enabled to compete unfairly with them. In reply, it has been alleged that this state of things was in favour of the man who wanted to borrow at a low rate of interest. Nothing of the kind. There is no reason why the Advances to Settlers Office should not lend simultaneously with private lenders ; but that department is not entitled to be protected from competition to the extent of } per cent. There are plenty of people who are quite willing to lend money at 4} per cent. if they can get it. But the fact is that people lending at 44 per cent. only get 4 per cent. That is a fact. I know also that on that account money is being sent away from here to Australia. The insurance

companies are doing that now. Tens of thousands of pounds are being sent constantly away to Australia, because, according to instructions from headquarters, they must get 4^a per cent. net. Well, you cannot lend at 4} per cent. and get 4 per cent. net here. In Australia you can get 4} per cent. net, because they have no mortgage-tax, but here you must lend at 5 per cent. in order to get 4} per cent. net. I say the retention of this tax unfairly favours the Advances to Settlers Department, and gives it an advantage over the private lenders. To illustrate the unfairness of it let me refer to the proposal in the Budget to start a State coal-mine. Let us assume that the Government start such a mine, and then proceeded to declare. " We want to get customers for our coal ; we will therefore levy a tax of half a crown a ton on the coal from every other mine, and if that is done, why, people will have to buy our coal. because we can undersell our competitors by half a crown a ton." Of course. such a proposal would be scouted in this House ; and yet the House is prepared to allow the Government to do a precisely similar thing in charging this inequitable and iniquitous tax of } per cent. in regard to mortgages. I do hope members

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will take this to heart and think it out. I say the Government in maintaining that tax are refer to the same closing. handicapping the man who through thrift and energy has amassed a little money and I have looked into this matter. I admit the wishes to put it out at fair interest. Why difference is very small, but I repeat that the should the State interfere with him ? It has figures given here are apt to confuse. I think no right to do so at all. Moreover, it is a it is an error that should be avoided in the distinct disadvantage to the man who desires future. to borrow at a low rate. Then, Sir, I find & proposal to provide cool-storage. Now, I am not going into the whole question as to not say that the figures themselves are wrong, whether it is wise for the State to provide cool- but it is an error to have them so stated in storage in South Africa or not. No doubt the Budget without anything to indicate from before any definite action is taken the Govern- whence they are derived. The task of ana- ment will take the House into its confidence in lysing and discussing the figures in a Financial this matter. I am sorry the Minister of Lands Statement is anything but a pleasant one, and has left the Chamber, because I should like him the result is totally unsatisfactory as far as to hear what I have to say on this subject. I any practical results accrue therefrom. What wish to ask him if he will be inclined to erect happens is this: A member carefully sets himself cool-stores in a certain part of Central Otago to the task, and after a more or less amount for the purpose of storing rabbits for export of research arrives at certain conclusions. If until they could be taken down to the railway, these conclusions correspond with the views and thence to the freezing-chambers. There of the Premier, then the member is styled an are over a million acres of pastoral land there, expert financier; if, however, they disagree, which, I am sorry to say, are overrun with then he is stigmatized as being ignorant of the rabbits ; and I believe if a cool-store were first principles of finance. Figures which may erected in the vicinity of Cromwell or the .or may not have any reference to the subject Ha . ea Flat large numbers of men would be under discussion are hurled at his head. Han- profitably employed in trapping, the cost of sard is filled with tables which no one reads keeping the pest in check would be greatly or understands, and the unfortunate public lessened, and there would be some probability are left in a state of utter darkness as to the of the Government continuing to receive the merits of the case. The only satisfactory way in which you can ever get a reasonable and present rents for such pastoral country. The cost of such a cool-store would not be great. proper discussion of the finances of the colony will be in the way I wish to suggest now. There Sir J. G. WARD .- Why do not the people should be a Public Accounts Committee worthy do it ? of the name, empowered to act on its own ini- Mr. W. FRASER .- Who is to do it ? tiative, and to call for persons and papers, then Sir J. G. WARD .- The people themselves. let the Financial Statement and all the matters You say it would be such a good speculation. connected therewith be submitted to this Com- Mr. W. FRASER .- I did not speak of it as mittee. Let it be a secret Committee if you a speculation. I say it would pay the colony like. The tables in the Financial Statement

well. The honourable gentleman knows that having been submitted to the scrutiny of this Committee the report when it came down would trapping for export is not done by the owner have some weight with the House and with the of the property. The trappers do it themselves ; and how can they afford to erect stores? I repeat country, more weight, at any rate, than the un- supported statements of members on either side this matter is worthy the consideration of the or even of the Premier himself. If you adopt Minister of Lands. I desire now to draw atten- some such plan as that it will remove a great tion to what is an inaccuracy in the Statement. many of the confused ideas that now exist in If we turn to page xii. there will be found there regard to the finances of the colony. I cannot in connection with the railways the actual understand why a Government which really proht as compared with that of the former year. knows and feels that its finance is sound and Now, one would fancy when figures are dealt that everything is right should have any possible with in this Statement that they would corre- objection to the clearest explanation being spond with those of the tables appertaining given to every one of the figures in the State- thereto. But the figures here do not fit in with ment. We are told by those honourable gentle- any other set of figures in the Statement. They men that they have no such objection, but if you are really taken from the Working Railways want any information how much do you get out Account. The figures given by the honourable of them ? I do not say they are worse than other gentleman are these : €599,389 for 31st March. Governments that have preceded them in this 1901, as against £571,533 for the previous year. respect. Very possibly they are not, but they The explanation of the discrepancy is : that the are bad enough ; but if you adopt the plan I books of the Treasury are closed each year on a suggested then you would have a clear exposition different date from those of the Railway Depart- of affairs, and the public would feel much more ment, and the consequence is the resulting satisfied and much more secure in regard to the figures do not coincide. Where you find the position of the public accounts. I never have missing link, as it were, is in the estimates, at been an alarmist, and I do not think anything the bottom of the appropriations for the work- I have said this afternoon can be held to indi- ing railways. Sir J. G. WARD .- The two accounts there Mr. W. FRASER .- Pardon me, they do not. Sir J. G. WARD .- It is not an error. Mr. W. FRASER .- It is an error. I do

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again, although our consolidated revenue is fairly buoyant we must not forget it is largely owing to the enormous amount we are deriving from the Customs, and that revenue from the Customs is much more liable to fluctuation than any other source of revenue. If anything happens to affect the spending-power of the people at all, down goes the Customs revenue. Therefore it behoves us to be very careful when we are depending so much upon this source of revenue. And to what is the large amount of the Customs revenue due ? To & great extent it is due to the fact that we are borrowing every year between \$500,000 to ¥1,000,000. I do not say this is wrong. I repeat again what I have said on former occasions, that we cannot help ourselves. It is all very well for those in whose districts there are rail- ways and bridges and metalled roads, and all that kind of thing, to say all this expenditure must cease ; but the majority of the members of this House know that if you are to carry on the settlement of the country there must be roads made for the settlers, and rivers must be bridged. All that must go on, and we can- not possibly do it out of revenue. But at the same time we must be careful to see that ways and means are provided for this expendi- ture, and obtainable. I repeat again that upon the Government lies a greater responsibility than has been laid upon it for many a long year, because of the increasing cost of adminis- tration on the one hand and the low price of wool on the other. They will find that the latter will affect their revenue to a very marked degree. I will not detain the House longer, but will reserve any further remarks I may desire to make on finance till another oppor- tunity. Mr. HALL - JONES (Minister for Public Works) .- Mr Guinness, I think the House as a whole will concur with a great deal of what has been said by the last speaker. His common- sense remarks will, I know, be indorsed by almost every member when he says that he had no

fear as to the position of the Consolidated Fund. Well, no member of the House who keeps in touch with what is going on in the colony, and who watches the course of events, and who heard the Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer-no one in the colony- member of the House, newspaper proprietor, or any one who was watching public affairs- had any cause to feel any alarm in connection with the finances of New Zealand. But when the honourable gentleman suggests that we should set up a Finance Committee to deal with the finances of the colony, that is a different matter. He has had some experience of the Public Accounts Committee, and other Committees of this House, and he must recognise how difficult it would be where you have both sides of the House represented, and where, as unfortunately is the case, the honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House do make a party question of everything that comes before the Committee. Honourable gentlemen must realise how impossible it would be for such a Committee Mr. W. Fraser the estimates and to bring them down to the House as good, certainly not better, than they are as now brought down. No; you must have some set of men to prepare the estimates and who are responsible for them when laid before the House. Where you have party action upon Committees it would be impossible to deal with intricate questions of finance. I know that when it is looked at superficially there is some- thing to be said in favour of the supposition that the consolidated fund and also the public works estimates, should go before a Committee : but, for reasons I have given, you would have no sound basis to work upon. You would have applications from one part of the colony and they would be supported on the one side by one party and opposed by the other, and it would lead to interminable contentions and divisions. Mr. W. FRASER .- I did not intend that the estimates - that is, the votes-should be re- mitted to the Committee at all. It was the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement, with regard to finance. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Then, it would mean that instead of the Colonial Treasurer pre- paring the Financial Statement, as laid down before the House, the Financial Statement would be prepared by a Committee. Mr. W. FRASER .- No, reported on by the Committee after being laid before the House. Mr. HALL-JONES .- I think it would be a saving of time, and meet the convenience of members better, if, instead of the Statement and estimates being referred to a Select Com- mittee, they should be referred, as they will now be referred, to a Committee of the whole House. I am sure the other proposal would be unworkable ; but I believe the honourable mem- ber is actuated by the best of motives in making the suggestion, but it would prove unworkable. Now, the honourable member and some other honourable members have referred to the Mid- land Railway Commission, and for the life of me I cannot understand the attitude takeu up by some honourable members with reference to the Midland Railway. What is there in the few words read by the Colonial Treasurer to object to ? The Colonial Treasurer says, After an exhaustive inquiry the Commission has prac- tically reported that the company and debenture-holders have been very well treated. I ven- ture to say that any honourable member who has gone at all exhaustively into the details in connection with this matter must admit that the company has been fairly treated - that is. that when carrying on their contract, when they asked for concessions and came to the House for assistance as regards deviations or alterations of the original contract, they re- ceived every consideration ; but, when the contract term expired and they were so far behind completion of the contract as to show their inability to carry out that contract-well. then we were done with the company, and the matter assumed a different phase. The com- pany, when it was carrying on the work, was very fairly treated, and that is a very proper interpretation of this sentence; and the sum-

practice. If the honourable gentleman would mary at the conclusion of the paragraph in - say that we should bring in an increase of the the Statement bears that out. The Com- mission did go into the matter exhaustively ; graduated land-tax to make up for the loss by remission in the mortgage-tax, so that it would they went into the whole question, and it took not affect our finance, then we would have them a long time, but they have acquired some very valuable matter which later on will enable something to work

upon ; but the mortgage-tax the House to come to a decision upon this matter. is one of the questions the Government have promised to deal with, and which they intend They show that the cost of the line as stated to deal with at the proper time. The honour- here was £654,411, giving full payment upon able member knows that when the Government a fair basis. Then, taking into consideration make a promise they invariably carry it out, the earning-power of the railway, and taking it over a series of years and allowing so much and this one, with the others, will be kept, the for prospective increase, they bring down the same as our promises in the past have been kept ; and while exercising caution we shall, value as #192,833, and the colony has con- as I have said, deal with the question of tributed, through its land-grant, no less than decreasing the mortgage-tax. As to the votes \$313,000 towards the cost of the railway, or a greater sum than the value of the line upon for roads, I admit there is a good deal in the basis I have indicated. Now, I fail to see what the honourable member said. I have why, and upon what grounds, members should had to deal with those votes, and it is express such strong feelings about the matter, annoying to the department, and certainly not the wish of the Government, that votes or should desire to do what, it appears to me, would be unfair to the colony, although it may passed by the House should come up again be to the advantage of the debenture-holders. year after year. We would rather have a vote When I heard the honourable member for which has been passed by the House expended Nelson, Mr. Graham ; the honourable member in the financial year. But it so happens that for Ashley, Mr. Meredith ; and the honourable in many cases the local authorities do not member for Riccarton, Mr. Russell - when apply for the grants, or that surveys have to I heard them speaking about the need for be made, or that some extra work might have devolved on the Chief Surveyor, or that there taking an "honest course" in connection with this matter, I could not forget what is some other unavoidable reason for delay, the colony had suffered in connection with and therefore the money cannot be spent until after the 31st March. I have myself had the transaction. There were the enormous land reserves set on one side, locked up occasion to speak to the officers of the depart- for years, and which so injuriously affected ment on this matter, and have at all times urged that, as far as possible, votes should be the prosperity of Canterbury, Nelson, and Westland ; but very little was done, and cleared off and that we start the next year with a clean sheet. I think the member for Tuapeka at the expiration of the contract time they would proceed no further with the was rather severe in his reference to the labour legislation of the colony. Sir, what is the work, and honourable members are aware object of our labour legislation ? It is for the what then took place. Now, then, what about the loss the people of the colony suffered protection of the health and the lives of men through the non-completion of this contract? who are the least able to protect themselves. The people of Nelson suffered considerably- That is the one great object we all aim at, and the labour legislation we have dealt with first, through their lands being locked up ; and, has not been necessitated by the action of the secondly, through the loss of business in the district on account of the non completion of ordinary employer. The average employer is the contract. But the honourable member a man who looks after the interests - the for Nelson, the honourable member for Ashley, lives and the health - of his employés. In most classes of labour a man's health and and the honourable member for Riccarton, strength is his entire capital. Destroy that forgot all about their constituents' losses, and man's health and you may as well destroy that became special pleaders for the company and man's life. The object of the labour legis- for the debenture-holders. It seems to me lation, then, was to protect that man's health that our duty is to be fair to the colony, and life, and I say the average employer does as well as to the debenture-holders; and we this. But you have a certain class of employers must bear in mind what the colony has lost through the non-completion of the contract. who do not take ordinary precautions to protect the life and health of those who work for At the same time we must be unfair 5.0. them. What happened before the first Act on to no man. I am satisfied with the work done by the Commission. I was pleased the subject was passed? Men were working under the most insanitary conditions, crowded with

the care and attention they showed in every detail, and with the businesslike nature together in rooms where there was no ventilation of the report they presented ; and I believe rooms that had not been cleaned for years-and where, consequently, the lives of the honourable member had a good deal to the men were injured through being worked in do with the drawing-up of that report. The honourable member also referred to the mortgage-tax, and before doing so he impressed on carried their trouble to their homes, and as a the Government the necessity for caution in result their wives and families also suffered. connection with our finance. Well, we are going to be cautious : that has always been our those close rooms and under such insanitary conditions. Their health suffered, and they Sir, I hope there is not one man in this House

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who desires to see anything of that kind continued. That, then, is the primary object of the labour legislation of the Government. As regards the Factories Bill, or any other measure that is before Parliament this session, I venture to predict that by the time those Bills come to their third reading in this House there will not be half a dozen members who will go into the lobbies against them. Mr. PIRANI .- They will not come down here. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Oh, yes, I think they will reach this House, and by the time we have finished with them we will have put them in such an improved form that the member for Palmerston himself will, I believe, congratulate the Government on the passing of the measures. I am desirous of seeing legislation passed so that the condition of our workers will be improved. Last evening the member for Waihemo expressed surprise at the Government paying a greater rate of interest to what he called the British money-lender than is paid to the depositors in the Post-Office Savings-Bank. Well, some members who have spoken would give one the idea that we had never been borrowing money from the British money-lender, and that the amounts lent out to settlers by such organizations as the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, and the National Mortgage Company, and so on, did not represent British money. Members opposite know as well as I do that scores of people, who have not got money from these and similar institutions, have gone directly to the Old World and made their financial arrangements there. Is that not British capital ? There is nothing new in what is being done, and as a matter of fact we are diminishing what has taken place in the past. I believe that if one went into the matter carefully it would be found that, especially as regards private indebtedness, there is less British capital in the colony at the present time than there was ten or fifteen years ago. But the member for Waihemo could not understand why we did not pay to depositors in the Post-Office Savings-Bank the same rate of interest as we pay for money raised on debentures. Well, I am sure it does not require a man with any great ability to recognise the position. In the one case the depositors in the Post-Office Savings-Bank have their money practically at call. Within a month every deposit in the Savings-Bank could be withdrawn by the depositors. But what about the debenture-holders ? Those who hold debentures lend their money for a fixed period, and they cannot withdraw it when they choose. If they want to raise money on their debentures they must sell them at the market price. The honourable member, and also the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutcheson), wanted to know the position of the small depositors in the Post-Office Savings-Bank at present as compared with 1890. If the honourable member will refer to the Postal Report of this year he will get all the information he requires, and he will see the enormous increase in the number of small depositors. It was suggested that the greater number of depositors were those Mr. Hall-Jones with large sums to their credit. No such thing. In 1890 the number of deposits under £20 were 71,017; in 1900 they had increased to 142,368. or an increase of 71,351. In 1890 there were 12,160 deposits of from £20 to \$50, and in 1900 the number had gone up to 22,333, or an increase of 10,173. In 1890 the number of deposits of from £50 to \$100 was 6,839, and in 1900 they were 13,704, an increase of 6,865. This shows, then, that in 1890 there were 90,016 deposits of sums up to £100, and that in 1900 the number of deposits up to the same amount was

178,405, or an increase of 88,389 deposits of \$100 and under. The number of depositors of sums over \$100 totals 19,003. This shows that the small depositors are much more numerous, and that they are taking full advantage of the facilities offered for their savings by the Post - Office Savings-Bank. Then, the honourable member for Waihemo, referring to the arrivals and departures from the colony, stated that the number of departures had decreased during the later years of the Atkinson Administration. What are the facts? In the last three years of the Atkinson Administration -1889-91- there were 214 more arrivals than departures in 1889, but in 1890 there was a loss of 1,782, and in 1891 a loss of 3,198. Since that year - so soon as the policy of the present Government was known-it began to have a beneficial effect, and the returns mounted up each year, and there has been an excess of arrivals over departures every year since that time. In one year it amounted to no less than 10,412. The member for Waihemo also stated that the trade of the colony was much more favourable, in proportion, in 1887, 1888, and 1889, than it has been during the last three years. The honourable member cannot have looked at the facts, because the figures for those three years are as follows :- £ 13,111,684 1887 18,709,225 1888 . . 15,650,727 1889 42,471,636 18,748,555 1890 . 20,677,965 1891 .. 23,892,257 1900 .. 63,318,780 Increase £20,847,144 Showing that from 1888 to 1900 there was an increase of ten millions in the total trade of the colony ; or, taking the two periods of three years, an increase of nearly twenty-one millions during the last three years. Then, the honourable member for Patea, and some other members, made a statement concerning Ministers and their salaries which, if he had only taken the trouble to look into the matter, he would have seen was utterly erroneous. The honourable member is a new member of this House. and I advise him to be careful that the statements he makes in this Chamber are based on solid facts, because, once it is found that he makes incorrect statements, members will thenceforth distrust him. I would, in that

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taxation has been increased ? I cannot under- warn from his immediate predecessor. The honourable member spoke of the salaries paid stand those members who speak of the taxation to Ministers in Ontario and Canada; but the of this colony as having been increased. For honourable member only told half the story, several years there has not been any increase Ontario being only a province of Canada. in taxation. On the contrary, we have reduced Mr. HASELDEN. - I thought you knew taxation more than any other Government has ever done in this colony. Take the reductions that. Mr. HALL-JONES .- The honourable member that were made in 1995 and take the reductions ber referred to Ontario as if it were Canada. made last year, and put the two together, and In many cases there Ministers have residences, what do you find? At the present day we and no deduction is made from their salaries have given just about half a million, by the because they occupy Ministerial residences. concessions made through the Customs in the The amount of Ministers' salaries paid in two years I have referred to. And yet we Canada . including the Dominion Government hear members talking about the increase in and the Provinces Government-is no less taxation. The honourable member for Riccarton gave a most amusing instance. He took than \$58,620. That is the actual payment for salaries alone. I am sure if the honourable one of the parliamentary papers-H .- 9, I think member had known the facts he would not - which gives the amount of taxation per head have made the statement he did. from the consumption of spirits, beer, wine, Mr. HASELDEN. - I referred to Ontario. and tobacco, et cetera, and he took a family of five, and endeavoured to show how hardly the Mr. HALL-JONES .- You also mentioned Canada. Ministers there receive larger salaries Customs duties upon those items pressed upon this household. He allowed so much for beer, than Ministers receive in New Zealand. The wine, and spirits to the wife and to the honourable member and several other members band, including tobacco, and so much tea and also made reference to co-operative labourers. sugar to the children. But I ask, what has that He said that the men are earning too much- that labourers are earning from 10s. to \$1 a to do with the question ? Spirits

and beer and day. Now, let us take the work being done at tobacco are not a necessity. If one chooses Hunterville : I would like the honourable member to use these things they are at liberty to do so, but to give one case where a labourer on that and they have to pay duty upon them. But work is earning #1 a day. it was on the actual necessities of life Mr. HASELDEN .- I can do so. that the concessions were made last year, Mr. HALL-JONES .- I receive the returns totalling for part of the last financial year over £100,000. Where does the increase in of earnings every month, and I say that the average wage during the last two or three taxation come in there? In what year has months does not exceed 78. 6d. a day. taxation been increased ? But I will tell you An Hon. MEMBER .- What is the highest what has happened : The position of the colony has been so much improved by the earning Wage ? Mr. HALL-JONES .- 10s. 6d. to the very best power of the people being greater now than in men. In one gang you may have men of excel- the past that they have had more money to lent capacity, with strength and experience, spend, and, having more money to spend, they but you may have in another gang men who have purchased goods upon which the same have had no experience. As I have said before, rate of duty, perhaps, has been paid as in past I do not care if a man earns £1 a day so long as years. Consequently, the Customs revenue has the colony gets the value for that money. The gone up ; the gross results have been greater, but there has been no increase of taxation, men are paid according to the work they do. It The able man earns a although there has been an increase in the is payment by results. higher wage, and the less able man a smaller Customs revenue. Now, when the member for Patea suggested that we had increased the wage. I may state that there are not six thou- taxation to the extent of six millions I think sand men employed on these works ; there are from 5,300 to 5,400 men employed upon rail- that, as a sensible man, he did not mean what way- and road-work, and among that number he said. there are first-class men and inferior men. I to six millions. am glad to say that in one district the men subscribe amongst themselves and subsidise a able member's speech in Hansard, and I doctor to attend to any of them or their families venture to say he will find that I am correct. who may take ill. Then, upon another work Well, then, the honourable member also made the men subscribe to a fund 6d. each per week, an absurd statement with regard to the North to meet any cases of sickness that may arise Island Main Trunk Railway. He said Mr. among them. I am proud to think there are Rochfort surveyed the line eighteen years ago, men engaged on these works who thus make and that only twenty-three miles had been provision for a time of trouble. But it is the lazy man and the loafer who is always growling made since that time. and dissatisfied. Then, the member for Patea had been made from Marton. said that the revenue of this country has been increased by six millions ; or, in other words, that taxation to that amount has been taken member qualifies his statement now, of course, out of the pockets of the people. What did | he may be right, but the Hansard report will Mr. HASELDEN .- I said it had increased Mr. HALL JONES .- I shall see the honour- Mr. HASELDEN .- Twenty-three miles only Mr. HALL-JONES .- Well, if the honourable

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miles have been opened during that time as were mentioned by the honourable member. During his speech the member for Patea stated that the co-operative works cost three times as much as contract work, and almost in the same breath he said the work cost one-third more than if it was done by contract. Will the honourable member tell us which is correct ? Is it one-third more or is it three times as much, or does the honourable member know so little about the subject that he is not able to express an opinion? Then he went on to ask what had the Government done to show for all the mil- lions expended ? " Had any one railway been finished, or one arterial road carried through, or was there one prosperous settlement to show for the many millions borrowed " ? That was what the honourable gentleman asked, and upon my word I began to doubt the condition of the honourable gentleman. He certainly has not travelled much in New Zealand. Did he never hear of the Eketahuna-Woodville line ? Did he not know that the honour- able gentlemen who support the leader of the Opposition - for of course we all still recognise

him as the leader of the Opposition-when holding office in 1888-89-90, left that Eketahuna line unfinished-left a comparatively short gap untouched for years? Does he not remember when everything from and for the Government railways beyond had to be sent over the Manawatu line because that work was not taken in hand? Who finished that work? Sir, the present Government finished it, and that is one railway they completed. Take as another instance the railway between Paeroa and the Thames, and leading on to Coromandel. There was a line completed in many parts, bridges built, rails laid --- An Hon. MEMBER .- There is no railway to Coromandel. Mr. HALL-JONES .- On the way to Coromandel; and if the Thames is not on the way to Coromandel I must be very much mistaken. I say on that line there were bridges built, rails laid, sign-posts erected stating, "Stop! look out for the engine," for years, and left unfinished until the timber rotted, the sleepers rotted, the rails rusted, and the bridges had to be pulled down and re-erected. Who completed that line, which is one of the best paying branch lines in this colony? Did the gentlemen opposite complete it? No; it was one of the legacies left by the previous Government, and the present Government completed that necessary work. And let me tell the honourable member this: that the first work there cost some £50,000 or \$60,000. That money was, as I have said, completely wasted because they would not complete the work, and interest has to be paid on that sum for all time. And yet the honourable member tells us this Government never completed one railway. I hope the honourable member, before he makes these statements again, will exercise his intelligence and make sure of his facts, otherwise his reputation in this House certainly must suffer. Mr. Hall. Jones tailors of Tooley Street " have been absent from the House for so long. I refer to the member for Riccarton, the member for Ashley, and the member for Nelson City. An Hon. MEMBER .- They are all ill. Mr. HALL-JONES .- Well, if speeches such as they delivered in this House did not make them ill, I should say they could stand any thing. I do not know whether they are ill or whether they are conscience-stricken. Why take the speech from the honourable member for Ashley-and I see he has actually got in Hansard a table dealing with the question of Ministerial salaries, which is as false a statement as has ever been made in this House. An Hon. MEMBER .- Is that in order? Mr. HALL-JONES .- I say as false a statement as has ever been made in this House. An Hon. MEMBER .- Be careful. Mr. HALL-JONES .- I am always careful; the honourable gentleman will never find me otherwise. And I say a member who will deliberately put into Hansard or state in this House what he knows is not a fact is likely to find that any statement he makes hereafter is not worthy of credence. Mr. HERRIES .- I rise to a point of order. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I do not think the Minister has said anything that is out of order. Mr. HALL-JONES .- I saw Mr. Speaker was keeping a very careful eye on me, and it consequently made me very careful; but if the honourable member did not know, he ought to have known, that not one of the salaries mentioned there as having been received by Ministers last year was received by a Minister. Members can take from the Premier down to the last gentleman appointed to the Executive, and I say the statement of the salaries received by them is wrong. But, Sir, what about a member who will make this statement that I believe he knew to be wrong? He has an opportunity of verifying his figures from the public documents, and yet he places this on record as an authentic statement; but it was only one made by the honourable member for Ashley. And so it is with nearly every other statement that he happened to make. He referred to the giants of the past, and challenged Ministers because we did not reply to the several statements made by the honourable member for Riccarton and others. Well, Sir, I must confess I never enjoyed any thing so much as the speeches delivered by these honourable gentlemen. It was the old story of giving them rope enough and they will hang themselves; and I believe now they are suffering from the effects of what they said at that time. Now, the member for Ashley, because Ministers did not reply to these gross misstatements, referred to the giants of the past, the men who had sat upon these benches, and what they had done in their time. Why, Sir, we had, in the year 1895, a similar speech from the honourable member for Riccarton to that delivered here by him this session, and at a time when the

giants of the past were sitting

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under the Hon. Mr. Seddon the colony is more took the same gloomy view of finance in 1895 as he did during his speech a few days ago- prosperous than it has ever been before." the revenue was falling, the expenditure was too great, he wanted great care and economy ; provement that had taken place in the general we wanted "able administration on these position of the country, and wound up in this benches, and not men who had let the way :- colony drift ahead and get into financial whirlpools." That was the honourable mem- question you will be asked to answer by your ber's utterance in 1895 : the Customs revenue votes will not be a personal issue between was going to the dogs, the Budget of that year the Conservative and Liberal candidates. The was the most Tory budget ever brought down to questions you have to answer are these : 'Do the House, there was no initiative in the you want the Liberal policy to be continued ? ' Cabinet at that time-just the same remarks If so, vote for G. W. Russell, the Liberal candi- as we have had from the honourable member date. Or, ' Do you want Messrs. Seddon and during this and last session. It is nothing Mckenzie to be put out, and the country new for the honourable member to make such handed over to the party who brought New remarks. If these honourable mem- Zealand to the brink of ruin in 1890?' If so, 7.30. bers were gentlemen in whom the vote for the Conservative candidate." colony had confidence, and relied upon the statements that they made, their speeches kept faith with those who sent him here; they might have created a very injurious effect on know the narrow majority by which he came the colony. Now, Sir, in that speech which here, and an honourable gentleman who takes the honourable member for Riccarton made in up the attitude he has taken up has only one the Budget debate of 1895-a speech, as I have course before him as an honourable man-to hand back his trust, and ask his constituents if said, on almost similar lines to the one he has delivered during this debate - among other they approve his action since he came here? matters that he referred to in connection with I was referring to the honourable member for. the Budget of that year was the absence of any Ashley, and his reference to the salaries and expenses received by Ministers last year, and provision for old-age pensions and to the solu- tion of the " unemployed " question. Now, it the misleading statement he placed before the is very remarkable that shortly after he de- House. I say this was a false statement, which livered that speech in 1895 he left this House no man with respect for himself and those who for a term, and immediately he left the House sent him here should allow to appear in Han- the position of the colony began to improve. The sard. He puts down amounts which are utterly "unemployed " question solved itself so com- at variance with facts. He put down the amounts received for 1900, and not one single pletely that at the present time there are no unemployed. The Old-age Pensions Act was Minister received the amount he named, and carried through the House, and has now been many received several hundred pounds less. in force for some years. I do not know if the He put down one Minister as having received recent speech of the honourable member will be £1,000 who had received only £473 2s. 4d. ; followed by a similar improved condition of another Minister at £1,000, who only received affairs, but if it leads to an increase in the £575 16s. 2d .; another at £1,000, and that prosperity of the colony, as his speech did on Minister only received £424 14s. 7d. Then a previous occasion, I at all events shall be the honourable gentleman went on to say satisfied. If members will look up the report that each Minister received \$200 for house of the honourable gentleman's speech in this allowance. I say that is utterly incorrect, debate they will find that it was almost a repe- and he must have known it was incorrect when titution of the speech he delivered in 1895. He he made the statement. Each Minister does said then, as he said this year, that the policy not receive that amount. As members know of the Government was the policy of the well, those who occupy Ministerial residences do Epicureans : "Let us eat and drink, for to- not draw house allowance. Then, he took a morrow we die." When I look back on what most extraordinary attitude. In speaking of occurred since he left the House, and how he the expenses of Ministers he had

the temerity to add on to the cost of Ministers the private came out at the last election as a supporter of the Government, and his actions since he has secretaries, who are actually engaged upon been in the House, I am astonished. departmental work, and he put them down at \$500 a year each. They do not draw that An Hon. MEMBER .- He has seen the error of his ways. amount, even including travelling allowances. Mr. HALL-JONES .- He did so before, and But, looking at it from a business point, each secretary is as much engaged in departmental repented, and what happened ? He came out work as any officer in the department. If those as a supporter of the Government. Here I secretaries were not with Ministers to reply to have a pamphlet issued by the honourable the correspondence of members, and to deal with gentleman with a magnificent portrait of him- various matters which are brought before them self, in which he advertised himself as a sup- from different parts of the colony, members porter of the present Government in large, would have to wait much longer for their replies prominent type-" a supporter of the present than they do at the present time. And if the Government." He says,- cost of private secretaries are to be added on to "I am a supporter of the present Govern- He then went on to indicate the vast im- " Electors of Riccarton, on polling day the Well, honourable members know how he

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 add the cost of the Under-Secretaries of depart- ments, and if you do that you might as well add every other officer in any department. In that way you could bring the expenses of my worthy colleague here to over a million of money a year. Then, the honourable member complains about the Commissions. He wanted to know why the School Teachers' Salaries Commission was set up. He stated that I said last session I had a complete scale ready at that time. I never said so. I said I had a draft scale which was incomplete, and as it was incomplete I did not feel justified in placing it before honourable members; and that was why I was anxious to obtain the opinion of those connected with educational matters, so that we might have something detinite before us when compiling the scale. Sir, if there was any one responsible for the appointment of that Commission it was the honourable member himself. When, last session, I had a Bill before the House under which I venture to say would have been com- piled a scale of salaries which would have given fair satisfaction-1 give the Commissioners every credit for the work they have done, and they have been of great assistance to the department - but, if that Bill had passed, there would have been no necessity for setting up that Commission ; and the honourable gentle- man was one of the strongest opponents of that Bill passing, so that he must take a large share in the responsibility of the cost of the Commission. Then, he went on to say the Government desired to create a standing army, and he referred to our Volunteers in most con- temptuous terms. It seem to be like the pro- verbial red rag to a bull for him to see a Volun- teer going through the street in uniform. I thought the honourable member would be aware that the rules of the service compel the re- turned troopers to wear their uniform until such time as they are formally discharged. That is the reason why they have been obliged to offend the honourable gentleman's eye. Sir, there are many in this House who recognise the good work that these men have done, and who are not like him and some other members who fail to recognise what those men have done for the defence of New Zealand, and in showing other countries what New-Zealanders are made of. The good service they have done will stand for all time. Now, the honourable member for Nelson City made a very extraordinary speech. He was in such a state of excitement that he was continually referring to my honourable friend the member for Napier, Mr. A. L. D. Fraser, as " Mr. Napier, the member for Auck- land City "; and his speech was much on the same lines. His figures were difficult to under- stand, and what I did understand were in every case incorrect. The honourable member got very angry because I challenged his state- ment about the increases on the estimates for the year. The details of those increases have since been given. The honourable member said that the increases in salaries outside the classification was £46,000, and he took up a theatrical attitude, and challenged a Minister Mr. Hall-Jones the correctness of his figures. What do the details prove : that the increases in salaries in the

departments, apart from the classification he referred to, do not exceed £12,000. The honourable member still persisted in his statement, and I presume will do so to the present day. But, Sir, he will have an opportunity later on of pointing out where these increases are. I challenged him to give the figures at the time, but he declined to do so. Then, he got into great trouble over the question of liabilities. He was at this time dealing with the Public Works Fund. He referred on several occasions to liabilities as debts owing by the colony. The honourable gentleman said. " If the honourable gentleman had paid his debts " owing on the 31st March. which ought to have been paid -"if he had done what was honest "; but the honourable gentleman did not know what he was talking about, because the liabilities in that case are not debts, only to this extent : that some small portion of them did not come to book on that date. At the present time we have some eight or nine bridges under contract running into a good many thousands of pounds. These works are being carried out in the manufacturers' workshops; but until they start the work of erection, or do some work on the site of the bridge, they cannot claim one penny for the work done. Hence they are not a debt ; there is no debt in connection with them until some work has been done or some material has been delivered on the site. Take the case of a contract let for a post - office, to cost, say, £4,000 or £5,000. So soon as a tender has been accepted that at once becomes a liability ; but as no work has been done no money is owing and it is not a debt, and it will not become a debt until some portion of the work has been done. That is what I have had some difficulty in getting honourable members to understand. I wish the honourable member for Nelson City and some others would take lessons in book-keeping before making such rash statements to the House, because, as I have pointed out, they are liable to mislead those who have not an opportunity, as honourable members have, of acquiring information. Now, the leader of the Opposition dropped into the same mistake, and I think the honourable member for Bruce did so-he wanted to put these liabilities as public debt. Captain RUSSELL .- I certainly said it was a debt, in the case of public works. Mr. HALL-JONES .- But they are not debts. I will give another instance. We have contracts out for thousands of sleepers. They are all liabilities, but I venture to say that not one-half of them will ever become debts, because the sleepers may never be delivered ; but we have to put them down as liabilities because the offers have been accepted. We want many thousands of sleepers, and have advertised for tenders have accepted tenders ; but in many cases the sleepers will never be delivered, and so, in many cases, the liability will never become a debt, Now, the chief criticism during

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the debate has dealt with the increased expenditure and the increase of the public debt. The main items of increased expenditure have been very clearly shown on page ix. of the Financial Statement, and it is a remarkable thing that not one of these financial critics - the member for Nelson City, the member for Ashley, or the member for Riccarton-has referred to that table on page ix. Had they done so they would have seen just where we are going, and that while the expenditure is increasing, the revenue is increasing in a still greater ratio. They say the expenditure is increasing in a greater ratio than the population ; but, then, so is the revenue. Take the revenue of the Railway Department. Since the Government took that department over from the Commissioners the revenue has increased enormously, but the population has not increased in the same ratio. And where the revenue increases you must expect an increase of the expenditure. The question is, How does it work out? Take the Post and Telegraph Department, for instance : In the Post and Telegraph Department the expenditure has increased by £155,079; but the revenue has also increased by £168,512. In the Stamps Department the increased expenditure is \$4,266; but the increased revenue is \$227,159. The increased expenditure in Customs is \$632, and the increased revenue £653,655. In the Lands Department the increased expenditure is £44,951, and the increased revenue \$80,781. In the Railway Department the increased expenditure is \$427,144, and the increase in earnings \$605,535. The cost of administration of the Tax Department has

increased by £11,929, and the returns have increased £111,044. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that honourable members would not object to the expenditure increasing tenfold if they could also increase the revenue tenfold at the same ratio as has been done in the past. Then, you must take into account the increase in the number of new departments. I venture to say that if it was proposed to abolish any one of these new departments a majority of the House would object to it. Therefore, when we know that with the largely increased revenue there is no cause for anxiety, and no cause to make alarming speeches, I say we may demand that the gentlemen who made those speeches should represent the position fairly to their constituents, return their trust, and let their constituents say whether or not they approve of the course they have taken. Sir, another question that has been dealt with is that of the public debt. Some people have compared our public debt with that of the Old Country, and have referred to the smallness of the debt per head there as compared with the debt per head in this colony. But, Sir, these honourable members forget to take into account the undertakings this colony has on hand—undertakings that the Government of the Old Country does not deal with. Now, take the railways in Great Britain. They are not owned by the State. In share capital and loan and debenture stock they have cost no less a sum than £1,444,009,878. This has been spent on railways in the Old Country; and if you add that to the debt, which was in 1899 £635,640,965, you get a total of £2,079,650,843. Then, if you divide that sum by the population, estimated roundly at forty millions, it would make the debt per head in the Old Country £51 15s. But you have also to take into account what the Government do in this colony, but which is not done by the Government of the Old Country, but is intrusted to the local bodies. There are harbours, the lunatic asylums, the gaols, the school-buildings, and the police. It is true they get sums in aid, but the large proportion of the cost is borne by the local bodies themselves. If you take the cost of these departments and add it to the debt, and the cost of the railways, it will be found that the debt per head is greater than it is in this colony at the present time. And in dealing with our public debt it is only fair that we should exclude the commercial operations, such as the purchase of land for settlements. The money borrowed for that department, as shown in the Lands Statement this year, shows a profit of over £13,000, after paying interest and for all expenses. Then, Sir, Cheviot alone returned a profit of over £5,000. Now, these undertakings were not entered on by the Opposition when they were in power, and if you want to give a proper comparison between the debt at that time and at the present time you must leave out of the account these profit-earning commercial operations. What do you find if that is done? That the debt per head is less than it was in 1890. If you deduct the amount received for these commercial undertakings—advances to settlers, £2,380,000; land for settlements (including Cheviot), £2,075,566; and Consols, £459,309—you will reduce the debt by nearly five millions of money, showing that the increased debt, including that for loans to local bodies, purchase of Native lands, and similar items, during the last ten years is £6,361,031. Then, if you take the debt with those deductions and divide it by the number of the population to get the debt per head, whether the debt itself or the annual charge, you find there is a great saving to the actual taxpayers of the colony. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER.—Time is up. Mr. HASELDEN (Patca).—Sir, I wish to make a personal explanation. The Minister for Public Works misrepresented and misquoted me. I do not wish to say he did so wilfully. Now, the honourable gentleman must have known I did not refer to Canada as a whole when I said the cost of government was £6,000. I said distinctly that the Province of Ontario, in Canada, contained a population of 1,650,000, and the cost of the government of Ontario was £6,000; and if the honourable gentleman had considered for a moment he would have remembered that the population of Canada is over five millions, and therefore I could not have referred to Canada. If the honourable gentleman would listen to the speeches of members in this House, instead of getting his information from the report in the Evening Post, in which the word "Ontario" was omitted, he would be

accused me of making a misstatement with regard to the Main Trunk Railway. I said that eighteen years ago Mr. Rochfort-I was there at the time-surveyed the route, and the line has only advanced twenty-three miles during that period. Mr. SEDDON .- I rise to a point of order. I think the honourable member is now going beyond the bounds of a personal explanation. The first part was in order, but this is not. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I do not think the honourable member has yet transgressed the rules. The honourable gentleman is a new member, and therefore is, perhaps, entitled to a little latitude, but he must understand that he must confine himself to an explanation as to how he has been misrepresented. Mr. HASELDEN .- I should be very sorry to transgress the rules of the House. In the short time that I have been here I have noticed how strictly and how religiously they are observed. But the Minister for Public Works has mis- represented ine-in fact, he misrepresented the whole of my speech. I think the honourable gentleman ought to have been a little more generous than he was, seeing that I stopped a gap and gave him a chance to air his elo- quence. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable member is now travelling beyond a personal explanation. Mr. HASELDEN .- There is another point with respect to which the honourable gentle man has misrepresented me. He said that if I could produce a co-operative worker who has been receiving £1 a day he would be prepared to put him in a glass case and exhibit him in the lobby. I wish to state to the House that I have been informed by a man employed on these works that he has earned from 10s. to £1 a day, and if the honourable gentleman will agree to pay his expenses I shall be glad to ask him to come to Wellington. Now, this man, though a co-operative labourer, is one of Nature's gentle- men, and I do not believe he would tell a lie. Then, the honourable member said that I stated that the Government had added to the re- venue £6,000,000. I said that the Government had extorted from the settlers of this country £6,000,000 of taxation. I may say that I rose to speak without any notes, and I notice that most honourable members who have addressed the House during this debate have had notes enough for half a dozen speeches. 'Then, in regard to the average wages of co-operative workers, I may state that I find that the average wage in Westland is 12s. 4d a day. I cannot tell the figures for the North Island, but if that is the average some must make over #1 a day. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable member is now going beyond a personal ex- planation. Mr. HALL-JONES. - Perhaps I may be per- mitted to put myself right. As regards the honourable member's reference to Ontario and Canada, I find that he has got "Ontario, Canada," in his speech in Hausard. The copy of Hansard is out to-night, and the honourable Mr. Haselden read differently from what they were as uttered by the honourable member. The honourable member was wrong in his statement with re- spect to the cost of the government in that province, because, according to " Whitaker's Almanac," the cost of the government of the Province of Ontario is not £6,440, as stated, but £8,450, as against \$8,900 for Ministers' salaries in New Zealand ; and it costs nearly \$60,000 for Ministers' salaries, taking the whole of Canada. With respect to his statement about the increase in taxation, I took down his words at the time. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - The Hon. the Minister must know that when an honourable member says he said so and-so his statement must be accepted. Mr. HALL-JONES .- I may perhaps give my reasons for coming to a different conclusion. I simply say I understood him to say that taxa- tion had "been increased," and I see that his Hansard speech has been altered to " increased to." Mr. MONK (Waitemata). - Mr. Speaker, never have I risen with so much reluctance as I do to speak on this occasion. In the first part of the debate I did not intend to speak at all, and made up my mind not to do so. I thought if three or four of some of the most able men on either side spoke they would be quite sufficient to elucidate the Financial State- ment. But since then the speeches have gone on, and I believe much that has been said upon this Financial Statement will be beneficial to the country, and I think that the credit will be rather on the side of those whom members are pleased to call the Opposition. And my reluct- ance to speak is partly due to this: I consider that their statements have not been answered. Was the statement made by the honourable member for Franklin answered as it ought to have been

answered? Were the noisy gibes-if I may use the term without disrespect-in the strident tones uttered by the Postmaster-General worthy of the elaborate and painstaking statements of the position of the country which were made by the honourable member for Frankhn and the honourable member for Bruce ? I think not. And also his remark in reply to the plea for economy made by the honourable member for Franklin, where he asked him whether he was willing to forego expenditure in his electorate : Could anything be more unworthy of a Minister who is supposed to be the custodian of the common fund, the father of the commonwealth. to distribute to all alike equally on their claims ? I speak for economy, and I wish to have economy, but I should be wanting in my duty to my constituents if I did not wish them to have a fair share of the revenue which they themselves contribute. I say the question we want answered by the Colonial Treasurer is whether there was a misstatement made on the part of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) when he said your appropriations had increased in ten years by £1,400,000. And we claim that £400,000 of increase for the appropriations for the departmental ex-

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We do not say that there would have been the returned to do their duty and to criticize every measure that was placed before them. Why, same number of departments that we have now. We consider you have been increasing depart- Sir, the speech made by the Minister for Public Works was in its general expression a sort of statements unnecessarily, and we consider that the tirade that should be avoided by a Minister- province of a careful Government-a Government that is administering for a borrowing a tirade upon certain members who had dared to people, that are piling up their public debt -- is express themselves in a manner which he did not to use with scrupulous care, with prudence and approve. fidelity, the money they have received through revenue and borrowing They are not moneys but it was upon something more than figures. to be wasted ; and to say that we want to stint the Civil Service, and that we want to scant There was something which should be beneath the dignity of a gentleman occupying a seat in their remuneration, was pure nonsense. We a Cabinet. And let me tell honourable gentle- want good public servants, and we want them men, as regards the speech made by the honour- to be amply paid. But there can be no danger of any lack of numbers in the Civil Service. No able member for Napier the other evening, that one knows better than the Postmaster-General it impressed my mind in this manner: that that the portals of the Civil Service are crowded the characteristic of a modern Liberal, if a Go- with applicants, and the difficulty is to find vernment supporter, should be somewhat as follows : He should not be allowed to think. them places. And why are they so crowding Because the remuneration is al- the service ? If he begins to think upon any previous state- ments he has made he may feel it his duty to ready better than that obtained in the ordinary alter them, and that will lead him into trouble. walks of life. Why do not the honourable In party politics he should never be a free man members answer these questions? We want the Civil Service to be well paid ; but we to think, nor be at liberty to alter his opinion, nor should he ever admit that he has suffered want good men, and only just a sufficient errors of judgment. He should also feel that if number to perform the duties of the country, he alters his opinion he must not acknowledge because we want all the surplus money, being a young country, so to speak, in making a it. If he finds he is wrong he must stick to it, and prefer to be a living sham rather than an new home, and to be spent, as it ought upright man. Further than that, he should to be spent, without waste or frivolity. Now, prefer to be a mute tool rather than a free another matter that strikes me as having been particularly unfair is the censure that has agent ; and if his party want his help in speech he must be content to say anything that they been inflicted upon certain honourable mem- wish, though it may be contrary to his belief. bers whom they are pleased to term traitors to I wish honourable gentlemen to think of it- their own party. I object to that term. Every to think to what degradation politics have come honourable member should try to speak what he believes to be true. I consider that any when a member must think more of his party and of self than of his country, and must hand party is wrong in its principles

that denies over his conscience and his brains to the order- freedom of thought and criticism whenever they feel called upon to do so, and no one ings of the Premier, whoever he may be. Is should be maligned because his criticism is this party government? Is this what party adverse. What I claim is that we sitting on government has come to in New Zealand ? If so, I shall expect some member of the Ministry this side of the House up till a certain time -or possibly the honourable member for Napier occupied an official position as an Opposition ; -as a sequel to this opinion, to come down but we renounced that position, believing that with a little Bill, and the preamble will be it was in the interests of the country that we something like this : " Whereas the represen- desire to serve that every member should be at tatives of the great Liberal party of New Zea- liberty to speak as his conscience dictated, and land, when in Parliament assembled, have at that he should unrestrainedly criticize all times to vote for and promote measures in matters relating to the public welfare. But, which they have no personal belief, and have when we abrogated our position as a party, do to support that which they believe to be con- not think we abandoned our allegiance to what trary to natural laws and in violation of the is right. We do not abandon our allegiance to great Christian principle ' Do unto others as ve principles. We believe still that, although men would that they should do unto you': Be it call themselves Liberal, modern Liberalism may therefore enacted that instead of a living per- be the reverse of what it was when we first en- son being placed in the ignominious position of tered the political school. But we believe that, going into the lobby against his convictions, and although dictionaries may alter and though the to relieve such person of qualms of conscience meaning of words may change, righteousness and pangs of remorse, members of the Govern- never changes and truth is eternal. And we have ment party shall be represented by a section of flung the responsibility of criticizing the state- their profile, to commence at the eyebrows, ments that are made by the Government upon including the nose, down to the lower portion of their supporters, because the country considered the upper lip. As the upper part, or intellect, it was not necessary to have an effective official is excluded, it follows as a matter of course Opposition-that the electors having returned in that no mouth for expression is required. overwhelming numbers the men in whom they The profile shall be a little tattooed, so that it have confidence as representing certain political Mr. HALL-JONES .- Only as to figures. Mr. MONK .- Quite right, upon their figures ;

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to be labelled, for instance, as ' A L.D., Napier,' instead of 'The Hon. Mr. A. L. D. Fraser, the representative of Napier.' And be it enacted that all these profiles shall be strung on a string, marked 'For the use of the Premier on divisions, and on such occasions he shall hand them over to Mr. Otterson to count for the Speaker." I have no doubt honourable members will feel horrified at the picture, but I say it is a reasonable burlesque of the facts as they now exist in the House, with regard to the speeches inflicted on the Governmen supporters who have criticized the Ministerial Statement. If I were a Minister on those benches I should feel glad to have such criticisms - the more the better ; and if I had sound principles at heart and a patriotic loyalty to the welfare of the colony, the more they rubbed it the brighter it would shine. It is their weakness that causes those honourable gentlemen to dread this criti- cism, which I desire shall be the rule of this House instead of the exception. Now I shall take a glance at the Financial Statement. Hon. MEMBERS .- Hear, hear. Mr. MONK .- Probably I shall not address myself to it in the form that honourable mem- bers expect, for I feel myself in this position : I do not like to repeat ; I like to contribute my mite in this debate in different form to that adopted by other members. That shall be my effort ; and I am going to address myself in any remarks I may make on the Budget from the point of my own perceptions; and any language I may state as having emanated from the Pre- mier will be only my own impressions of the language he used. He can accept or ignore them as he pleases. We noticed when this Financial Statement was being prepared the worn look on the Premier's face, and we had some regret for him. I like as I sit on this seat to scan the faces around me and form my opinion on what is

taking place in their in- most thoughts. I dare say honourable members will have read some books in which the lan- guage of the writer is ambiguous or mysterious, and they have pondered over it to try to find out the meaning of the author. I have done so with this Statement. I pondered over it, and tried to find the purpose lurking in the inner soul of its author. I saw him come out in the afternoon before he delivered it. He had a smile on his face, and I knew the Financial State- ment was finished and we were to have it that evening. And as I have it now before me I can fancy that just before he came into this Chamber to deliver it -in that inner sound - proof chamber of his, from which no secrets are supposed to escape -I can fancy him, Sir, lifting up the Budget with a smile of approbation, and soliloquising in compli- mentary language somewhat like this: " Tis finished, my latest achievement in the art of writing a great deal from which as little in- formation as possible can be obtained. I have no doubt there are those in opposition to me who will try to introduce sentiments known as ' public ethics' into the discussion on the Financial Statement. What nonsense. What Mr. Monk are prosperous and things are running smoothly as a marriage-bell? Besides, do I myself believe in ethics? See how I have succeeded, and my dearest friends never accused me of feeling the pressure or force of ethics ; and yet I am certain that there are very few qualities essential to this modern Liberalism of which I am not personally possessed. Look on this Statement : that is proof of it. Not one of those who will cavil at this Statement to-morrow can produce one like it. Of course, they will talk about public honesty. Let them talk. Until the bubble bursts there is an aureation in this document that will influence the public more than all their speeches, and when I have read it to-night members will be so dazzled that they will have a difficulty in finding their way to their lodgings. I have the opinion that the Financial Statement is the one great effort on which the decorative art of a Liberal Premier can lavish its skill with the utmost advantage to the artist. Of course, in a great policy like mine there are necessarily pills that are difficult to swallow, but my skill is to sugar-coat them over to the largest dimensions that the public can swallow, and they are so intoxicated with my financial Bac- chanalia and the millions I have borrowed and the manner in which I have gulled them that they do not know where they are, and are ready to swallow anything I place before them if I only call it 'Liberal.' How it does catch the people to appeal to the traditions of Liberalism -but, thank the Lord, the majority do not know the difference between the spurious and the genuine article. Oh, what a blessed word this word 'Liberalism' is, and what luck is mine to light on such a tide of times that beneath the agis of the word 'Liberal ' I can do almost anything and everything that is illiberal. Of course, there are some that I cannot beguile, no matter what I place before them. They will talk about principles: so do I talk about principles. They are capital show words. I use them on Sundays when I am laying the foundation-stones of churches, and doing a little saintly simulation for the purpose of tickling the groundlings, by stirring up the clergy, and showing how they should permeate the young and rising generation with religions principles, how the parson should take them in the afternoon when they are done with school. When the young things have had pumped into them all that the teacher can jamb, then the clergy should take them for half an hour and give them easy lessons on the doctrines of the Trinity and original sin. But my opponents want their principles for every. day wear. Rubbish ! My supporters do not want principles, they want money that they may not have earned, and departments that are not needed. My opponents are a minority-a submerged minority. My love is for majorities. I am a great political merchant -a wholesale dealer in noses. It is a special business, and I have a special capacity and adaptation for it ; and, besides, I have 50 attuned the thoughts of the public in accord with criminal leanings, induced by some

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of my laws, that it is not for persons with It was unworthy, I say, of the honourable principles to rival me in my business." member for Ashburton, when all other classes Does the Premier think I am not right-that I of the commonwealth are forming themselves have not correctly touched his innermost soul ? into unions, to discourage their action. Have I am not going to apologize for it, though I pity they no interests to

protect? Have they no the Premier. I believe, if I could go further into aspirations that need to be encouraged? Are the Premier's soul, I would find that he now there no influences taking place which are feels he is urged on by a Frankenstein he detrimental to their welfare that he should try wishes he had not got behind him, and that to discourage the movement? Himself a farmer, this is urging him on to a serious brink, and the he knows better, and with the skill he possesses only salvation for himself and for the country he should use it on their behalf. If in any respect is for him to turn straight round and put his they are astray or wrong in their conceptions, let foot down; and if he does he will find us his him apply all the skill which he possesses him- supporters, and even half of those who are his self and try to guide them right, feeling that supporters now will back him up. Let me their aspirations are to be commended, inas- refer to a passage in the Financial Statement much as it is the order in New Zealand that of which we heartily approve. No one who has all avocations should be formed into unions. hewn a home out of the forest or the swamp The Premier has noticed how that has hap- but must be gratified by the promise he has pened in the country, which he did not expect. made-and which conception he has taken from He noticed that the agricultural classes all over the Farmers' Union-to allow such persons a the colony have heard and felt the jubilant period of grace during which they shall not be sounds of urban unionism. The Labour Bureau liable to the claims of the State landlord. And was never intended to afford them any benefit, I cannot but also admire, Mr. Speaker, the man- or to have any regard for their welfare, or to help ner in which he has gathered around him for them at all. Its policy was the unrestrained favours the family created by his self-con- exploitation of their interests, and to hand them over to the control of urban guilds guided stituted paternity. Of course, it is from their own contributions that he awards his dona- by the noisy drones and the scheming faddists tions; but each one is spurred on by the of the city hive. But there must be something expectation of receiving more than he has wonderful about this word "union." And so contributed, even at the expense of some other there is, for it betokens strength, it betokens member of the communal brotherhood. Now, might, it betokens the purpose of united units; Sir, another feature which we cannot but ad- and, if the purposes of union are confined to mire in the Premier is his steadfast gaze on their legitimate interests; if it is controlled by every movement of the political barometer. He the feeling of the equal rights of every citizen has the master's eye for every change of social in the community, and refrains from oppres- weather. It puts me very much in mind of sion and tyranny; if it does not attempt to what, I dare say, some honourable members interfere with the privileges, yea, the inborn have experienced who live near the sea-coast. rights, of every child in the commonwealth; They may have noticed those times when the if the intention is to defend itself against atmosphere was perfectly calm. Its aspect may the greed of capital that may be in bad have been touched with leaden hues or shades of hands-and there are bad hands; if it is to steely grey, but all was calm and tranquil as a protect from injury and wrongdoing, then its summer's day, save a lingering hollow moan aspirations are noble and we wish it success. that would follow the thud of the waves as they There must be some magic in the word flung themselves on the ocean's beach; but the "union," for we have all noticed how, with practised ear could detect in those sounds the wonderful spontaneity, it has flashed forth the herald's voice of a coming storm. And, just so, witching abracadabra of the farmers' vocabulary, the Premier's trained ear can detect in the and has had the power to transform the Premier scarcely audible sigh of the Farmers' Union the from an indifferent spectator into an ardent widespread influence of a coming power he lover, and now he offers them the olive-branch must not ignore. I do regret, Mr. Speaker, of peace, clustered round with hollow blooms that the Right Hon. the Premier made use of fresh gathered from the conservatories of Sed- donia. And why should he do it? Has not the the honourable member for Ashburton. Mr. MCLACHLAN.- No. honourable member for Geraldine, Mr. Flatman, Mr. MONK.- Well, then, let me say that the and the representative of Pahiatua, and the re- honourable member for Ashburton yesterday presentative of Masterton assured him that it placed himself, in my estimation, in an

ignoble is non-political? Is it non-political that the position. No man knows better than the farmers urge on the Premier that they are contributing so much revenue, and that, instead member for Ashburton that for years the Legislature of this country and the Government have of receiving from the consolidated revenue in been trying to induce every class of the community to aid of public works \$500,000, they should be getting 1800,000 or \$900,000? Is it political monweath to form themselves into unions, for them to urge on the Premier that loans must except those who pay wages, and the toiling be contracted grudgingly, and the money be farmers. Mr. MCLACHLAN .- The poor farmers. spent with most scrupulous care and professional Mr. MONK .- Yes, "the poor farmers." No skill to make it produce the utmost possible benefit ? Is it political for the farmer to pathematter how small their remuneration, for them tically urge on the Premier that their homes legislation has had no relish of salvation in it.

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be extricated from the grip of the foreign bondholder ? Is it political to urge upon the Premier that he should have some consideration for those natural laws belonging to politics, as the farmer has for those under which he produces his crops? Is it political for them to urge that we should live in higher aims, and have a patriotic concern for the welfare of the national life that will continue after their own span has ceased to mingle with its existence ? I know that these are new strains to our ears. For years we have been so unused to them that we have come to regard them as no part of politics, and to think that they have no connection with the administration of the country. Will the Hon. the Premier tell us that they are non-political ? No man knows better than the Premier that they are political. No man knows better than himself that it is a ghastly farce to say they are not political, and no man can tell us better than the Right Hon. the Premier that politics are as inseparable from our being as the air we breathe ; and he can tell us, further, that the basic principles upon which sound politics and good administration rest are as definite and scientific as the laws that govern mathematics. And that is what we claim on this side 8.30. of the House. We are not going to descend to any personalities. Our appeal is in the name of those principles, and in their recognition only can the Government of a country be right. Then, those henchmen of the Premier's will tell him that the union is non-party ; but that is more absurd still, to ignore that mysterious quality, good versus bad, that constitutes the alternating tug-of-war that we realise in our own individual as well as commercial life. The Premier knows that the principle which should be adopted by his Cabinet as well as by every member of this House is to have less concern as to whether we belong to the submerged minority, but rather as to whether we belong to that may-be' small band of brave men that will loyally adhere to truth and right for its own sake, unsuborned by the attractions with which the crowded ranks of opportunism can entice. Now, let me tell the Premier, if he is going to win the farmers-and he can do so-it must be by something more tangible and businesslike than talking about sending cargoes of our produce to the Cape and bringing back huge steamers with clean holds, and carrying only sufficient coal for the return voyage. the farmers want is enterprise in which the Premier will be willing to embark his own money. Sir, I think the Premier got a lesson when he and Freyberg undertook to teach the timber merchants how to trade in lumber, and to enhance the value of the woods of New Zealand. You know how the unfortunate taxpayers' money was lost over that business. It did not come out of his pocket, only as a taxpayer. There are certain principles in economies that cannot be ignored, and it is certainly not the province of statesmen to interfere with the individual enterprise that is already well stimulated. Mr. Monk ever thought that, though we rightly grumble at our present freights for our frozen mutton, butter, cheese, and wool, there is some difficulty at the present time in getting bottoms for our produce ? That I admit. But has the Premier ever thought what we should have to pay for the export of those articles were it not for the large amount of merchandise that comes to us as return cargo? In this way we get cheaper rates. Does the Premier think that he is going to win the farmer by the paltry gift of a few doubtful stallions that he wishes to pose on at the cost of the taxpayer ? Does he think that private enterprise will coddle

down cheek by jowl with his Civil servants, who, so long as their salaries are secure, never feel that competitive emulation which quickens the enthusiasm of private enterprise. Does he think that he is going to successfully compete against the private individual in this way? Does he think that he will be able to train bulls without horns, and get cows to voluntarily pour their milk into buckets whilst waiting for the farmers to get up at the same time in the morning as the dwellers in the city? Does he think that his Poultry Department will be able to entice men from his co-operative works at half their present wages to pluck cocks and hens and spring chickens, and to twitch the pin-feathers out of the breasts of ducklings! Not at all. They will not come away while we have such extravagant molly-coddling of the people of New Zealand. And the mothers and daughters of the farmers have already too much to do; theirs is already the life of unceasing assiduity, and they have no spare moments for the claims of cottage industry. Then, with regard to oats: I admit the demand of the Home authorities for big steamers no doubt has lessened the supply of those vessels, and bottoms have been somewhat scarce. But if cargoes of oats have been prevented from going away it was on account of the margin required between the pittance paid to the producer and the price invoiced to the Imperial Government and the Barcelona buyer. The difficulty has not been the scarcity of steamers, but the margin necessary to satisfy the greed of the agents. The policy of the statesman for New Zealand is that which will rigidly endeavour to lessen the cost of the local transit of the farmers' produce, not interfering with anything beyond the littorai of New Zealand, and by that means to swell its volume and bring to the aid of the What Farmers' Union the opportunity which a wider competition will afford, and enable it to lessen the price we will have to pay for the transmission of our produce. That is the way to make the country prosperous, and is the province of true statesmanship—let me tell the Premier that in his own interest. And outside the laudable purpose of helping the farmer it is to the interest of the Government to do this, on the principle of nourishing the goose that lays the golden egg. That is the way that other Governments have made their people prosperous. That is the way, Sir, in which we may bring

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prosperity to this country, and in which we may throng our wharves with a swelling stream of exports and imports. You will also make the city a hive of prosperity and happiness, and do spent in defence. I may state, however, that more for it by such a policy than by all that the Arbitration Courts can contrive. Then, when you have settled people on the soil, the first care should be to give them the opportunity by roads to be prosperous. You cannot have any citizen in the country, any member of the Commonwealth, unsuccessful but what it is a loss to the State. And here I take exception to the statement made by the Minister of Mines the other day, when, in response to my ejaculation that the cost of the gold we mine is twice that of its value per ounce, he replied that it was no loss to the country, and that if a man paid £100 a week and received only \$30 in return the State was not the poorer. The money, he said, would be used in buying goods and other necessary articles. Never was anything more fallacious uttered by the lips of man. If there is any truth in that, then the more bankrupts you have in the country the better. The principle of good government is, if you possibly can, to take care that no man's labour is unprofitably requited, and that he is receiving benefit out of it. No man is fit to administer the affairs of New Zealand unless he bears this fact in mind: that our necessities are such that it is wrong of him to unnecessarily spend a single pound in fetes, shows, photographs, journals, or the running of steamers at a great cost. For instance, there is £1,150 for one trip of the "Tutanekai." That money would have been much better spent on roads than in enabling the Premier to poke his nose, so to speak, into business that has brought us into considerable obloquy. It would have been much better to have spent that money on necessary improvements, which the country cannot do without. The farmers are now struggling with impassable roads. Do those honourable gentlemen think they will be content to join in paying high rates of taxation, and also interest upon our public loans, that suffer partial waste by Ministerial pets and co-operative

works that are not realising more than 75 per cent. of the market value of the money they are costing ? Now, with regard to the purchase of improved estates, I have no objection to the purchase of improved estates under proper conditions-which do not exist now when land is boomed and Government have large quantities of Crown lands in their possession. The Minister of Lands has a single session block now in the course of preparation for occupation. It has only cost a few shillings per acre, and there will be the cost of roading and survey, and it will do more for the common-wealth than all the speculations they have made in the purchase of the improved estates. The 'first day's work the settler does on such land will not only enrich himself, but will add to the country's wealth. Do members know that in the purchase of these improved estates the rich, in land-tax, have escaped contribution to revenue to the extent of £250,000, and that the immunity of the Advances to Settlers mortgagees from taxation is £12,500 a year loss to revenue. Then, I am against the very large amount that is proposed to be I am not against putting ourselves in the best state of preparedness against an enemy. I am one of those who believe that the time will come when the British race will perhaps have to pass through a severer struggle in the defence of their liberty and in the maintenance of their prestige than ever they have before. And when I note the bitterness and envy shown to us by other nations, and the world-wide militancy now prevailing, it makes me feel inexpressibly grave. God of the nations give to our chiefs wisdom ! Never again may our guns be outranged, or our momentous arrangements striated with confusion ; but I hope that, whenever the time comes that we shall have to defend ourselves, we shall be in a state of sufficient preparedness, and will take our fair share in the defence of the Empire. But not by that grandiosing that is proposed. Bring our children up as far as possible while in the public schools so that they may be the most useful material to form into Volunteer corps, who will at their own instance be the nucleus of our defence, while the non-enthusiastic will be well advanced for Militia purposes. What should be done is to encourage Volunteering and rifle clubs, and make the population of New Zealand, so far as we possibly can, to be good marksmen by cheap ammunition, cheap rifles, and prizes. That has been proved beyond doubt to be the essence of the defence of a country of such irregular topography as the people of New Zealand will be called upon to defend, should it ever be their misfortune to have to do so. Then, again, a remark has been made about "our boys." Well, I think something more could have been said about our boys, for while I am not one of those who think that without exception there have been no failures-there have been-still, I feel proud of the achievements of our boys, and I feel sometimes as if there was a purpose of Providence in that movement, because these contingents, composed of contributions from the colonies, have had the effect of swerving some of the great currents in the Empire's life. Why, the contributions of colonial youth have, so to speak, as with the privileged license allowed to grandchildren, romped through the punctilious etiquette and reserve which is a tradition of the British Cabinet. They have been surprised at the doings of our colonial boys. Even the English critics have confessed that they can fight as well as their fathers, and they have actually hustled the professional knowledge and traditions of the Horse Guards. They have been surprised at their aptitude and relish for fighting. Their free life and habits have fitted them best to fight the Boers with their own tactics, and the consequence is that the colonial being of the Empire has been fairly aureated with lavish expressions of appreciation from the Mother-country and encomiums from her military chiefs. But who dared to think that they would do less than

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Even our late venerated Queen, when the feebleness of approaching dissolution was stealing over her life, invited the invalids of the colonial contingents to come before her, and she personally thanked them for the services they had rendered to the Empire, and she praised them for it. By these matters I merely wish to remind the House that they are forming for us, so to speak, a new link betwixt the colonies and the Mother-country. What it will come to I cannot tell ; but I have this feeling, Mr. Speaker : that the

ultimate fruit and crowning reward of this movement will be to draw closer the relationships between the colonies and the Mother - country. No doubt, close as these relations now are, to be enduring, to be ever-lasting, they will have to be drawn still closer than they are at present ; and I believe that the Mother-country and the colonies will yet meet together, and they will settle what are to be the permanent arrangements that shall be maintained between the parent State and her colonies. It is now an admitted axiom that in the contrivances of policies for the British colonies contribution to revenue or taxation must be followed by representation ; and as the colonies have donated large sums of money, to say nothing about the priceless treasure of human life, they must eventually be re- presented in matters of world-wide moment to their welfare. And I make no claim to any special foresight in auguring that ere long a great Imperial Council will be formed, meeting biennially or every few years in order to discuss and determine affairs of Imperial interest. And the foremost men of the Old Country will be there, grouped beneath the folds of the great flag of our race ; and representatives of all the self-governing colonies will be there, seated beneath the flags of their respective countries; and the prize which the best citizens of New Zealand will covet, and the blue ribbon in the gift of her electors, will be to represent her in that august assembly, canopied by the blue flag that waves over this building-the blue flag with the badge of the Southern Cross. I must say a word or two now with regard to the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds). It seems to be a misfortune to the rural populations, right up from the time of Solon to the present day, that there should always be some representatives of urban communities knowing least about the interests of agriculturists, who will assume a divine mission to know more about their business than they know themselves. Well, Sir, when he was speaking I ejaculated my desire for more information and more light. There was a perfect jumble of figures, but not the information I required. As I heard him enumerate millions of acres and millions of pounds I thought to myself, " Does he know anything about the large amount of value there is in land on which 1 per cent. is not obtained over and above the cost of working the homestead ?" And as I listened to the honourable gentleman's freedom of speech, and his unhesitating confidence- Mr. Monk with the evidence of medical experts, who assert that coruscated liberty of diction and very serious mental derangement may be closely associated. Now, Sir, just for a moment or two-it will be said to be pessimism, of course -let me talk about the possibilities that may happen. No, it is not pessimism. We are only giving expression to that which presents itself to our perceptive faculties; and if what we think of and feel as a possibility that may happen to us does not come about we are no poorer, but if it does we are surely in a better position to cushion the touch of depression and minimise its evil effects. It is only right that we should think of the possibilities which are eventuating in other countries. If honour- able members who talk about pessimism would think about Canada, and consider what rapid strides she is making in butter-manufacture -more than we are making ourselves-they might alter their tone. Do they think of the Province of Winnipeg, which has an area of 106,000 square miles, a few more than we have in New Zealand, but with a great deal more fertile land-land so fertile that it produces crops of 50 per cent. more to the acre than ours, rich as it is. And there is only a population of sixty-hve thousand in that province. You may tell me her climate is rigorous. It has certainly more rigour than ours, but there are a great many attractions in it, and I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I would sooner place myself in the most rigorous climate and be free than I would be a slave environed by beauty, as the trend is here. Then, Sir, is not Russia to be noted ? Russia has one little patch, compared with her vast extent of nine million acres, of black soil, and she is crowding it with Danish experts. Two million pounds worth of butter was produced there last year, and she expects four million pounds' worth this year ; and if the butter production of the population of Russia, who work for wages we would not dream of enduring, realises her expectations it will be a gospel of blessing and happiness to them. They are bringing their butter even from Siberia, claiming that its resources are limitless; and I tell you that this production of butter in Russia will be something to be reckoned with. Then, Australia will increase her production. Then,

too, little Hol- land has just started the undertaking of re- claiming 500,000 acres from the Zuyder Zce, and when she reclaims it you may depend that she will not State-nationalise it, but will sell it immediately to freeholders ; and all that area of land will be converted into smiling home- steads, and that will be something that we will have to compete with. Then, there is our own expert, Mr. Reynolds, who has helped so much to develop the butter industry of New Zealand ; he has left us and gone to the Argentine, be- cause he thinks he can do better there. He certainly will help them to develop their dairv- ing industry. This is not pessimism, Sir, but a warning to honourable gentlemen to act as the prudent, thrifty statesmen we need for a country like ours should act. I should like

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photograph, and one is to be marked with the am glad to find that the penny postage has official stamp of the Registrar and a number, been a success. It has been a colonial success, but I still adhere to the opinion expressed which is to be the roll-number of the applicant, that the Postmaster-General went too fast in and given back to the elector, while the other is applying it to oversea mails. And I express to be kept by the Registrar for reference if at any time fraud should be suspected. When elections my most sincere regret that he has put that figure on the penny stamp. Is it the figure of take place the photograph of the elector is to be sent, under registered cover-record of which some courtesan in the street ? Is it the figure of an Aspasia, who is the embodiment of evil will be kept by the Postmaster-to the Return. and the genius of ruin wherever she goes? Did ing Officer, to be opened by him on the day of election before the scrutineers appointed by the I not ask him to have the profile of our late candidates. No one but members of the family illustrious Queen ? We did not know her end was so near; but had he put her head on the may apply to a Postmaster for an electoral right to be registered for transmission to the Return- stamp, or represented her as seated on the ing Officer, and it shall be deemed an offence throne with an overflowing cornucopia on her lap held by one hand, and with the other offer- under the Corrupt Practices Act for any person to canvass for or collect electoral rights for ing the penny post to our planet. it would have been a memorable figure, which would have transmission to a Returning Officer. I will put lasted for all time, and never would be forgotten. 9.0. Everybody knows her figure; no living person of the British race would ever forget it, and it afford facilities or has an aspiration for a suc- would have been a familiar form in every post- cessful election system for the outside country districts-and not only country districts, but for office in the world : it would have been an enduring laurel on the brow of the Postmaster- everywhere-he may find it in this suggestion General. He did not do it. that I now record. Sir J. G. WARD .- England herself did not Mr. COLLINS (Christchurch City). - Like do it. the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, Mr. MONK .- The parent can do as she likes ; I too, owing to somewhat indifferent health, but the children should feel a pride in their have had to refrain from speaking during the ancestry, and do everything possible to foster course of this debate, and I am quite sure that it. I do not believe in a State coal-mine. Let honourable members will agree that at this them try a little more of this socialistic busi- stage of the debate I will be consulting both ness and they will find that they will have to the wishes of the House as I am sure I will be pay more for coal than they do now ; these consulting my own physical interests if I do not men will become the masters of the Govern- attempt anything like a lengthy speech. More- ment, just as the co-operative service is at the over, everything has been said that can well be present time. And talking about Cook Islands said on the Financial Statement that has been as "Greater New Zealand " is pure bosh-un- submitted to this House, and I feel it will be mitigated bosh. I want the British flag to trespassing unduly on the patience and good- wave on every unclaimed nugget of land in nature of the House if I were to go once again the world. But the idea of talking in that over the ground that has been so well and way about our connection with those islands ! thoroughly threshed out. I have listened to I only wish they had put Mr. Percy Smith on this debate during the last eight or nine days Rarotonga at the first. What was wanted was with anything but jubilant feelings, inasmuch some man that

could exercise an elevating as I have had to recognise the fact that the influence on the minds of the natives, and strongest adverse criticisms have come from whose blameless life would lead them to better members on the side of the House to which I methods of living. There was a point in which belong. But I cannot follow in the wake of the Premier might have been successful. I am some honourable members, who, from their own sorry my time is up and I must close, but I initiative or from the fact that they were care. shall claim the indulgence of the House for the fully schooled to perform the part they took on two or three minutes left me to place on themselves to play-I say I cannot follow them record a proposition I have for electoral rights. in abusing those who have assumed a posi- As I have made several political suggestions tion which, I think, is scarcely justified or which afterwards the Government have brought warranted by the financial position of the into vogue, but in which, like the penny post- colony. I think in the main they have the age, I have been denied any credit, I now take right to be credited with an honesty and sin- the liberty of placing on record my appeal cerity of conviction in the utterance of their to the Government for electoral rights to be criticism ; and what I resent is that, when a granted for the convenience of women and member on this side of the House ventures to men living in the country. The Premier has give vent to any opinion adversely criticizing objected to give such relief, on the plea that it the proposals or administration of the Govern- will facilitate corruption ; but it will come, and, ment, the Government find it quite an easy instead of evil, it will improve the quality of matter to get member after member who is election results. The method will be simple : quite willing to rise in his seat in the House Every person desiring electoral rights shall for the express purpose of pouring out some- provide two photographs precisely alike, 3 in. times most unwarrantable, most unseemly, and by 2 in. in dimension ; and the signature of the | most undignified abuse on those who have had that on record as an outline of a method that, if the Premier wishes to

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honourable gentlemen who have spoken ad- versely of the financial position of the colony, but I am bound to credit them with sincerity of purpose. But, Sir, what else can we expect ? Only a short time ago the last speaker but one indulged in just such observations and criti- cisms as have been indulged in by the rank and I refer to the Hon. Mr. file of the House. Hall . Jones, Minister for Public Works. It must have been surprising to honourable mem- bers that the Minister for Public Works, of all Ministers on the Treasury benches, should be the Minister to so soundly rate honourable members on this side of the House for their Indeed, Sir, he not only adverse criticism. did that, but he indulged in extremely undig- nified criticism of honourable members, and many of his remarks were, I think, of an unwarrantable and unseemly character. And yet what Minister is there upon the Trea- sury benches who has furnished a more striking example for honourable members to follow in the very direction he now condemns? I will ask honourable members just for a moment to go back with me to the year 1895. In that year the present Minister for Public Works (the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones) was a private member in the House. It was the year before he was raised to Cabinet rank, and that year, Sir, he delivered his last speech as a private member on the Financial Statement. I remember that speech very well indeed. While the honourable mem- ber was speaking just now, and castigating other members for freely criticizing the Finan- cial Statement, my mind instantly flew back to the year 1895, when from his place there on the floor of the House he stood and delivered the following statement. He said,- "Sir, I think the marked feature in this debate has been the outspoken criticism indulged in by Government supporters. I do not know that this is to be regretted, because I do not think those supporters of the Government who criticized, in many cases severely, the proposals contained in the Budget did so with the idea of turning the Government off those benches, but rather to keep them in the right path. They considered it to be their duty to their con- stituents and to the country to make the remarks they made, and I am glad to see the Government have taken those remarks in good part. It seems almost a waste of time to go into the finances, seeing they have been dealt with by

some of the ablest financiers of the House. But it seems to me we have actually no surplus at all. If we take the actual departmental earnings for the year, and compare them with the actual departmental expenditure, I fail to see that we have a surplus at all. On the contrary, we find a deficiency of about £230,000." Now, I want honourable gentlemen to note that when the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones was a private member fearless criticism, honest criticism, was to be commended. Before the honourable gentleman was in the Ministry the Government did not resent strong criticism, and the honourable gentleman had to congratulate the Government in 1895. Sir, at that time the Government claimed to have a substantial surplus. The honourable gentleman denied the existence of a surplus. That is exactly what those honourable members have been doing during this debate, and which the honourable gentleman has condemned to-night. I myself agree with the honourable gentleman that we have a surplus, and I believe there is absolutely no fault to find with the consolidated revenue of the colony. I am not one of those pessimists who believe that we are rapidly drifting to disaster. I view the position with equanimity and with a considerable amount of pleasure. I believe those honourable gentlemen have mistaken the position; but surely they can be credited with honesty in their criticism. And if they are mistaken, Sir, whose fault is it that this debate took the turn it did? Whose fault was it that speaker after speaker followed in the same strain? I undertake to say that if the Minister for Railways had delivered the speech he delivered yesterday in the early period of the debate half of those speeches complained of would never have been delivered. He would have been able to have placed the position before members in such a manner-as he did-that those speeches would not have been delivered in the manner they were. I, for one, say again that those honourable gentlemen have made a mistake. I believe there never was a time-in fact, I am sure of it-when the country was in a better financial position than it is now. If the indebtedness of the country is heavy, there never was a time when the public wealth was so great, or the private wealth was so great, or when the wages earned by the workers were so high. There never was a time when the standard of comfort was higher, when the prosperity of the country was more assured, than it is at the present time. If that is so, what reason is there for entertaining these pessimistic views? It seems to me there are no such parties as Liberal and Conservative. We are optimists and pessimists now, and I am pleased to say I am still able to retain my optimistic attitude. As I have said, it would be absurd at the present time to attempt to enter into any lengthy criticism of the Financial Statement. I do not intend to do so; and, indeed, in the short time in which I shall venture to ask the attention of the House, I shall simply refer to one or two matters, and the first item to which I shall refer is that of the Crown tenants' rebate of rent. The Financial Statement says,- "Last session the Rebate of Crown Tenants Act was passed. Its working has not been satisfactory or equitable in its incidence. An amendment of the Act is necessary." Now, Sir, honourable members will remember that when that Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Bill was before the House last session, I, in common with one or two other members of the House, roundly opposed that measure: and, Sir, we at that time were just as hotly condemned

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| We recognise that the prosperity of the town by the Ministry and some of the Ministerial following as some of the critics of the Government depends to a large extent upon the prosperity which have been condemned during this debate. of the country. In listening to the melodramatic speech of the honourable member for But it is at least satisfactory to find that the Waitemata, my only regret was that he should Government themselves have had to recognise have appeared to think that there was some that we who adversely criticized this matter difference between the political sentiments of when it was before the House twelve months ago were right. At the time, it was thought the city and the country members of this House. The honourable gentleman is full of sentiment that we had some ulterior motive in criticism so far as

the farmers are concerned ; and, while cizing the proposal ; that there was some- thing underneath our adverse criticism ; but he can draw upon his imagination, and give I am quite sure honourable members will us very vivid, very graphic pictures with regard to the life of the settler, I would remind him now begin to understand that we were impelled that there is another scene of which he knows by the sincerest motives in opposing what we very little. Does he understand the life of considered was not only an impolitic but an unworkable piece of legislation. The attention the workers in the towns ? Does he, who has of the House has already been called to the such an admiration for the beauty of the coun- manner in which the rebate has worked out try, know those who are living and working away from the scenes he so much admires ? up to the present time. The rebates granted for the half-year amount to £2,317 13s. 9d. Does he understand what it is to go tired and Let me remind honourable members again that weary to the crowded cottage home from the grime and smoke and dust of a factory ? I wish in the Canterbury Land District \$890 was that he, who knows the exhilarating influence granted to 474 persons. This means an ave- of the country life, would just spare a little of rage of £1 17s. 11d. per tenant. We were told twelve months ago that the passing of the Bill his sympathy which he can so grandiloquently express for the farmer-I say I should like him was to relieve the Crown tenants, and many of the representatives of country districts thought to spare a little of that for the worker in the town, and he will then find that there is as it was their duty roundly to rate one or two of much poetry and as much sentiment covered us town representatives for opposing the mea- sure, which was said to be absolutely necessary with grime and smoke as there is to be found to save the struggling settlers. I ask them, do in the country. It is still there for the denizens they think a struggling settler could be saved of the towns and the workers of the factories. There should no longer be this estrangement by getting a reduction of 10 per cent. on his rent? Does any member of the House between town and country members. We should endeavour to make the country what it should think that 91 17s. 11d. could stand be- tween any settlers in the country and ruin ? be, for the country and the towns are necessary In the Wellington Land District £879 8s. 3d. for each other. There is only one other matter to which I should like to refer, and that is was granted to 1,489 tenants, or an average of 11s. 9d. per tenant ; in Otago, £347 2s. 7d. to to express my regret that more has not been done by the Board which was set up by 790 tenants was remitted, or 8s. 9d. per tenant ; this House some few years ago, and which Southland, £101 17s. to 206 tenants, or an ave- is known as the Assets Realisation Board. rage of 9s. 10d. per tenant ; in Marlborough, The honourable member for Dunedin City 493 6s. 2d was remitted to 35 tenants, being an average of £2 13s. 3d. per tenant ; and in (Mr. Millar) was, I think, the only member who referred to the work of that Board. Nelson District, £5 19s. to 42 tenants, or at the He said that he did not complain that they rate of 2s. 10d. per tenant. Now, I ask, is had not disposed of a greater number of 2s. 10d. per half-year to stand between a tenant estates under their control than they had done, and absolute ruin? And some northern mem- but he said he thought it was wise that they bers most roundly rated us. and yet nothing should go slowly. I could not understand why has been distributed to the tenants in the Dis- tricts of Auckland, Hawke's Bay, or Taranaki. the honourable gentleman should make a re- I do not want to be understood to be blaming mark of that kind, for it appears to me that the Assets Realisation Board are allowing that the Government because the Government sees time to slip by when the lands under their con- that it is necessary to go back on the Act of trol are likely to fetch the best values. During last session ; indeed, I congratulate them upon the course of this debate it has been pointed seeing that it is necessary to alter this Act. I quite agree with the Premier when he says in out by honourable members that the present values of land cannot be sustained. What was the Budget that it is necessary to speak plainly that Board set up to do? It was set up for from the facts that have come to his own knowledge. The Premier says it is quite clear the express purpose of realising on those estates, and, I should say, with all possible speed. Now, that persons taking up bush land, and having little or no capital, cannot pay rent until the land yields a return. I am glad he

has decided have been realised. I think that up to the at last to take a reasonable, rational, and 31st March last the total amount realised on practical way of helping struggling settlers. the estates was £676,0:2, which is about I think that the more the country members 25 per cent. of the book cost of the estates understand the aims and aspirations of the taken over by the Board, and the total town members the better they will understand of the estates was \$2,731,706. Last year the that their desire, too, is to help the settlers. five years have passed by, and up to the present time no more than 25 per cent. of the assets

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I would remind the House that if a fall in land values should take place it can only be detrimental to the lands under control of the Assets Realisation Board, and I do think that a greater amount of land ought to have been disposed of by that Board up to the present time than there has been. I hardly like to make the suggestion, but it appears to me that that Board, including as it does the Premier, is a paid Board, and that when all these lands have been disposed of the pay will cease. I would not for a moment suggest that they are neglecting to dispose of these lands because it is profitable to hold these positions on the Assets Realisation Board, but I do say that the time for high land-values is slipping by. The Board was set up for the express purpose of realising that estate with all convenient rapidity, and up to the present time but a quarter of the total value of the estate has been realised. I think it is necessary that the attention of Parliament should be called to this matter, and that the Board should be compelled to put more activity and energy into their work. Besides, we have to remember that the debentures issued against those properties which were taken over by the Board mature in 1904, and that there is not much time between now and then. These, Sir, are the only matters to which I wish to draw the attention of the House ; but before I sit down there is just one other point to which I would make passing reference. The Hon. the Minister for Public Works brought under our notice the present attitude of Par- liament towards the labour proposals now before Parliament ; and, generally speaking, a cry has gone forth that, so far as the labour proposals are concerned, the Government should move slowly. The Minister for Public Works, when replying to criticism of the nature I have just expressed, said he felt quite sure that when the Factories Bill came down to this House, which it would before long, the very members who had spoken adversely to the labour legislation would be found voting for the third reading. Now, Sir, I just want to point out-and I have tolerably good reason for knowing what I am saying-that nearly the whole of the adverse criticism of the labour proposals of the Govern- ment this session have not resulted from any measure at the present time on the statute- book, nor from any proposal of the Labour Bills Committee. Sir, nearly every objection raised, and the objections have become pretty current - there have been more influential witnesses giving evidence before the Labour Bills Committee than in any previous year, to my knowledge-are almost entirely and exclu- sively against new proposals to the Act. Sir, as that measure left the Labour Bills Commit- tee last year it was a good and workable con- solidated measure, but it has now been sent to the Committee with new clauses got from Goodness knows where, and suggested by Good- ness knows whom, but probably suggested by some idealist who has failed to put them in such a practical form that they can ever be in- Mr. Collins in the form in which it left the Labour Bills Committee last year no employer in the colony could take exception to it. No reasonable employer would take exception to it, and no employé would tako exception to it. Sir, I do not say that there is any particular reason to "go slow." All we want is to act wisely. If we act wisely you may go as quickly as you like ; but I do think, if the Government would only take the opinion of those who were sent to this House for the purpose of embodying their ideas in the legislation of the colony, that when a Bill is submitted to a Com- mittee, and the Committee work at it conscientiously from week to week, the Go- vernment should then remit it to the House. instead of embodying in it matters suggested to them by theorists and idealists who do not understand the practical working of such a measure, we could then rely on it that any Bill of this kind

submitted to Parliament would not raise hostile comment or feeling from either employers on the one hand, or the workers on the other. As I have said, I have no desire to make a long speech, but there were two or three points to which I did think it necessary that attention shall be called. Some members would apparently like us to believe that the country is rapidly galloping to disaster and ruin. I am sure honourable members must feel pleased to know that there is no foundation for such dismal forebodings and fear, but that the colony is, and is likely to continue, in a thoroughly satisfactory position so far as its prosperity and progress are concerned. Mr. HARDY (Selwyn) .- I would like to say a few words about the Financial Statement. but I feel a certain amount of diffidence in speaking after two of what we may term the orators of the House. They placed before the House fairly and clearly the state of affairs as they see it. But, Sir, I do not care much about figures, as I am sure the House must be weary of the continued repetition of them. But I will deal with the Budget generally, feeling sure that the country has been aroused by the candid criticism of the independent members of the Liberal party, as well as by the trenchant criticism of the members on this side of the House. I wish to say that the public debt is increasing at almost an alarming rate, our local bodies' debts are also increasing. and I am perfectly sure that the private debts of the people are almost larger than they can bear. Figures are curious things, and in the hands of clever men they are often responsible for strange conclusions. On the one hand, the Premier tries to bolster up his Statement with certain comparisons, and the independent members of his own party, full of loyalty to Liberal principles, and desirous of honestly representing their constituents, place an entirely different view of the situation before the House. The member for Ashley says, after a severe criticism of the Budget, " I move, as a candid friend of the Government, that the estimates be reduced by \$50,000." Then. the member for Nelson City spoke in no measured

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terms with respect to the salaries and allowances for Ashburton says the farmers have got so anxious of Ministers. His words speak for themselves many concessions that they must be considered, and, so far, they are still unanswered. sidered a favoured class, and he painted a rosy The member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar), description of their prosperity, mentioning the prices of pork, lambs, and other commodities. quoting the late John Ballance, says that we have marched for twenty years at a furious pace. But he forgot to tell the House about grain, pace, too severe to last, and that we have piled and entirely overlooked the oats contract. He did not say anything about a few favoured up obligations which should make any sane man friends of the Government making large sums pause. If those words were applicable in 1891, when Mr. Ballance was alive, they are still more of money, when the direct interests of the farmers were neglected. I think the honourable member applicable in 1901. Mr. SEDDON .- I desire to call attention to able member did not study the railway tariff, or he would not have found the concessions as he the fact that the honourable member is reading has painted them-at least, so far as his concessions in his speech. Mr. HARDY .- I am not reading my speech. constituents were concerned. Take, for instance, Dunedin to Oamaru, seventy eight miles : These are my notes. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable Classes A, B, C, and D are carried for 12s. 6d. member knows that it is contrary to the Standard per ton, and for a similar distance in my own riding Orders for any honourable member to read constituency the charges are nearly double, his speech. simply because we have no water-carriage to Mr. HARDY. - Such, I believe, are the Standard-compete with. Lime, certainly, is free. It is in riding Orders, but I think I am right when quoting used largely in Otago and Southland, and members to read exactly what they have said. sparingly in Canterbury, where patent manures Of course, I have to learn a good deal from the and other necessary farm requisites have Right Hon. the Premier ; but I can assure you to pay full freights. And, as for the carriage that I am here as a novice, and much of the carriage of stock, I venture to say that there teaching I have had from him has not been is at the present time quite as much stock such as to commend itself to me. I am quite travelling alongside the railway-lines as the prepared to catch it. The Premier's \$40 shot railways are handling

themselves. I am per- has never reached me yet ; and even if he adds feely satisfied and clear in my own mind of that. And, also, for general reduction of pas- that £60 one, which I presume is going on to members' salaries, I am afraid it will take senger and season tickets, \$68,000 of remissions, as mentioned in the Budget, is misleading. more than that to bribe me. And so the criticism goes on, until I am sure the right Surely the honourable member has not been honourable gentleman must feel his position paying for his own tickets, or he would have keenly. The member for Ashley says, "It is discovered that the bona fide farmer, travelling government by Royal Commission," but I to the town and back, only receives a remission think it could much better be described as of between 9 and 10 per cent. " government by balloon." The Premier denies the statement that has been published, that Sir. whether a member of the House has a right he told a deputation that "our finances are to quote another member's speech absolutely in a very bad state, and that he had grave from Hansard, for that is what the honourable gentleman is doing? This speech is taken doubts about making ends meet," or words to that effect. We accept his denial, but from Hansard, and he is simply reading it. at the same time feel assured that the public will not be so easily dealt with. Now, honourable gentleman as to that. Sir. I am satisfied in my own mind that this Hon. the Premier's statement an unqualified was only a balloon set up for the purpose of denial. I took notes of what the honourable deceiving others. Why, Sir, the honourable member for Ashburton said, and I congratulate gentleman has members of this House who are actually engaged in flying balloons, and one the honourable member-I am sorry he is not sent up for my information just before the here-upon having so placed his speech in celebrated reply was to the effect that " our Hansard that he has not had to alter it as so affairs are in a very bad state ; the Premier is many other members do. worrying his life out. and his private friends do not know what to do with him," and much took the notes he is reading himself? I do more of this sort of gammon. The report deal- not think he is competent to take them. ing with the railways is fairly satisfactory, and I think, under the present management, leaves honourable gentleman would not make a state- little to be desired. The Minister in charge is ment like that unless it were true. The statement an able man, and the men under him are of the honourable member must be accepted. capable; but I must take exception to the statement of concessions, which may be correct my statement. I have not been sufficiently long in the House to be able to put my words so far as the figures go, but are misleading, as they only show how unfair the charges in such a way that it is a matter of extreme doubt whether they may be believed or not. were in the past, and prove conclusively that Probably, if I return to my constituents again further reductions might be made in many and again, I may come in time to even imitate ways for the purpose of increasing traffic and the Premier. benefiting the public. My friend the member Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- I want to know, Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I will hear the Mr. HARDY .- I desire to give the Right Mr. SEDDON .- Do you believe, Sir, that he Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - I assume the Mr. HARDY. - Thank you, Sir, for accepting

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Mr. HARDY. - Is the right honourable gentleman not satisfied ? Mr. SEDD .N .-- I have said I do not believe that the honourable gentleman took the notes he was reading, or was competent to do it. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) .- I rise to a point of order. The Premier has just said across the floor of the House that he does not believe the honourable gentleman. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I must uphold the dignity and authority of the Chair in this House. The Premier knows that to refuse to accept the statement of a member is not parlia- mentary. Mr. SEDDON .- I have accepted the honour- able member's statement ; but what is in my own innermost conviction I will give to no man. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I must ask you to withdraw unreservedly the doubt you ex- pressed as to the honourable member's state- ment. Mr. SEDDON .- I withdraw it; but my con- viction is the same. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Now, the Pre- mier must know that that is not a proper way in which to make a withdrawal. I hope he will not show such an example to honourable mem- bers, but will obey the ruling of the Chair. Mr. SEDDON .- I withdraw it

according to your ruling. It is all the same to me. Mr. DEPUTY - SPEAKER .- The Premier must see that he is required to withdraw un- reservedly, without making any comments. Mr. SEDDON .- I withdrew it when I said I did not think the honourable member was com- petent to make such notes. Mr. HARDY .- As for my competence, Mr. Speaker, I have to leave that to my consti- tuents, not to the honourable gentleman. If he had his will I should never have appeared in this House. I do not wish to go into ancient history, but I could tell a tale to members of this House that would make their hair stand on end if they only knew what the honourable gentleman did to keep me back. As I say, I do not like to give ancient history. I have a very great respect for the Premier, and I do not care about slinging mud. I thank you for your sympathy. You know I am a young member, and you always give protection to young members. Going on to the member for Ashburton, I want to be quite clear about this, because I took a note of it and want to read it, and I think I shall be in order, because if I trust to my memory probably I shall not quote him accurately :- "I want to draw your attention to his state- ments about the Farmers' Union, and think he must have made a mistake when he spoke in such derogatory terms about educating them. I am sure, Sir, they are at least as intelligent and praiseworthy a portion of the community as the honourable gentleman who represents them ; for are they not the backbone of the country? I think their endeavours to form a union are commendable. This is the day of unions, and every class should be united ; for you know balance of power that justice can be obtained. I should like the union formed and conducted absolutely independently of party politics, and think that on these lines it will be a power in the land. It is not a case of town against country, but country to the front, for the towns can well look after themselves." In reference to the muddle made about the pro- posed colonial scale-I am speaking now about education-that will be dealt with later on. Amongst the members of the Commission were two teachers with low-grade certificates, whose influence on the work- Mr. SEDDON .- I ask whether the honour- able member is quoting some other member's speech, or is it his own speech he is reading ? Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - Is the honour- able member quoting from a written speech ? Mr. HARDY .- I say at once I am not, and I do not think I am like the Premier. I am not going to take up the Premier's time. I feel certain, when he comes out with his sledge-hammer on the members who opposed his policy, he will clear the atmosphere, and we in opposition will be satisfied with the position then. I was speaking, Sir, of the teachers with low-grade certificates that the Premier placed on the Commission. I think it has been a slur upon all the leading men in the colony-men who have had a university training. But, Sir, it is like the Premier. It was done for a pur- pose, but what that purpose is remains a secret in the breast of the Right Hon. the Premier alone. At any rate, this is the Budget I am quoting from now. I wish to draw the atten- tion of the Premier to this fact : that I am quoting from his own Budget. Speaking of the Crown tenants' rebate of rent, he says its work- ing has not been satisfactory or equitable in its incidence, and an amendment of the Act is necessary. Who ever heard of such a thing, and who but the Ministry is responsible for such a bungle? Probably the Premier will make that matter clear, but certainly the Crown tenant will demand an explanation, and the country generally. Indeed, Sir, the Govern- ment takes all the credit of settling the people on the land. I do not really know what they do not take credit for, but that is one thing for which they certainly do. I will now relate an incident that took place in my own district about ten years ago. When the late Mr. Bal lance was down in Canterbury, driving about to see some of the village settlements, he drove with Mr. John Holmes-a former member of the House -- Mr. Gordon Holmes, Mr. Coster. and others, with myself, out to see the Rakaia village settlement, and on looking over the fence of one of the prettiest little homesteads in New Zealand, said, " Well done, Mr. Rolleston, to you belongs the honour of our land policy." This, Sir, was the exclamation of an honest man, one who did not care to take honour where honour was not due. Sir, the monu- ment says, " Ballance loved the people." And when the memorial is being erected, as I hope it will be erected, to the Premier, I think we might well inscribe on it, "He loved himself."

would be appreciated. It is this : that we land. I would far rather see children on the broad acres than sheep ; but, Sir, it is one thing have often years of plenty in the agricul- ... to settle people on the land, and another thing tural districts, and in those years of plenty I should like to see provision made for the to see that they are happy, contented, and self- reliant when they are placed there. But, Sir, lean years. We have years of plenty. when the that is a question which, I think, does not dis- farmers are able to make good returns, and turb the honourable gentlemen on the Govern- years of dearth when hardships occur ; and at ment benches. All they care about doing is to the present time they have little or no induce- borrow money and place people on the land, ment to save money, because, when their in- feeling certain that those placed there will be vestments are placed in the Post-Office, they supporters of themselves. They know very only get 2} per cent .. and perhaps in some well that the Crown tenants support them, cases 3 per cent. The farmers, then, are in this position : If a man happens to have deposited and they know very well that the co-opera- tive workers will support them. These, and his money in the Post-Office Saving-Bank on other agencies that he has worked, keep the 2nd of the month, and takes it out during him in the position he now fills; but it will the following month, he gets no interest for the be for them later on to decide whether broken time at all, and consequently that is he has been a statesman or only a politician. a great loss. I think this is a matter which Now. Sir, if I could see through the secret should be made very clear. We are told that the recesses of that silent office outside, I would Savings-Bank is so prosperous, and the deposits there find tales that have never been told in are so large that the department does not know what to do with their accumulations ; but, Sir, this House. To my own knowledge, Sir, many of the Crown tenants are behind with their the people do not seem to realise that they are rents. What is the Government doing to alter being robbed to the extent of the broken time. this state of things ? Surely this cannot go on Well, in the years of plenty I would encourage for ever. If you ask the honourable member the tenants to make prompt payment of rent, for Ashburton, who is an active and intelligent and to pay the Government as much as they member of the Canterbury Land Board, he will can spare. I want to make myself clear. This tell you that he has more tronble from Crown will enable his rent to be reduced later on. This proposal will cause the tenant to rely tenants asking for concessions than he has from all the freeholders in Canterbury. I think more on his own energy, and to lean less on his that is correct Sir? landlord. But, Sir, in order to prevent those Mr. MCLACHLAN .- That is correct. estates reverting to the original owners, I Mr. HARDY. - From my own knowledge, would still urge on the Crown the advisa- bility of holding a percentage of the principal. Sir, of the purchases in Canterbury, they have By doing this the tenant will be almost as as been most satisfactory, at least so far good as a freeholder, and he will be able to Cheviot, Highbank, Marawhiti, and several understand what a policy of self-reliance is. 1 other settlements are concerned; but even from those settlements, which have been have not read this, Sir, and I wish to remark bought at low prices, and which, I believe, that this proposal will enable the Government have increased at least from 40 to 50 per cent. to reinvest the moneys, and to go further on in value, there are continual applications made with the land-policy, which I approve of so for reduction of rent. Now, you must know highly. Well, Sir, let the Minister of Lands go to his old home in the Emerald Isle, and he yourself, Sir, if you make yourself acquainted, as I believe you do, with the working of the will then be able to judge for himself, when he departments of the service, you must know sees how happy and contented they are there, that this state of things cannot continue - at which is best for this land-freehold or lease- least, if it is to be carried on on these lines. I hold. Now I wish to refer to " our boys at the am satisfied that some provision must be made front," whom the Minister of Defence talks to give the tenants a greater interest in their 'about, whom he palavers, and makes all sorts of holdings. Many are leaning too heavily on the promises to. I wish him to remember that landlord. I may say, Sir, if the Premier wishes when he was down at Christchurch, at a ban- to commence his speech now, I do not mind quiet to

the Rough Riders, he promised that he would give them their bandoliers and their giving way to him. I can assure honour- able members that my constituents are not rifles. I feel assured, Sir, that he will do that particularly anxious that I should speak. for the boys who have so distinguished them- They are quite satisfied that I am working selves in fighting the battles of the Old Country. early and late in their interests. I am almost The Premier, when coming up from the Third a beast of burden in this House. Some honour- Contingent, kindly promised me that if it was able members do not understand what the possible he would give them their rifles. He said drudgery of Parliament is. I do not pose as a they belonged to the Imperial Government ; and speaker-I never could speak in my life, and I my reply to him was, " Well, Sir, there is a way am quite prepared to give way to the Premier. of doing it, and I never knew you yet, when you Mr. SEDDON .- You had better finish. Do have made up your mind to do a thing, but you could find some way of doing it." At any rate, not let me interrupt you. Mr. HARDY .- Thank you very much, Sir. at the banquet in Christchurch, the Premier Now, speaking about these Crown tenants, promised the Rough Riders that they should I have an idea in my head which, if I get their rifles and bandoliers. I was not pre-

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Times. However, yesterday I received a memo- randum as follows : - " Headquarters, Wellington, New Zealand. "Memo. re Trooper Seymour. " With reference to your letter re above- mentioned trooper's rifle and bandolier, I have the honour to inform you that the Defence Minister has not yet come to any decision re- garding the rifles and bandoliers of returned troopers: "J. GETHIN HUGHES, Captain, Staff-Officer, New Zealand Forces. "To C. A. C. Hardy, Esq., M.H.R." Well, Sir, I do not know whether the 10.0. Premier has a knowledge of this. I am satisfied that he was as open and clear in his promise to me, when he said, "Yes, they will get them," and I am just as satisfied as ever I was that he will keep his promise. But this delay shows mismanagement in one of his departments. This gentleman was a staff officer in the New Zealand Forces. At any rate, I hope this promise is not like some of the other promises of the Government, which, like pie-crusts, are made but to be broken. Throughout the length and breadth of the country there is a widespread feeling that the Government is very extravagant. I do not know whether any satisfactory explanation has been given on this point by the honourable gentlemen opposite. I would ask the Premier, Is it not a fact that last year you drew nearly £4,000, or, rather, I ask you, Sir, if the Premier did not draw nearly \$4,000 last year from the public purse for salary and travelling-expenses ? This is, at any rate, the current opinion, and it is for the Premier to say that he did not do so. But if he did so, I say to him, as well as to the members of the party, for the future try and act squarely. Mr. SEDDON (Premier). - Sir, I rise to a point of order, for I have never listened to any- thing like this since I have been in the House. Honourable members may smile, but I have never heard a question put to the Speaker such as the one you have been asked to answer. I have never known the Speaker to be asked a question with regard to Ministers' salaries and. expenses, and I have never yet heard a Minister of the Crown told to "go square." I say, Sir, that the honourable member's remarks are an insult to Ministers of the Crown ; they convey a grave reflection on the Ministers of the Crown, and if Ministers are not protected by the Chair, I would ask, Where is their protection to come from? I ask, Sir, that the words be taken down. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. - I must first rule as to the question asked by the honour- able member. The custom of Parliament is that members when speaking must address themselves to the Speaker I understand that the honourable member's remarks were ad- dressed in the ordinary course of debate to me, and in addressing me he asked the question of the Premier and not of me. The question as to whether the words "act on the square "- Mr. Hardy use of ; but the statement was that he hoped that the Premier and the members of the party would "act square," and, as far as I can see, no reflection has been cast upon the right honourable gentleman. Mr. HARDY. - I thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for your protection. I must admit that I am a Freemason, and have been one for many years. I also say I never wore a masonic charm at my chain. The only charm I wear is the pass for the New Zealand railways. I draw the attention

of the members of this House to the fact that the Right Hon. the Premier him- self wears a masonic charm, and I consider, Sir, it would be a disgrace and that I would be act- ing scandalously to the profession I try to adorn if I threw anything like that on the floor of the House. I thought I had made myself clear when I said "squarely," and not "on the square." Mr. SEDDON (Premier) .- Sir, I submit if the honourable member says that members of this House have not acted squarely it is ex- actly the reflection I complained of. To act "squarely " is to act honourably, and to express the hope that in future the Premier will ac: squarely leaves the inference that in the past he has not done so. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- I do not think the honourable gentleman should take the word in that light. I am satisfied the honourable member did not mean to cast any reflection on the Premier. It is a parliamentary expression that has often been used in this House. Mr. HARDY. - I thank you again. Mr. Speaker, for your further protection. Now. Sir, in conclusion, I wish to say that not long ago the Right Hon. the Premier made 3 striking allusion to the fly in the amber. It was a beautiful simile, and I do not know that I could apply it better than to ask the honour- able gentleman to look alongside him at the members who form his Cabinet, and let honour- able members say if those gentlemen are not like the fly in the amber,. and ask themselves how they got there ? Mr. PARATA (Southern Maori) .- Sir. I have a few words to say on the matter now occupying the attention of the House. I look upon this financial question as a matter which im- mediately affects the welfare of the colony : in saying that, I refer to the welfare of both the Maori and European races. Therefore I do not stand up to refute or to deny the remarks that have fallen from honourable members who have so far spoken in the debate. I do not pro- pose to go into the figures set out in the Budget. or to deal with the Statement item by item to show that the information therein contained would be for the welfare of the colony. Honour- able members are aware that I have been in this House for a number of years, sitting here year after year consecutively ; and it has been my lot to listen to the debate on each Financial Statement that has been during those years brought down, and I do not see that the present Financial Statement differs in any material point from similar documents brought down to

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stand it to be the privilege of every mem- ber of the House to express his views upon any question under consideration, and I say that I am satisfied that this Budget is a fair sample of the manner in which the welfare of this country is guarded and promoted by the honourable gentleman at present in power. Now, with regard to the remarks that have fallen from honourable members who are dis- satisfied with this Financial Statement, and who have sought to cast a doubt upon the present financial position of the colony, I have heard some honourable members say that the figures in this Statement are not to be seriously accepted as correct, and that it is not a satisfac- tory Statement as compared with the Statements of previous years. But, Sir, I ask, How are we to know which honourable member's figures are correct ? I say we can confidently leave that question until the Colonial Treasurer replies, and then we shall be able to form our own opinions as to who is right and who is wrong. Now, with regard to the proposed expenditure for public works-for roading and improving the various districts throughout the colony- I think the majority of members must agree with me when I say that that is money expended in a right direction : that will be money expended upon reproductive works, and from those reproductive works the Trea- Bury will be eventually replenished Now, Sir, with regard to the railway administra- tion, I must say that it seems to me that the forecast given by the Hon. the Minister for Rail- ways is entirely satisfactory. I see, Sir, that considerable reductions have been made both in passenger fares and railway freights, and there- fore I say that I think the colony has every right and reason to congratulate itself upon the present position of affairs. Why, Sir, this Statement shows beyond question that these re- ductions have been entirely justified. In spite of the fact that such large reductions have been made, we find that the revenue derived from the railways is greater than it was before these re- ductions were made. Sir, the same is the case with the reductions made in the Postal Depart- ment. We find that since the institution of

the pony post a larger amount of revenue has actually been received by the Postal Department. Sir, when that Bill was brought down before this House I was one of those who supported it, because I was satisfied in my own mind at the time that if a penny postal service was introduced in this country people would write more letters to their friends and relatives; and, in consequence, that a greater revenue would result to the Postal Department, although the charge was reduced from 2d. to 1d. That, Sir, is another matter upon which I say the colony has every reason to congratulate itself. And, Sir, I do not confine that remark merely to the European population of the country. I intend that remark to include both the European and Maori residents of the colony. Now, Sir, with regard to the dissatisfaction that has been expressed by certain members of this House in VOL. CXVIII. - 22. expended in connection with the visit of their Royal Highnesses in this colony, I say, Sir, that in my opinion the expenditure of that money was entirely justified. I say, Sir, that the fact of that money having been expended in that direction is in itself a proof of the joy which was felt by both European and Maori residents in this colony on the arrival of their Royal Highnesses, because the result must be that the young man, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York, will carry home to his Royal father, King Edward the Seventh, a very pleasant account of his visit to this country, and will tell him of the loyal and enthusiastic manner in which he was received by all of the residents here. Further than that, he will be able to tell the King that he has actually himself personally seen the Maori people in their own home. And I say that no member of this House can ever convince me by any argument whatever that it was anything but right that that gathering of the Maori tribes that was held at Rotorua should have taken place. I feel certain, Sir, that it was a gathering entirely unique of its kind that we may never again have such a vast concourse of the Maori people gathered together from all parts of the colony, as they were on that occasion, unless it may be that on some future occasion we may again be favoured with another Royal visit. Sir, that was an opportunity that should never have been missed. An opportunity was there afforded to the Maori people to assemble from all parts of New Zealand to demonstrate personally their loyalty and love towards the Throne. The Royal grandmother of the young Prince who came recently to this country, our late beloved Queen, only knew by hearsay what the loyal feelings of her Maori subjects in this country were, but now her grandson the Prince has been himself an eye-witness of the strength and genuineness of that loyalty, and will be able to convey to his Royal father in person his own impression of it. I say, Sir, that that was, as I have already said, an occasion that we must always look back upon with happy recollections, because it was an occasion unique of its kind, which will emphasize the loyalty of the Maori people of this colony just as much as it reflects and shows the loyalty of the Europeans in this country. The Maori inhabitants of both Islands looked forward with keen longing to meet the Prince face to face on his arrival in the colony. I will ask members to remember the address of welcome presented to the Duke on his arrival at Rotorua by the Maori inhabitants through the Native Minister. I think no better evidence is available of the extreme loyalty of the Maoris of the South Island than the fact that they came from the extreme south to Rotorua days before their Royal Highnesses' arrival, at, in many instances, extreme personal inconvenience. They left their businesses and their homes, and paid their own fares to Rotorua, and were there in time to welcome the Duke. There is but one thing in connection with the

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and that is that the Government could not see their way to extend the arrangements in connection with the Royal visit so far as to enable the Maoris of the South Island to meet the Duke in their own homes. However, I know that the visit was all mapped out and arranged beforehand, and the plan that had been laid down had to be adhered to. On the occasion of their Royal Highnesses' visit to the South Island Maoris came from the far south, from Murihiku, Ruapuke, Rakiura, and other places, and travelled as far north as Otago, and even Christchurch, in the hope to see his Royal Highness. However, even though they were, through force of circumstances, denied that honour, yet they are proud that they were able to

make His Royal Highness a present of a greenstone ornament and other articles of value, as evidence of their loyalty and affection to him. Sir, I do not propose to detain the House any longer. Debate adjourned. The House adjourned at half-past ten o'clock p.m.