

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Thursday, 5th September, 1901. Informal Petitions-Hospital Nurses

Registration Bill-Shops and Offices Bill. The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS. # INFORMAL PETITIONS. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, That the order of this Council (16th August), " That the petitions of A Asher and 175 others, and of W. Bull and 103 others, do lie upon the table," be read and rescinded 1. The petitions referred to in the motion did not conclude with the usual prayer as provided for by Standing Order No. 17, and were otherwise out of order, and the usual course was to have them struck out. The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he did not see any reason why the honourable member should move this motion. The Council had already accepted the petitions, and no fault had been found with them. Many petitions of this Act. Then, clause 4 is inserted as a new clause were presented to the Council that were informal, and, as a rule, the Council generally shape the clauses in the Bill originally introduced. Mr. Lethbridge not being in strict accordance with the rules. He could only say he was sorry the honourable gentleman had taken upon himself to move for the rejection of these petitions. As far as he was concerned, they had had their effect, and so he was perfectly satisfied, whether the Council received them or not ; but this showed the feeling there was on the part of the labour members against the poor people of the colony, as they now moved that the petitions be rejected. His object had been gained ; the petitions had been received and read, and there was an end of the matter. The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON merely wished to say that what he had done he had done as Chairman of the Petitions Committee. Seeing the petitions were not in order, the Committee had resolved that the order that they should be read should be rescinded, and it had devolved upon him, as Chairman of the Committee, to move that the order be rescinded. The Council divided. AYES, 16. Kelly, T. Scotland Arkwright Smith, A. L. Montgomery Barnicoat Pinkerton Swanson Bolt Feldwick Twomey Reeves Walker, W. C. Rigg Jenkinson Jones NOES, 11. Baillie Shrimski Johnston Louisson Tomoana Bowen . McLean Williams. Gourley Ormond Jennings Majority for, 5. Motion agreed to. # HOSPITAL NURSES REGISTRATION

BILL. The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER .- Sir, if honourable members will compare the Bill as sent back to us by the House of Representatives with the Bill as passed by this Council they will notice that, as far as the principle of the measure is concerned, it is pretty well as we passed it. On the other hand, it renders its operation a little less restrictive; and perhaps it is just as well, when a new departure is made in regard to any profession or calling, that the rights of those who are practising that calling under the old conditions should be protected as far as possible. I am therefore quite prepared to ask the Council to accept the Bill as amended by the House of Representatives. In clause 2 honourable members will note that "Hospital" is made to include such other hospitals the proprietors of which consent to such hospitals being open to inspection under "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885," as may be approved by the Governor in Council. I think that gives quite sufficient guarantee that the hospital will be a hospital within the intention clause. It is simply putting into different

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posing penalties and fees, but which we did not touch, because they were money clauses: and I think that can safely be accepted as virtually the Bill which came down to us. Clause 4A further protects the position of nurses who are practising at the present time ; and clause 5 is altered, inasmuch as it lessens the number of lectures that are required to be delivered in the hospital, and also absolves the hospital from the necessity of having a registered nurse, so that the whole of the existing appointments may not be interfered with. I feel quite certain, if this Act comes into law, and is in operation for any time, in a very few years we shall see hospitals of all kinds only too anxious to employ those who hold certificates and are registered. So I think we might safely accept that clause. Clause 8 is a mere verbal alteration of the clause passed by the Council. It requires the Registrar and Stipendiary Magistrate to be satisfied that no grave misconduct has been committed by any registered nurse sufficient to warrant the Registrar striking her name off the register. Clause 11 is new, and enjoins upon hospitals under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act to give preference to registered nurses in regard to any future vacancies. It need hardly, I think, have been inserted in the Bill, because I feel quite certain that when the Bill comes into law all these bodies will be sure to employ only those properly qualified. And the last clause makes the Bill come into operation on the 1st day of January, 1902. After hearing the reasons I have given, I trust the Council will accept the amendments made by the House. I move out all the words down to "commercial." accordingly. The Hon. Mr. T. KELLY .- I have much pleasure in supporting the proposal to accept the amendments. The House of Representatives has now been acting as the revising Chamber, and I think have done the work well. As far as the Bill is concerned, the House has improved Jenkinson it ; they have made it a much better Bill for the nurses. As it was sent down it was in some respects a very arbitrary Bill, and it did not give qualified nurses the standing they ought to Barnicoat have. Clause 8, to my mind, contained a very objectionable feature in respect to the way in which offences committed by nurses were to be dealt with. It gave power to the Governor Jennings in Council-in fact, the Governor in

Council Johnston was constituted a kind of Court to punish nurses for misbehaviour. As the clause now stands the power is put in the hands of a Magistrate, and is, of course, taken out of the hands of the Governor in Council. In my opinion, the remaining words were also struck out. that is a proper course of procedure. It strikes me that the Bill is now of a more liberal which the clerical work of a warehouse, factory, character, less official, and more in favour of or shop is carried on shall, if situate within the the rights of existing nurses than when it left warehouse, factory, or shop, be deemed to be this Council. part of the warehouse, factory, or shop, and not The Hon. Mr. JONES .- I just want to say to be an office within the meaning of this Act." that I consider this Bill is a great improve- ment on the Bill as it was when it left us, and the words " Provided that " were struck out. I am very sorry to have to confess it. I think the word " warehouse," as inserted by. the we might have made it much better than it Labour Bills Committee, be retained. was. In one direction certainly we committed an error with our eyes open. We allowed to pass in it a restriction that no nurse should be permitted to win a certificate unless she first of all had been trained under a certificated nurse. I pointed out to the Minister the in- justice of this provision at the time the Bill was going through, but he ignored my con- tention, and, as usual, allowed the Bill to go through in an imperfect form. The other Chamber has amended the Bill in that respect, when we might have had the credit of doing it ourselves. In regard to new clause 11, I fail to see how the hospitals are going to be com- pelled to observe the provision in that clause that "preference of employment shall be given to registered nurses." There is no penalty in the clause, and the hospital authorities can snap their fingers in the faces of the autho- rities, and neglect to carry out the object which the clause has in view. I think there should have been a penalty provided. There is a penalty for any nurse who does anything wrong, but no penalty for a member of the Board who may do what is wrong. Motion agreed to. # SHOPS AND OFFICES BILL. IN COMMITTEE. Interpretation clause .- " ' Office ' means any building in which any person is employed, directly or indirectly, to do any clerical work in connection with any mercantile, commercial, banking, or professional business or calling carried on therein by the occupier thereof." The Hon. Mr. PINKERTON moved to strike The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained." AYES, 13. Tomoana Arkwright Reeves Feldwick Twomey Rigg Smith, W. O. Walker, L. Kelly, T. Walker, W. C. Swanson Pitt NOES, 16. Pinkerton Jones Scotland Bolt Louisson Shrimski McLean Bowen Smith, A. L. Gourley Montgomery Stevens. Ormond Majority against, 3. Words struck out. On the motion of the Hon. Mr. PINKERTON "Provided that any building or room in On the motion of the Hon. Mr. FELDWICK The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER moved, That

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AYES, 15. Louisson Smith, W. C. Arkwright Pitt Feldwick Swanson Jenkinson Reeves Tomoana Jones Rigg Walker, L. Kelly, T. Smith, A. L. Walker, W. C. NOES, 13. Pinkerton Barnicoat Johnston McLean Shrimski Bolt Bowen Montgomery Stevens Gourley Ormond Twomey. Jennings Majority for, 2. Word retained. Bill reported. The Council adjourned at half-past four o'clock p.m. # HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Thursday, 5th September, 1901. First Readings-Departmental Returns-Financial Statement -Mr. Speaker-Departmental State- ments in Hansard-Financial Statement. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair at half- past two o'clock. PRAYERS. FIRST READINGS. Wellington Harbour Board and Corporation Empowering Bill, Maori Relics Bill, Charitable #cc-zero Institutions Rating Bill. # DEPARTMENTAL RETURNS. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster - General) brought up the annual report of the Post and Telegraph Department, and moved, That it do lie on the table and be printed. Mr HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said he would like to know if the report would be printed directly, as he believed the Railway Report that was laid on the table the day before had not yet been printed or circulated. He hoped that both reports would be printed with the utmost despatch, as they were of the greatest importance to members. He hoped that the honourable member would give the necessary instructions to the Printing Office at once. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) desired to point out that all the assertions

made by members on the Opposition side of the House with regard to the intentional keeping-back of documents until the financial debate was over had been fully justified by the course now being pursued. As most of the members had spoken, documents that were necessary to properly understand the financial position of the colony were now being submitted. gentleman was making a speech, and if he was complying with the Standing Orders. Captain RUSSELL said that he always complied with the Standing Orders. It was honourable Ministers on the other side of the House that did not do so. If the delay in furnishing these returns was not intentional on the part of the Government, then it must have been caused by culpable negligence. An Hon. MEMBER .- Well-timed negligence. Captain RUSSELL believed that it was well-timed negligence. In future honourable Ministers should be more discreet. He was surprised at the little wisdom that had been shown by the Minister in producing the document when he did. For decency's sake, that and the other documents referred to should have been kept back for a week or two, as they would have been just as useless then as now, when the debate was practically over. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the House had heard a good deal about these papers, and particularly B .- 1, and the Government had been compared with their predecessors for keeping these papers back. He had stood it so long, and he was now going to kick. He might tell honourable members opposite, in respect to these returns, and in respect to the Financial Statement, and in respect to B .- 1, that they were the only Government that had given the House an opportunity to discuss it during and before the debate on the Financial Statement was over. Mr. J. ALLEN .- No. Mr. SEDDON .- Does the honourable member say " No " ? Mr. J. ALLEN .- I do. Mr. SEDDON said he would just show the honourable member that he was wrong. He had caught him napping this time. He would have done better to have kept quiet. The honourable member for Riccarton wanted to know why the paper B .- 1 had not yet been laid on the table of the House, when the late Mr. Ballance laid it on the table on the 23rd June, 1892. He had gone further than the honourable member for Bruce had, for he had committed it to writing, and had put the motion on the Order Paper. and therefore he (Mr. Seddon) could not refer to it. It so happened that these honourable members had looked at the index, and they had seen that Mr. Ballance did lay a paper on the table of the House on the 23rd June, and immediately following it was "B .- 1," but there was no date opposite B .- 1 ; and because of that the honourable member for Riccarton and other members had concluded that B .- 1 was laid on the table on the same date -23rd June, 1892. Now, there was no B .- 1 laid on the table of the House at all in 1892. He had had the whole matter gone into, and he had a return showing the dates on which the Financial Statement was delivered, and B .- 1 was presented, from 1888 up to 1901 inclusive. This was certified to as an official document, and if honourable members wanted it laid on the table they could have it :-

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Financial Statement delivered. : Date when B .- 1 Paper presented. Year. Date. Not presented during session. 1888 May 29 June 25 1889 June 25 1890 June 23 1891 June 30 1892 July 5 1893 July 24 1894 1895 July 30 July 1896 14 October 12. Oct. 18:7 12 October 11. 1898 Aug. 9 1899 August 30. Aug. 1 October 3. 1900 Aug. 17 1901 Not yet presented. Aug. 16 How was it that from 1888 up to all these years they never had a B .- 1, and yet they had financial debates which would shame anything of late years? Yet members said they could not debate the Statement without B .- 1. They never had from Sir George Grey's time B .- 1 for the financial debate up to the year 1897. In 1897 they had the Financial Statement, and on the same day they had B .- 1, the first time they ever had it. Do members challenge that ? Mr. J. ALLEN .- Yes ; we challenge other years which have not been mentioned. Mr. SEDDON said they had heard a good deal about his late chief, Mr. John Ballance, and he was now a saint according to the Opposition ; he was far from a saint when he was here, but their views had changed, he was a saint now. Mr. Ballance should speak, and this was what he said in his Financial Statement of the session of 1878 :- " I trust I shall be able, in a few weeks, to lay before the House detailed accounts of the transactions of

the year just closed. It will be the first time that the accounts in detail have been presented to Parliament in the session following the close of the financial year, and honourable members will thereby be enabled to obtain an intimate knowledge of the transactions of the year, as epitomised in the tables which I shall lay before the Committee as an Appendix to this Statement." That was taken from the Financial Statement of the 6th August, 1878. He made the statement that up to that date they had never had B.-1. From 1854 to 1878 they never had B.-1 during the session; but they went on with the financial debates during that period, and managed to discuss the accounts intelligently-much more so than was done at the present time. He thought he had exploded the charges that had been made by the Opposition about B.-1. The late Mr. Ballance, speaking on the 6th August, 1878, said, "I trust I shall be able, in a few weeks, to lay before the House detailed accounts of the transactions of the year just closed." If he (Mr. Seddon) had made a statement of the kind he would have been pounced upon by gentlemen opposite, and told that he was playing with the House and the country. He was quite prepared to lay on the table the document he was quoting from: members opposite might have it if they wanted it. Then, there was the question of putting returns on the table in the middle of a debate. The Government had said that as fast as the different departments could get the returns ready, and as soon as the Printing Office could get them printed, they would be submitted to the House. That promise had been faithfully carried out.. As the reports were being completed they were laid before the House. On the previous day the Railways Statement was completed. His colleague the Minister for Railways asked him if he would lay it on the table at once. He (Mr. Seddon) said, "If you do the Opposition will twit you with keeping it back until they had no opportunity of criticizing your administration." The report, however, was laid on the table, and, as members would see for themselves, it was marked "September 4th, 1901." It was received from the Printing Office on the 4th, and was laid on the table on the same day. That, surely, was proof positive that the Government were doing their best to lay the reports on the table as soon as they were ready. The Minister for Railways was himself anxious to take a part in the debate, but would not do so until the Railways Statement had been laid before the House. An Hon. MEMBER asked, Why have we not got it? Mr. SEDDON said the report had been submitted to members, and, now they had it, not one of them would get up and praise the Minister on the results of his administration. The Lands Report was also laid on the table on the previous day, and if any honourable member would look at the bulk of that report, it must be admitted that, what with supplying returns and doing the ordinary work of the department, it had cost the department no little time in its preparation. It was a monument of work, and it was laid on the table at the earliest opportunity. An Hon. MEMBER said the Railways Statement had not been circulated. Mr. SEDDON said it had been laid on the table, and members should get it. However, it showed that the Printing Office could not have had the Statement lying printed for a number of days, if members had not got it yet. It ought to prove to members the force of his argument, that immediately these Statements were ready they were presented. He would give the statement of the public debt, and by that statement he would show the House and the country that, as regarded the public debt, our annual increase during our term of office, outside interest-bearing loans, was only half of what it had been with any previous Administration. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said this was a matter not before the House.

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Mr. SEDDON said he had been led into this { he would find that in 1887-page 48-the by an interjection of the honourable member for Bruce. At all events, he wished to show that the moment members got the details of the public debt of the colony it would prove that really it would have been in the interests of the Government if the paper had been laid on the table, and it would have removed misconceptions that had got into the minds of honourable members opposite. The Government had nothing to keep back. Every paper and return that was furnished showed careful administration, and was in favour of the Government and in favour of those gentlemen who supported the Government; so that it had been against their own

interests that this delay had occurred. He felt pained that the leader of the Opposition should have- Mr. ATKINSON .- Who is that ? Mr. SEDDON said, Well, it was not the honourable gentleman. At all events, he was pained that the member for Hawke's Bay should make the statement that we had kept the returns back until the member for Pahiatua was just about to speak, and the Hon. the Minister of Lands, who had not spoken yet for . a reason that honourable members knew. He might say the Minister of Mines would be the next to come in for adverse criticism, because he was just about to lay the Mines Statement on the table. Honourable members would get that printed at once, because it was only a short Statement. He only wanted to prove to the House and the country that they had not kept back returns. However, he more particularly wanted to emphasize the absence of B .- 1, and from this forward he supposed members on the other side would be quiet, because he had shown an example that had never been shown by any previous Administration in respect to these details. He might say that, without being asked by members, he should carry out his promise that as soon as the paper was ready-not, as Mr. Ballance said, " in the course of a few weeks "-it would be laid on the table, and he thought that ought to be sufficient for members for the time being. Mr. J. ALLEN (Bruce) said the Right Hon. the Premier just now contradicted an inter- jection he made that the B .- 1 return had been laid on the table in some previous years before the Financial Statement had been delivered. He knew he was right, and he had proof that he was right. The Right Hon. the Premier, of course, went back to previous history, and he forgot to tell us that at that date Parliament used to meet at a much earlier time in the year. It was only since the present Government had been in office that the date of the opening of Parliament had been brought to a late period in the year, and therefore it had been rendered much more easy to produce B .- 1 now than in the olden days when Parliament began in April or May and ended in June. Now Parliament began in June. He had the particulars of when B .- 1 was laid on the table in 1887, and if the Premier would care to look Public Accounts for the year ending the 31st March, 1887, were laid on the table on the 13th October. Mr. SEDDON .- 13th of October ! Well, this is September now. Mr. J. ALLEN said the Financial Statement was delivered in that year on the 1st of November. Mr. SEDDON .- There were two sessions that year and two Financial Statements. Mr. J. ALLEN said he was aware of that. In the olden days when they had a late session B .- 1 was laid on the table before the Financial Statement was delivered, and that was the case in the year 1887. He might say that the paper was not called B .- 1 in those days, and he was not quite sure that the Premier was quite honest in his statement to the House. Has the honourable gentleman been quoting B .- 1 all through ? Mr. SEDDON .- Ycs. Mr. J. ALLEN said in that case the Premier had been misleading the House. The honour- able gentleman ought to have referred to the Public Accounts, for the paper was not always numbered B .- 1. He (Mr. J. Allen) had been quoting, not B .- 1, but the Public Accounts for the year. They were laid on the table on the 13th of October, and the Financial State- ment was delivered on the 1st of November in 1887. Mr. SEDDON wished to put himself right, because a statement had been attributed to him which he had never made. He started with the year 1888. He never said a word about other years except 1878. He said that during Mr. Ballance's time a certain course was followed, and the honourable member interjected, "during Mr. Ballance's time." He (Mr. Seddon) might say that in respect to 1887 an appeal was made to the country in that year, and the first Financial Statement was delivered before the appcal was made to the country ; then there was another Financial Statement delivered, and it was after that that B .- 1. was laid upon the table of the House. Why did not the honourable member tell the House and the country that ? If the honourable member thought that he (Mr. Sed- don) had a bad memory, he was mistaken, and he might say that this return had always been called B .- 1, and was B .- 1 in 1887, and which during the second session was laid on the table. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) would like to say, in reply to the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty, that the Railways Statement was already in print. The reason it had not been circulated was in consequence of something having gone wrong with one of the lithographic plans which

was attached to the Statement for the information of honourable members, necessitating the reprinting of that plan. Honourable members did not want to have the Railways Statement incomplete.

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He assured honourable members that at the earliest possible moment the Statement which he had laid on the table would be in their hands. That Statement was only received from the Printing Office yesterday, and it had been laid on the table of the House to-day. He had given instructions that the plans were to be attached to the Railways Statement, and that copies of it were to be put in the hands of honourable members without any delay. He would reiterate the statement made by the Premier, that it was most unfair to charge the Government with withholding these returns purposely. They had done nothing of the kind. If there was anything in the contention of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay it was that these reports were delayed in order to prevent discussion by the Opposition of the Financial Statement. The honourable gentleman ought to remember how many members on that side of the House have not yet spoken. There were nine members on the Opposition side of the House who had not spoken on the Statement ; and if members would only take the trouble to think the matter out, they would remember that the Railway revenue, the Postal revenue, the Lands revenue, and the Mines revenue were contained in the Financial Statement, and no honourable member could, within the hour allowed by the Standing Orders, discuss the whole details of these different departments and the Financial Statement too. Opportunities would be afforded to members of dealing with those matters later on ; for instance, resolutions were to be brought down relating to the San Francisco mail-service. To say that this information was held back when the Government laid it on the table as soon as they had it was unfair. It was more to the Government's advantage to lay the reports on the table, as they were most favourable to the Government. All the talk about withholding the reports to prevent discussion on the Statement was rubbish, when, as a matter of fact, any one who knew anything about the affairs of the colony knew that the whole finances of the colony - including each of the departments - could be intelligently dealt with on the Financial Statement. He had given the explanation why the Railways Statement was not circulated. He hoped it would be in their pigeon-holes later to-day. If members wanted an incomplete Railways Statement without one of the plans they could get it, but he did not think it would be satisfactory to members. It was grossly unfair for the member for the Bay of Plenty and the member for Hawke's Bay to make statements that were contrary to fact-that important returns were purposely held back. It appeared to him that they tried to make people believe-or themselves imagined - that they were the only honourable people in the world, and he, for one, took exception to such a statement. They should give the Government credit for doing their duty to the best of their ability, and not be ever anxious to cast suspicions upon everything. Motion agreed to. ADJOURNED DEBATE. Mr. O'MEARA (Pahiatua) .- Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the many speeches that have been delivered criticizing and analysing the Financial Statement that has been placed before us this session. We have in this House a considerable number of members who consider themselves financiers of the first water, but I have had very great difficulty in following many of them. For instance, we had the member for Nelson City, who brought out a surplus of his own; and then we had the honourable member for Ashley, who did likewise. Several other members adopted the same principle, and, so far as I am concerned, it has all ended in utter confusion, as their figures all differed. On that account I decided to make an attempt myself to analyse the Statement, and I shall this afternoon place a few figures that I have taken out of it before honourable members. These will in their turn, probably be criticized by those who succeed me in this debate. I have been rather disappointed in listening to the pessimistic prognostications of members not only on the opposite side of the House, but also of members on this side. They took my mind back to the year 1891, when the present Liberal Government came into power. What was prophesied by those who were opposed to us then in politics ? They said that by changing the incidence of taxation our revenue would

be so disturbed that in the course of twelve months the Opposition would be called back to arrange the finances of the colony. I am glad that so far they have not been called back to power, and I venture to express the opinion that so long as they retain their present political opinions they will remain in the cold shades of opposition. If a change does take place in the present form of government, I feel assured that honourable gentlemen on the opposite side will never be called upon to occupy positions on the Ministerial benches. They have endeavoured by all sorts of intrigues to get there, but, fortunately, the people of the colony have become so well educated that they will not listen to the voice of the charmer—they will not allow themselves to be misled. I would like to compare the speeches of some of those honourable members with the statesmanlike speech delivered by the member for Auckland City (Mr Napier). He explained the financial position of the colony with that detail and effectiveness that the greatest pessimist in the House must, at all events, have felt that it made a good impression upon him. In my opinion, that speech was one of the ablest delivered on the Financial Statement this year. We were told that the fact of the Government remaining in power and bringing down a Financial Statement such as this had made such an impression upon those who had previously prepared their speeches that they made fresh notes to be used in this debate instead of their old notes. There is no doubt that a gloom was cast over the colony for a week or two, the cause of which I do not know. Per-
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haps those honourable gentlemen themselves, disappointed at not receiving office, did all in their power to unseat the Government, with the view of getting on the Ministerial benches. I think the statements that have been placed before the House and the country by these gentlemen have placed the matter in an unfair, and, because unfair, in an unfavourable light. There is no doubt that those who are timid, such as the honourable member for Nelson City, the honourable member for Ashley, and those who condemn the Statement—that their utterances will have the effect of making a great many people timid, and possibly may drive them out of the country—that is, if these pessimistic statements are listened to. But those who are timid will only have to refer to the speeches of the same honourable gentlemen previous to the last general election, and then they will be convinced that the statements made in this debate are simply humbug and nonsense. Mr. Massey, the leader of the Opposition—or sub-leader of the Opposition stated the other night that the majority on this side of the House was gained by bribery, and that sometimes the public funds of the colony were used for this purpose. My honourable friend the member for Auckland City (Mr. Witheford) became indignant, and stoutly denied such a charge. should like, also, to hurl that accusation back at the honourable member for Franklin as far as I am concerned. I would like to tell an experience of my own as far as bribery and corruption are concerned. The gentleman who opposed me was undoubtedly a man whom every one could respect. We had not the slightest doubt in our minds that he would conduct the election as fairly as I would myself, and that is saying a good deal for him. But, Sir, those who assisted him, what did they do? There were three candidates in the field, and, to make the election sure for my opponent, they subscribed \$50 to buy one of them out—to get him out of the field. Is that not corruption? Is that not the worst form of bribery? I say that such tactics as these, when they come to light, should make those honourable gentlemen on that side of the House hold their peace. The honourable member for Franklin also condemned the Government for their extravagance; and almost in the same breath he says, "Give us more money for the North Island Main Trunk Railway." And he further declared that unless the public works of the North of Auckland, or near Auckland, are prosecuted more vigorously than at the present time it will be a bad look-out for any member of the Ministry or any Government supporter going into the City of Auckland. He also states that the outlook of the colony is gloomy. In my opinion, it is not. It is just as prosperous as it has been for the last ten years. But if those honourable gentlemen whom I call pessimists would have a little courage they would make the colony advance, instead of by their pessimism dragging it down to the lowest depths. There is no doubt that the

honourable senior member for Dunedin City delivered an excellent speech. It was a very specious one, and as an ex parte statement it Mr. O'Meara sounded very well indeed. What did he do in speaking to this House ? He did not show one bright ray in the picture at all. He turned the gloomy and dark side to the House, and endeavoured to make the country believe that the financial position of the colony was such that the Government and the country would probably come to grief in a very short time. If I had the faith of the honourable member for Dunedin City, the honourable member for Ashley, the honourable member for Riccarton, and the honourable member for Nelson City as to the abilities of the Government, and their financial position, I would go to the other side of the House and say that the present Administration have no right to stay a day longer in office. That is my view of it, because these men to whom I refer have done their best by the statements they have made to prejudice the Government in the eyes of the people of the country, and by so doing hurl that Government out of office at the earliest opportunity. The senior member for Dunedin City also stated that the building trade was not so brisk as it had been—that, in fact, it was extremely dull. As a matter of fact, the building trade in the North Island is as brisk as, if not brisker than, ever. The sawmills in my district—I might say right through the Wellington Province—I cannot keep up with the demand for timber. No doubt Dunedin is suffering considerably from depression. There are a number of people in that city who have been over-speculating, and have now become very gloomy, and, speaking in common parlance, are "whipping the cat." But, if Dunedin has suffered by over-speculating and gambling in shares, I do not see why it should be said that, because Dunedin is dull and gloomy, the rest of the colony is in the same position. Let the senior member for Dunedin City tell the Government that, "Owing to your bad financial position, it is my intention to oppose any vote with which you may come down for the further prosecution of the Otago Central." Will the honourable member do that ? Would any Dunedin member do that ? In my opinion, that railway ought never to have been constructed. It was a political job in the first instance to take it where it was taken, instead of from Palmerston South. If that had been done a lot of money would have been saved, and the line might have been of some service. But I question very much if, even after the line is completed, it will ever earn sufficient money to pay for axle-grease. I see the honourable member for Waitemata shaking his head, but no doubt by the time the debate ends he will alter his mind, and become a little more liberal to the party which are opposed to him. If the senior member for Dunedin City had introduced a measure to make promoting bogus companies and floating shares on the market and issuing false prospectuses liable to punishment he would have done good service to the people he represents. The honourable member also states there is a falling-off in Customs, a falling-off in railway receipts, and in our staple product - wool. What are the facts? No

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doubt wool is low in price; but if you look at the price of cattle and sheep you will see they are correspondingly high. No later than this morning I find the following prices quoted from Christchurch and printed in the Wellington Times : Prime beef, 24s. to 26s. ; North Island bullocks, £12 to £12 10s. ; local heifers, \$6 17s. 6d. to £8 7s. 6d. ; calves, 22s. ; 3,000 mostly prime wethers, better price, and a rise of 1s. - heavy wethers, 22s. to 23s. 6d. ; best ewes, 16s. to 19s. 6d. ; others, 13s. to 15s. ; merino wethers, 14s. to 15s. 11d. ; store sheep, mostly wethers and hoggets-wethers, 16s. 10d. to 17s. 10d. ; best hoggets to 15s. 4d. ; others, 10s. to 13s. 10d. ; baconers, 35s. to 56s. 6d. - equal to 33d. to 4d. per pound. In the face of such prices, how can the prospect be gloomy ? I hope the statement I have made will cheer the hearts of those pessimists, more especially on our side of the House, who, unfortunately for themselves, take a very gloomy view of the Financial Statement. He also states that the Government have no sinking fund. In my opinion, a sinking fund in connection with our loans for public works should not be created until the whole of our public works are completed, because what is the use of having a sinking fund while we are going on the London market and borrowing money at 4 per cent. and are only receiving 3 per cent. for it here. I say the Government are wise in taking the sinking funds. In regard to the

falling off in the Customs, I have a list with which I shall be very pleased to enlighten those pessimists who have stated that they have fallen off. It is as follows :- Customs Duties collected during the last Ten Years for Period ending 31st March in each Year. 1,625,173 1892 .. 1893 1,642,595 .. 1894 1,655,503 .. 1,569,787* 1895 .. 1896 1,649,344 .. 1,818,893 1897 .. 1898 1,935,262 .. 1899 1,965,017 .. 1900 2,107,567* .. 2,180,862 1901 .. Change of tariff. Now, Sir, where does the falling-off 3.30. come in ? I think members of the House ought to be well satisfied with the figures I have placed before them. It will enable them to see that, as far as the Customs duties of the colony are concerned, they have not fallen off, but have rather increased. Then, the Government have dealt generously with the people. They recognised last year that the people were paying too much through the Customs revenue, and the reductions they made in that revenue in one year-1900-1901-amounted to £131,335, made up as follows :- Amount collected, Financial Year .900 have been collected 1 Amount that would under Old Rates. Loss of Article. Revenue. 1901. Tea 87,763 59,740 28,023 Currants and raisins 43,003 28,330 14,673 Candles .. 13,960 4,294 9,666 .. 1,960 Coffee, raw 780 1,180 Drugs, chemicals, 12,414 14,476 2,062 &c. Kerosene 22,947 70,947* 48,000 .. Matches, wax 4,440 5,090° 650 Medicines, patent 5,789 11,703 5,914 Rice 19,188° 5,188 14,000 .. Stearine 1,084 510 1,594 .. Wax, paraffine 6,388 8,542 2,154 .. Other articles 10,000 131,335 - Estimated. We were also told that, as far as the remission of these duties was concerned, it benefited the consumers largely. No doubt some of the remissions have given a benefit to the consumers, but if we take tea, for instance, I agree with other members that, as far as the cost of it is concerned, the consumer has not benefited at all by the reduction. As for kerosene, no doubt the consumers have felt the benefit of the remission. At any rate, it has been a boon to the settlers in the country districts. In view of the increased tariff placed on the people through the Customs tariff, it would be as well to have these facts Hansardised, so that those who read Hansard may understand how the Customs revenue has been increased. The following is a return showing the principal items on which revenue has increased for the year ending the 31st March, 1901, as compared with the previous year :-

Year ended	Year ended	Increase.
31st March, - 1900.	1901.	£
Spirits	444,618	421,782
22,836 .	Cigars 27,724	32,679
4,955	Cigarettes 4,160	54,219
50,059	Tobacco 263,101	278,944
15,843	3,516	Sugar 166,295
162,779	Ad valorem 707,972	94,520
802,492	Parcels post 18,350	14,810
3,540	149,370	This shows plainly that, as far as increased Customs duties are concerned, they only affect those who deal largely in luxuries ; and I consider that the Minister of Customs was perfectly justified, and is deserving of commendation-

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have just enumerated. The honourable member for Nelson City, in speaking on this debate, led one to imagine that he had a brief for the mortgagees of the colony. Well, I believe he has. There is no doubt that many mortgagees, more especially those who are trustees in trust estates, are very severely dealt with under this In my opinion, the Government mortgage-tax. ment would be wise if they wiped it off the statute-book altogether; and if it is necessary to raise revenue by any other means, then, I say, make an increase in the graduated land-tax. If that were done, in my opinion it would do a lot of good. It would necessitate those who occupy very large holdings at the present time, and who do absolutely nothing in the way of cultivation of these estates, to cut them up and closely settle them. Why, Sir, I do not know one of all those honourable gentlemen who have condemned this Statement this session who has not voted for every loan proposal that has been brought down by the Government. Surely to Goodness, if they made themselves so conversant with the financial position of the colony this year, they would have done it no later than twelve months ago, but to take their speeches then and compare them with the speeches delivered on the present occasion one would think they were not the same men at all. I say they are unfair to the Government they support, they are unfair to themselves, and if they were doing their duty to their constituents as they should do, and as they were pledged to do, they would return to them the trust

the people placed in their hands at the elections. Now, Sir, these men have not the courage to do that; they have not the courage to go before their constituents, but they say, " We are opposed to borrowing, we are opposed to any further expenditure of public moneys." No; they will come here and denounce the Government, and endeavour to assist, and assist in such a way that at election time they will hang on to the Government like grim Death, so that they will be returned by their constituents. When the honourable member for Nelson City was parading his figures before the House I made an interjection and asked if he had got his figures from the Treasury. He immediately replied to me that he had not. Well, I can assure the House that when the member for Nelson City made that reply I felt I had been right in supposing they were his own figures only. I thought, " Oh, well, it is all right, the country is safe." The honourable member for Ashley also stated that there were so many Commissions set up that it alarmed one. Well, I believe the only member it did alarm was the honourable member for Ashley himself, because I do not think any honourable gentleman in this House was more disappointed than that honourable gentleman when he was not put upon one of these Commissions. He also stated which, I think, was unfair and uncharitable—that the Premier, when he was in Pahiatua addressing the settlers there, denounced the Farmers' Union. The honourable member stated that he quoted Mr. O'Meara I have the newspaper here in front of me containing the speech which was delivered by the Premier on that particular occasion, and there is not one word of denunciation in the whole of that speech. I would like to quote just one little piece to prove that the honourable member is absolutely—well, I will say out of date in making a statement of that sort. At all events, coming from such a source, one would naturally take the statement the honourable member had made as a fact. This is what the Premier stated, and how the member for Ashley could twist it into a condemnation of such an organization I fail to understand :- "If the country settlers were to combine producers would obtain better prices for their products, and the good results would affect the inhabitants of the towns. Similarly, when lower prices ruled it affected the townspeople." Now, to be fair to the Premier, what the honourable gentleman should have stated was that the Premier did not denounce the union, but denounced the platform they started with, and he was justified in doing so. What was it ? It was purely and simply a Conservative platform. That was what he denounced ; he did not denounce a union of the farmers, or any other union. I do not think there is a country member, at all events, in this House who would not like to see the farmers unite so as to further their own interests, but not on any party political lines such as that which the organizer of the union endeavoured to secure by promulgating certain doctrines and distributing certain pamphlets, which would have led, in my opinion, to a resuscitation of the National Ass. That is now all altered. I hope, Sir, that the farmers will combine, and that they will be a strength in the country, in order that they may have their wants attended to. No member in this House has spoken more than I have done respecting the farmers' grievances, and I shall continue to do that so long as I am in this House, whether I am in opposition or supporting the Government of the day. I am not surprised at the honourable gentleman's utterances in this House, because we all know that when he was first returned for the constituency which he now represents he was returned as a member of the Conservative party. I am speaking of the honourable member for Ashley. In fact, I believe that he attended one of their first caucuses. If that is so, he would simply be returning to the fold which he deserted many years ago if he went back to them at this juncture. And perhaps he is wise, because we know that many years ago he predicted a change and supported the party that he thought was strongest in the country. He may have similar notions now ; but, at any rate, if he does return to that fold it will possibly be the last time he will have the opportunity of making a charge in this House. Then, Sir, we had the honourable member for Riccarton. He said that we had too much khaki in our streets. Did he not help to send away our contingents to South Africa? Now that our boys are returning, it appears they are compelled by some

military regulation to wear uniform until such time as they receive their discharge. That, Sir, is the reason why there are so many young troopers to be seen in uniform-they are compelled to wear that uniform. If the honourable gentleman, holding such views, had been doing his duty, even when the last contingent was proposed he should have stood up in this House and denounced the sending-away of our boys to South Africa. Did he do that? No-thing of the kind. Now, the member for Riccarton also spoke about the co-operative labourer. He said there were 5,600 co-operative labourers who were living on loan-money. Any country representative who knows anything about the co-operative labourers knows perfectly well that the honourable gentleman did not know what he was talking about. In my own district-in fact, in all newly settled districts in New Zealand-we have some of these men settled on the land, many of them on rough bush land, and in nearly all these settlements they were promised a certain amount of work by the Government. They have got that work, and many of them have become prosperous settlers, worked themselves out of debt, grassed their lands, and felled their timber. The result is that in all the constituencies the co-operative labourers consist of men who but for this system would have been cast on the streets in the larger centres of population. They are now perfectly independent of any Government, and all that they want is roads to give them the necessary means of access to their settlements, and they can live on the land by their own industry. The honourable gentleman also spoke about the Public Revenues Act. Now, what was his position in connection with this measure ? He said that the Premier had bribed certain members by the #40-1 forget whether he called it " bonus " or "steal," but we will call it "steal"-that the right honourable gentleman had bribed certain members to vote for this Public Revenues Act. What did the honourable gentleman do in connection with that measure ? On the first and second reading he actually voted for it. But when it went into Committee he did not appear on the scene at all, and when the third reading came on he deliberately ran away. Yet he is one of the members who stand up in this House and say, "I am here to represent the interests of my constituents and of the country generally." Why, then, was he not here on the third reading to exercise that vote which would have protected the interests of his constituents? What did he do the other night when the Advances to Settlers Bill was under discussion? When it came on for the third reading he stood up and denounced it in the most bitter terms. And what was the result ? He stayed here till the division on the third reading came on, and, as an honourable gentleman said the other night, the honourable member for Riccarton found a lobby for himself. That was the "central lobby," and he found himself outside the precincts of the Parliamentary Buildings. The honourable member also had a great deal to say about the large salaries being paid to our Civil servants. My opinion concerning the Civil Service of the colony is this: When we get a good man we should pay him well. We have lost many of our best men, more especially in the Railway service of the colony, through our parsimony. I would like to quote here the salaries paid by the New Zealand Midland Railway Company to their officers : In 1892 the general manager, Mr. Wilson, was paid \$2,400; in 1893, #2,500 ; in 1894, £2,600; and in 1895, #2,600. The Government should pay a man a fair wage for fair work done. If that is done we will have good public servants. There is another matter which I would like to put on record. It was stated on two occasions that the ballot for land in the Te Awamutu district was a miserable failure, and that there must have been corruption to enable one man to get so many sections. That statement has been harsardised. I have obtained a statement of the facts from the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Auckland, and I deem it my duty to place those facts on record in Hausari. The following are the facts : - " Re ballot, Te Awamutu, 20th July, 1900 .- In accordance with the request you made verbally just before my leaving Wellington for Auckland, I now forward to you the particulars of this wonderful transaction, concerning which I reported at the time for the information of the Cabinet. The Courthouse at Te Awamutu proving too small for the large number of applicants attending, we adjourned to the Public Hall adjoining, which is a building very much larger than the Courthouse, with a stage or platform at one end about 3 ft. higher than the floor of the hall. On the platform I had two tables,

one for the Receiver of Land Revenue and the larger one for the balloting. It occurred to me that the facilities of the public supervising the balloting were not as good as on previous occasions when it was taken on the floor, and I therefore requested the applicants, of whom there were enough to practically fill the hall, to select a scrutiner who might come on the platform and supervise the putting-in of the balls into the ballot-box and the correct reading of the successful numbers drawn. They duly nominated Mr. McCardle, and on the proposition being put he was unanimously elected. Mr. McCardle refused to act, but on being repeatedly pressed by several of the applicants he at last consented and came on the platform. Mr. McCardle, up to half an hour before the taking of the ballot, was a stranger to me as well as to all the officials present. Mr. McCardle took his seat on my right; the officer (Mr. Munro) working the ballot-box was on my left. I myself called out the numbers and names of the applicants, and Mr. Munro, as I called these out, dropped the respective balls into the ballot-box. The same officer closed the lid, turned the ballot-box backwards and forwards, shook it freely from side to side, and then reopened and, with averted face, drew one of the balls, handing same to me. I called out the successful number, and then handed it to Mr. McCardle, who likewise called out the number by way of check.

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names of successful applicants on a poster litho. as the ballot proceeded, and thereupon another officer (Mr. Redman), who had never before assisted at the ballot-box, took Mr. Munro's place. Throughout the whole of the procedure Mr. McCardle never dropped a single ball into the ballot-box, nor did he ever put his hand into the ballot-box to take one out. In fact, from where he sat he could not reach to the ballot-box or the boxes containing the numbered balls. The only occasion on which he handled a ballot-ball was after I had read the successful number aloud, and handed it to him to verify my reading, or on one or two occasions when he first read the number aloud, and I verified his reading. The statement, therefore, that Mr. McCardle had personally worked the ballot-box, had drawn the balls, et cetera, is absolutely without the very slightest foundation; and I may here add that the whole of the people present in the hall had a clear and uninterrupted view of everything that was going on in connection with the balloting on the platform. Now, as to the wonderful success of the McCardle family at the ballot: There were five members of the family, and four of these secured five sections. I append & list giving number of applications for each of the sections and number of the McCardle family applications, and after examination of that list the absurdity of the charge or insinuations made as to the questionable dealings must be apparent to every unbiassed mind:- "Section 4, Block VII., drawn for Mr. McCardle, sen., had to fall to one of the family, as there were only three applications lodged, and these three members of the McCardle family. "Section 1, Block I., was allotted to A. D. #cc-zero McCardle simply because he was the only applicant for the section. "Section 3, Block VII., fell to the lot of Miss McCardle. There were five applicants, and of these no less than three were McCardles. The law of probability was entirely in their favour, and there is no cause for amazement that the result of the ballot should be what it is. "Section 4, Block X.: There were twenty-four applicants, and of these one-sixth (four) were members of the McCardle family. "Section 2, Block X.: There were twenty-six applicants, and of these nearly one-fifth (five) were members of the McCardle family. These last two sections fell to the lot of W. W. McCardle, jun. "You will see, therefore, that the five cases of suspicious balloting may be summarised thus: Three out of the five cases had to turn out successful for the McCardle family, and, if they had not, then there would have been good grounds for suspecting 'foul-play,' and two out of the five cases are the ordinary occurrences of every-day balloting. I am very sorry to hear that this matter has been dishied up again -- not sorry for my own account, for we officials are accustomed to getting hammered and knocked about, and in nine cases out of ten we Mr. O'Meara that the McCardle family are dragged into this trouble and annoyance, knowing that they are absolutely innocent of the charges which have been made against them." That letter, Sir, is signed by Mr. Mueller, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland. As far as the ballot for this

land is concerned, and also the reputation of the McCardle family, there should not be the slightest suspicion. I have read this letter to have it inserted in Hansard to contradict statements that have already been put there by some honourable members. Now, Sir, it is a remarkable fact that some honourable members who denounced the Government in connection with what they termed "the £40 steal" accepted it, nevertheless. Those honourable members who protested very loudly reminded me of the action of Judas Iscariot. They received their £40, which was not pressed upon them at all, and before receiving it they had to sign a voucher in the Treasury. After having it in their possession for three or four days, they found that certain Conservative and other papers were commenting upon what they termed "the \$40 steal"; they rushed back to the Treasury and threw their forty pieces of silver-or gold- on the floor. They wanted then to pose as purists; but if the papers had not denounced the matter those honourable gentlemen would have put the money into their pockets and have said nothing about it. What did the honourable member for Waitemata do? After signing the voucher for it he took the money to his constituents, and actually tried to bribe local bodies in his district with it. But they said, "If this offends your conscience, keep it; we will not have anything to do with it." So the £40 was in that case returned to the chief misappropriator. It must be remembered that those who have made such a terrible fuss about this £40 business knew perfectly well when they were signing the voucher what they were signing for; and, as I have already said, were it not for the newspapers denouncing them, and denouncing the action of the Government in passing the £40 as they have done, they would have put it in their pockets, and we would never have heard a word about it. As far as I am concerned, I raise no objection to it. As I was not in the House when it came on, nor did I vote for it, I took it. I consider that members of this House, when one thinks of the many calls that are made upon them, are paid too little. \$300 per annum is, in my opinion, little enough for any member to draw. We have Wellington members, and, of course, they can attend to their business and attend to the wants of their constituents at the same time; but those of us who come from a distance, and have to spend the whole of our time here, and are put to considerable expense attending the session of Parliament- I say it fearlessly, and would say the same thing on the platform in addressing my constituents-I say \$300 is quite little enough for a member of Parliament to receive. Were he to keep it all it would be all right, but the amount that has to be given in donations

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and in charitable ways considerably reduces the amount of his honorarium. The public debt of the colony has also been adversely and severely criticized. I have already stated that, as far as the members of the House are concerned, those who differ from the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer differ also very materially among themselves in regard to the amount of the debt. I have taken some figures out and placed them in Hansard, and I defy criticism, and challenge those who will come after me to show wherein my figures are wrong. We had a gross public debt on the 31st March, 1901, of £49,591,245; on the 31st of March, 1900, we had a public debt of £47,874,451, or an increase for the year of £1,716,793. Now, how is this increase made up? Are the honourable members who denounced the money which was raised last year prepared to go before their constituents and say, "We disapprove, and if the question were to come up again we would denounce all these increases, and, in fact, disapprove of them"? I venture to say, Sir, that there is not one honourable member who has denounced the accumulations in connection with our national debt who would be prepared to go on the platform and say to his constituents that he would not increase the public debt by granting further loans to local bodies; that he disapproves of the Land for Settlements Act, because it increases the public debt; that he does not believe in the New Zealand Consols; that he does not believe in adding to our public works; and, as far as the advances to settlers are concerned, he would strike it out altogether, because that department increases the public debt by £380,000. The dairy industry also caused an increase of £1,781-a total, in all, of £1,694,683. Now, I feel sure I am correct in saying that any honourable member who goes before

his constituents and says that he would do away with these things that I have mentioned, because they increase the public debt, he would never see this House again. Now, if we take the gross public debt from 1891 to 1901, we find that on the 31st March, 1891, the public debt amounted to 138,830,350, whilst on the 31st March, 1901, it amounted to £49,591,245, or an increase for the ten years of £10,760,895, made up as follows :- Direct interest-earning- 2,075,566 Land-settlement 2,380,000 Advances to settlers . . Loans to local bodies 1,205,900 Lands improvement .. 500,000 Bank of New Zealand preferred shares 500,000 New Zealand Consols 459,389 District railways 47,000 Additions to open lines 625,000 Dairy industry 1,981 7,794,636 Non-direct interest-earning- Purchase of Native 649,700 lands 1,910,000 Public works Increase by conversion 646,312 Sinking fund accretions 1,407,700 Naval and military 27,226 settlers Government Accident Insurance 2,000 . . 4,642,938 Less redemptions- £12,437,574 "Consolidated Stock Act, 1,260,420 1894" Other debentures 416,259 . . 1,676,679 Increase of public debt, 1891- 10,760,895 1901 .. This is the amount of money borrowed by the Government since they came into power, and I challenge any honourable gentleman who has denounced the finances of the Government to go before his constituents and say that, so far as increasing the national debt is concerned, if such proposals are placed before the House, " [am quite prepared to denounce and vote against them," and not do as one of them did the other night- immediately the third reading comes on, through sheer funk, clear out and not record his vote. There is no doubt the Government have gone to a great deal of expense, and their hands have been forced. We had the war in South Africa, and we had to contribute largely to its cost by sending troops and horses, engaging boats, et cetera. Then, there was the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York; but the money spent on it will result in good to the colony. It is one of the best and cheapest advertisements the colony ever had. Members of this House, previous to all these things taking place, must have realised or anticipated the cost to be incurred; and why did they not denounce it, and oppose by their votes the idea of sending the contingents, or giving the Duke a reception in the colony ? No; the House unanimously agree to the expenditure, and when the Government have done their duty, and obeyed the will of the House, the result is, those who have a desire for Ministerial position turn and denounce them, and, like a pack of wolves, tear them to pieces for an act which they participated in themselves, and the responsibility of which they should share. In my opinion, the expense could not be avoided, and it has done a large amount of good. It has brought us prominently before the world, and, as a tourist colony alone, the number of tourists will recoup us a great deal of the outlay. I do not, certainly, believe in large borrowing, because if we go in for a large loan it would mean indiscriminate expenditure as in the past. We want to borrow small and well. What we want to do is to have all public works in hand at present completed. As a country representative-one who represents a roadless part of the colony-I demand that roads in the settlement of the back blocks shall be completed at as early a date as possible. If it is not done within a reasonable time- I have spoken strongly on this question ever since I have been a member of the House- and if my constituents are not fairly and well

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prepared to give the Government a term of seclusion, but not with the honourable gentlemen on the opposite side, but as a supporter of a selection of more progressive Ministers from this side of the House. I do not blame the Government altogether, because they have given sufficient money for roads and bridges ; but there is no doubt the Lands Department of the colony wants a clean sweep from beginning to end. That is my opinion of the Lands Department. I have in my own district, and have had for years, some men who are administering the construction of roads and bridges who are totally unfit and incapable of carrying out the work intrusted to them. I am pleased to say, however, that at present we have a most capable and most estimable man at the head of affairs : I refer to Mr. Hursthouse. It is a pity for the back blocks of the colony that that gentleman was not put in charge of roads and bridges many

years ago instead of allowing him to remain in an out-of-the-way place like Auckland for a number of years. I warn the Minister of Lands, however, that he must not put too much work on this gentle man's shoulders, otherwise he will destroy his efforts, and the result will be dissatisfaction. There is no doubt if the settlements in our back blocks were roaded it would mean prosperity to the colony. France, for instance, is a country many parts of which are cut up into small sections; and what was the result immediately after the war with Germany? How quickly the war indemnity was paid off by that nation. Mr. MASSEY .- By the freeholders. Mr. O'MEARA .- Well, I am not opposed to the freehold. However, what I say is this: We want small settlement, and it is no use putting poor men in the back blocks unless we are prepared to assist them by giving them access to a market. This they have not had so far. There are settlers in my district who have been for the last ten years completely isolated. They cannot get away from their homes, and as a consequence they must either forfeit their sections or starve, and if they remain on the land they certainly will starve. They have been there for ten years, and, having proved good settlers, they are fully justified in demanding that they should have roads and bridges to give them an outlet. We hear gentlemen on the other side of the House, and other members who represent town constituencies, denouncing the co-operative labourers in most unqualified terms. Well, I say without fear that if these workers had roads and bridges-and nine-tenths of them are settlers in the colony - they would be independent of Government work or of work from any one at all, because by their own industry they could earn sufficient to keep themselves and their wives and families. The fact is that these honourable members ought to realise that those who have been sent to make homes for themselves in the out-of-the-way places have come originally from the larger centres of population, and were sent to the co-operative works by a wise Government who relieved the colonies. Mr. O'Meara seems to forget that fact, because on every occasion possible they speak most disparagingly of the settlers in the back blocks, more especially of the co-operative labourers. With respect to our railways, I must commend our Minister for Railways for the exceedingly good Statement he has placed before the House. He has shown in the present Statement a substantial profit of £599,389, or of £3 0s. 8d. per cent .- a working profit ; and he has employed in his own department 2,836 men. I reckon that the railway-men of this colony are a credit to the colony ; they are a credit to the department they serve, and they are also a credit to the Minister who has charge of them. I hope, Sir, that he will treat them fairly, and that in the future he will pay them according to their work, because if he does not do that he will find he will lose the best of his men. I regret very much I have not sufficient time to deal with the decrease in the birth-rate. I have a lot of statistics here, and I was going to speak on the question to-day, as this is probably the only opportunity I shall have this session. But I would like to ask the Premier and the Government to consider the advisability of carrying out the proposals I have made to them from time to time. If members will take one State in Canada-Ontario-they will find that that State provides the head of a family, male or female, with two hundred acres of land ; and, speaking from memory, because I cannot find my note at the moment, Western Australia has paid for female immigration alone £22 per head of the population. It has cost us, in the way of immigration, an amount equal to £2 15s. 6d. per head of the present population ; so that if the Government were to encourage by such means as I have suggested the obtaining of large families, those who have families and are desirous of settling on the land would be able to do so. The Government, instead of bringing in a Bill which will be perfectly useless, would do a thousand times better if they offered them some inducement to obtain large families, and when obtained to see that the children did not die of starvation. Well, Sir, I hope the Premier will consider this, because in his Financial Statement he has discussed it, and he tells us that something should be done in the way of increasing the birth-rate of the colony. If he would take, for example, a family of seven-that is, five children and father and mother-he will find they contribute per head \$3 16s. 10d. to the revenue of the colony, totalling altogether for the seven £26 17s. 10d. Well, if he would only allow them the amount they contribute

indirectly to the revenue of the colony for a certain time that would in itself be sufficient to provide them with land to help them to live, and it could be credited against the land given to them by the State. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Time is up. Mr. McGUIRE (Hawera) .- Sir, we have had a very nice and interesting speech from the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, and he wound up with a subject in which he is very much interested-that is, the increase of

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we got them done in the right and proper way. than precept, and it would be better if the And I say it is a scandalous thing to borrow honourable gentleman practised and did not money in the English market, and tax the people preach so much. That is what I advise the to pay the interest on that money, and not get honourable gentleman to do. I understand, with a satisfactory result from it. We shall never all his talk, he has a very small family indeed. be able to get a satisfactory result until we Sir, I regret to say that I am suffering from a revert to the contract system. Every shilling severe attack of influenza, and had I obeyed my of public money borrowed and used for roads, doctor's order I should be in bed ; but I have bridges, and railways should be made to tell in always been accustomed to say something on the interests of the struggling settlers in the the financial debate, and, notwithstanding my back blocks and the taxpayers of the colony. I illness. I will endeavour to add my mite on this do not believe in keeping an army of six thousand men, and I feel satisfied I shall have the sand men, many of whom are determined to do consideration of members. Now, I think there as little as they can for the payment they re- is a good deal in what the honourable member ceive. It is quite wrong. If we had wisely for Pahiatua said about the Lands Department. utilised the money we have borrowed, and spent I think really that it would be an advance- it well in the past, and got our work done by tate to this country if the chief officials were contract, I am perfectly certain that we made a clean sweep of. They are behind the would have to-day many more hundreds of times ; it is impossible to infuse life or energy miles of roads and railways than we have at into them. I will, however, go fully into the the present time, and I say it is a sinful waste subject-matter, if my voice holds out, or time of public money to do nothing in the direction permits. With reference to the Department of I have indicated. We should do everything Roads and Bridges, I agree with the honourable gentleman that the Under-Secretary at the ture. If we were a people with sufficient head of this department is a very able engineer means that could take up our own loans, and and reliable man. The Hon. the Minister of the interest on them was paid amongst our own Lands is to be congratulated in having secured people, it would be all very well ; but, seeing such an efficient officer. He is a gentleman that the money has to be borrowed in the that I have known for years, and from my foreign markets of the world, and that the knowledge of him I am satisfied he will put interest has to be remitted to a distant coun- new life into this department. Every man in try, in the course of a few years this colony his department will be treated with consideration- will be in a worse state than ever Ireland was, so long as he does his work efficiently and was in. It is the absentee landlords that honestly, because he knows what a man is draw the money from that country, those who capable of doing. I would advise the men in spend their money in gambling on the Continent and other places, and this constant drain an honourable gentleman in another place- has been the curse of that unhappy country; namely, to do as little as they can, and to and so, when the money we have and are borrowed- get the most they can get for it. No one rowing shall have been spent, the payment of will notice a schemer more quickly or surely interest to the foreign money-lender will be than this gentleman. I refer, Sir, to Mr. drawing the life-blood out of this country, un- Wilson Hursthouse. He is a Taranaki man. less we have interest-earning assets and reproductive works ; but, in order to secure this, as place, and I am sure the Minister of Lands prudent men we should see that we get good himself has already recognised that. With value for our expenditure. We should continue reference to the small settlers that the honourable to borrow for roads, railways, and

other public able gentleman who has just sat down spoke works ; but we should be very prudent, and see of, I am in full sympathy with what he said. that we get full value, because I admit it is the What they want are good roads and bridges. greatest economy to spend loan-money on pub- If we are to assist these people in the back lic works, if it is well and wisely spent. But it blocks, we should provide them with those is wilful waste to use a single penny for politi- necessities, and give them the right to the cal purposes or patronage, or in order to secure freehold, and I am perfectly certain they will votes. By doing so we are bribing and corrupt- be able to work out their own salvation for ing the people, and wasting the moneys bor- themselves and their families. With reference rowed, which should not be wasted but econo- to the co-operative men, when these men were mically expended in developing the resources of got originally to work on the roads near their the country. own land, as proposed and carried out by the late Mr. Ballance, it was all very well, and labour ? the work done was satisfactory. But since they were taken from different parts of the coolie labour, and the honourable gentleman colony, principally from the large centres. and knows I would not; nor would I be a party knowing nothing of the work they were re- to a wilful waste for the sake of votes in order quired to do, the result has not proved satis- that I might be elected a member of this factory. I say this, and I am satisfied no House. There is no man in this House who one can contradict me, that we are paying would give good men higher wages than I at least from 33 to 50 per cent. more for would ; but I would expect a fair and honest these works than we should pay for them if day's work in return, as a private individual Mr. HOGG. - Would you import coolie Mr. McGUIRE .- No, I would not import

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that there are a number of honourable mem- bers who do not care what burden they place on the taxpayer so long as they can make poli- tical capital and secure votes. I hope the day is not far distant when members will be re- turned who will consider it their first duty to zealously guard the interests of the State, and then maladministration will be looked upon as a bad dream. Sir, I have known really good men come to Wellington and ask me for my influence to get them a job on the co operative works. I asked them " Why do you want to leave the work you are engaged on now ; you are making 8s., 9s., or 10s. a day on a small contract ? " They said, " I shall have less work, and I shall make as much money." Unfortunately, some of those hard-working men have not succeeded, and a few of them are in this city, and some of their wives and families are now receiving charitable aid, and the men have lost that self-reliance which cannot be estimated in £ s. d. If they had taken my advice they would pro- bably now have been settled on small farms inland of Stratford, and have a balance to their credit in the bank. I think we have done wrong in encouraging our young men to become co-operative workers and do the "Government stroke." The co-operative work should have only been relief-works, where particularly the old and inefficient workman could get employ- ment. Settlers who have become Crown ten- ants should get the first offer of work in the neighbourhood of their land, to enable them to make a cheque in order to fell bush on their properties. But some people are not content with any work unless it is under Government. Latterly it has been very difficult indeed to get men to do any kind of farm work, and therefore the exports have not increased as they would have done, owing to Government com- peting in the labour - market against the farmers. Any interference with the exports is hurtful and damaging to our country. It is the duty of this House and the Executive to aid and assist in increasing our exports. Our public works, I am satisfied, could be carried out more efficiently, with greater rapidity, and more economically under the contract system. But that would not suit the Government and many honourable gentlemen, because they de- pend in a great measure on the votes of the co-operative workers to be returned to this House. I may here say that I have always recommended co-operative workers to take up land, and when they cannot find employment on public works to improve their sections. I think it is unjust to bring men from other parts of the colony to compete with those who are endeavouring to make a home

for themselves and their families. I again say that we cannot carry on the work of railway construction satisfactorily under this system. Mr. HALL-JONES .- What about Stratford ? Mr. McGUIRE .- If that work had been done by contract it would have been finished now, and according to your time it will not be finished till Christmas. What about the Mako- Mir. McGuire contract it would have been completed at a much earlier period than it will be finished now, and thousands of pounds would have been saved to the colony. The honourable member for Pahiataua referred to the Farmers' Union. He seems opposed to that, as also was the member for Wairarapa; but Ministers of the Crown are very cautious now in saying anything disrespectful with reference to the Farmers' Union, because they know it will become a power in the land. The farmers have slept on their rights long enough ; it was high time that they should be up and doing. Sir, it is absolutely necessary for their interest that they should unite on a common platform and co-operate, by joining together as other classes in the community have done, for their mutual benefit, for unity is strength. Therefore prudent members, like Ministers, say nothing, although they dislike the movement. We find only members who have hopelessly committed themselves attacking it now. They think they are playing the game of their party by their denunciation ; but they never made a greater mistake in their lives, for the farmers have no party. The Farmers' Union has come to stay, and denunciations will have only one effect-namely, to cement it the more closely together. The bulk of the experts of the colony come from the farmers. It is only right and proper that they should organize in their own interests. They do not desire to interfere with other unions, which have no doubt done good service ; but the farmers want to look after their own interests, and a few self-seekers want to deny them that right. You all know that the farmers have been from the beginning of modern civilisation the foundation-stone of prosperity, and without them it would be impossible to get on. True statesmen have done much to assist, and warriors have fought and bled in order to extend boundaries and annex territories, but their victories would have been barren had not the tillers of the soil and the breeders of stock made the earth pay tribute to labour. The farmer prepares the way, and supplies the sinews of war to support the armies and the navies. The farmers are the real backbone of this country, and they have a perfect right to organize in their own interest. They should also organize in order to procure the best price for their produce in the markets of the world. They can very well do all those things, and I believe they can do more and do it effectually and well. I sincerely trust that they will endeavour to do away with party government, and I trust they will be successful. Some other and better system of government is badly wanted. I would like to see the elective Executive established. I am convinced it would give more satisfaction than government by party. The present Government are by no means a happy family. I have no desire, however, to enter into their quarrels ; but it would have been better for them and the country if there was a strong Opposition party in this House. There is one thing I should mention,

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and that is with reference to the purchase of solidated revenue, the several services of the colony have necessarily increased, and the land. Perhaps we have done well in the past, but I doubt it. Times have been very pro- strictest economy is necessary ; for if ever the time arrives when increased taxation is required sperous, but if we go on purchasing land at the to meet the ordinary expenditure, so surely will present high price, or at the prices paid in the past, I fear that the result will be that we reduction in salaries eventuate." shall be left with a lot of tenants that cannot pay their rent. I give this as a warning. revenue is concerned, I am sorry to see it is increasing by leaps and bounds. I think it is I think it would be far more prudent if 4.30. we were to settle the Crown and Native increasing unnecessarily ; I think we have lands of this colony and open them up with more Government ofhcials than are required ; roads and bridges, and so make them fit for they are falling over each other in the Govern- ment Buildings ; there are too many by half. thorough settlement. We place settlers on the I do not say the men are too well paid - I land, but we give them very little facilities. I believe in having good men and paying them only mention

that because I know there are in my own district settlers who would be only too well ; but I think we, as prudent men, should have as few Civil servants as possible. They pleased if the Government bought them out. I have no objection, but if a loss is made it will should be of the best class, and we should pay fall on the taxpayers. I can truthfully say that them well. Then again,- I know of no place in the whole of New Zealand so suitable for small farms as Taranaki. And why various causes well known to members, the is it suitable for small farms? Because of the fer- money-market in London continues to be un- tility of the soil. A hundred acres there have a favourable to floating loans, and we have had recourse to raising \$500,000 locally on short- greater carrying capacity than a hundred acres in any other part of the colony I know. It is mostly dated debentures bearing 4 per cent. interest. Full particulars of the floating of this local small farms that are there, but there are still a loan will be given." few large holdings, and I would be glad to see them cut up. But I would again, as a prudent understand that the whole of this half-million man, warn the Government that they ought to hold for a time, at all events, to see how things has not been borrowed locally, but a great part has been borrowed in Australia. I think it is are going to "pan out." The horizon is not very bright as far as business and prices are con- a pity to borrow too much locally, as it might cerned, and signs are not wanting that we may intensify the difficulty it is intended to pre- have-not in this country perhaps-a depression, vent. I was under the impression-and I am but if anything takes place in any other country still - that, in connection with the Advances it will surely affect us, especially if it is Great to Settlers Department, we should take the Britain. Should the workers be out of em- money from the Public Trustee or the Post- ployment for a short time it will reflect very Office Savings-Bank. This, I think, would be a very prudent thing ; but it was done other- quickly on a colony like this, which supplies them with a portion of their mutton, beef, wise. I have always supported the advances butter, and cheese, and other imports. There- to settlers, and I hope the Government will fore i think we ought to be exceedingly careful keep sufficient money in hand, because if in the meantime. Well, now, I do not intend they had not sufficient money in hand, and to say much on the Budget, but while I am on money were to harden in any way, money- my feet I would like to say a few words. The lenders might take advantage of the rise. It Treasurer says :- would be prudent for the Government to keep "The eager and pressing desire for the sufficient money in hand not necessarily to advance it in large sums, but let them attend construction of public works and conveniences has forced borrowing up to a limit beyond which to the financial wants of the small settlers first. it would not be safe to go. There need be no Many good and sufficient reasons could be cited why the money-market has hardened in the curtailment of expenditure in respect to obtain- ing lands for settlement or for roading back Old Country. The South African War, for in- blocks and Crown land, which so materially stance, has absorbed a great deal of money. assists in furthering the settlement of the people Now we come to the penny postage. It may bo on the land, or in respect to advancing moneys said that the time was not opportune to inau- gurate the penny postage; but I really and to settlers, or in pushing on the North Island Main Trunk and other important railways, honestly believe it to be a step in the right and in otherwise developing, within reasonable direction, and, in a few years' time, whatever loss we may make at the present will be fully limits, the resources of our colony, for this recouped, and a great benefit will be conferred means increasing the output of products and on the people of the colony. People write a exports, and tends to promote an increased population, which the colony badly needs." great deal more now than they did in years Now I agree with these sentiments to a certain gone by, and every one has an opportunity of extent, especially with reference to roads and being educated fairly at the public schools of bridges and opening up the country. If the the colony. I therefore think it is a step in the right direction. Now, the Treasurer makes a money is spent properly it cannot be better long statement here in reference to the land. expended than in that direction. Now I pass and income-tax, and especially as to the valua- on to another matter,- "Coming to the demands upon the con- tion. He says,- VOL. CXVIII .- 15. So far as the expenditure of the consolidated " I

regret again to have to state that, from It is all very well to borrow locally ; but I
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"A careful revision of the land-values of the colony is now in progress, but it will take some time yet to complete this work. The result so far is a net increase of the capital value of £8,390,000, and of the unimproved value of £6,375,000. The gain to the land-tax revenue this year I estimate at #10,000, and I see no reason, notwithstanding the unfortunately low price of wool, why the land-tax should not increase year by year in sympathy with other heads of revenue until, at all events, the whole revision of the valuations has been completed." He might as well have said thirty millions if he had the right sort of valuers. I say that, so far as I know, the lands of the colony are far too highly valued. I am perfectly certain that, so far as the district I come from is concerned, the Government has put an inflated price on the land, and I do not know what it has been done for unless it is to get money from the settlers to replenish the Treasury. I think it is not a proper thing to raise land-values in that way, and if the farmers protest against it they have only Hobson's choice. If they object they are told, "We will take the land at the price." Well, many men place greater value upon their homes than the actual value, and are not prepared to sell them for what would be a fair marketable price, so that they have to pay taxation upon an excessive value. In 1879 the Property Assessment Act was passed, and in the amending Act of 1882 it was provided that the Property-tax Commissioner should furnish a roll to the local bodies. By the same Act of 1882 the local bodies had the power of making alterations, but now they have no power of that kind. Freedom from expense and the privilege of correction was enjoyed by the local bodies from 1882 to 1891, when the property-tax was repealed and the land- and income-tax imposed. Now, almost one of the first votes I ever gave in this House was in favour of the land-tax. I did not believe in the property-tax, and I do not believe in it now. I think it was a cruel thing to tax people for all the improvements they made. A man who worked early and late improving his property was taxed upon his improvements. I think that was unfair, and I certainly voted for the repeal of that Act and for the introduction of the land-tax. From 1891 to the passing of the Government Valuation of Land Act, in 1896, the local bodies were again left to make their own valuations ; but now the whole thing has been changed by the Valuation of Lands Act. The cost has now to be borne by the Valuation Department, the Land-tax Department, and the local bodies ; but, although the local body is made to bear a portion of the cost, nevertheless it has no right whatever to change the valuation ; that must be done by the Valuer-General. And, in connection with the revision of the roll, I may say the whole of the work falls on the clerks of the County Councils and other bodies. They have to make all the necessary corrections and send them on to the Valuer-General. And no alteration whatever is considered legal until it is accepted by the Mr. McGuire Valuer-General. Another thing I thoroughly believe in is manual and technical education. Of course, the vote has had to be increased to a considerable extent, but I believe the additional expenditure will be fully repaid. As to the abolition or reduction of the mortgage-tax, I think something should be done in that direction. To my mind, it is very unjust to impose a mortgage-tax as it is imposed at present, especially when people lend money at a very low rate of interest. It is only fair that a private person should be placed in the same position as the Government, and I consider it to be the duty of the Treasurer in the interests of justice, and in justice to the widows and orphans, to make a change in the direction I have indicated, providing the money is lent at 4) per cent. Now, with reference to the Crown tenants and the rebate of rent made to them last year, I was in favour of that, though it has not worked out as satisfactorily as might have been expected. I consider the Crown tenants should get every facility so far as roads and bridges are concerned, and I think that a person who takes up land now and in the future should have no rent to pay, especially in the case of bush lands, for a number of years, until he can make something out of his holding. I notice that the Treasurer is taking steps in this direction, and I trust the proposed policy will be initiated, because there are very few in this House except country members who have any idea of the real hardships the

settlers in the back blocks have to undergo, especially where they have to carve out homes for themselves in the bush. It is the duty of the Government to assist them in every possible direction, and any thing that will make their lot a happier one will certainly have my support. For my part I have always advocated assisting the settlers in the back blocks, because I know so well the great difficulties they have to contend with, and I have always felt sorry for them. Another thing I should like to call attention to is the rapid strides that have been made in the provincial district from which I come during the past ten years. A recent review says :- " In ten years the population of Taranaki has increased by over 60 per cent., as compared with 42 per cent. in Wellington Province. Looking at the trade of the province it appears that the exports of butter have grown from 1,678 tons in 1891 to 6,055 tons in 1900; cheese from nothing to 1,688 tons; frozen meat from 2,455,277 lb. in 1891 to 5,527,320 lb. in 1900; wool from 658 bales to 3,074 bales; while other lines also show large increases. Bacon, which did not appear in the list of exports ten years ago, last year amounted to \$24,370. Altogether, including the ports of New Plymouth, Waitara, and Patea, the exports were valued at £760,567, equal to more than \$20 per head of population. while the average for the whole colony in 1899 was less than \$16 per head. In 1891 there were 10,915 horses, 103,356 cattle, 270,559 sheep, and 22,759 pigs in the province; in 1900 the numbers were 17,741, 214,071, 508,665, and 37,371." In any other part of New Zealand the amount per head does not total more than £16, so that

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Taranaki is leading the van in this direction. Therefore, if honourable members have any friends who want to better their position men with some means, possessed of energy, and also possessed of industrious wives and families- they should advise them to settle in Taranaki. If honourable members have the welfare of their friends at heart they will certainly advise their friends to go to Taranaki and take up land there. There is certainly no place where a man of energy and small means can make a living as he can in Taranaki. Sir, I am suffering from a cold, as honourable members must have noticed, and for that reason will bring my remarks to a close. I thank honourable members for the patient hearing they have given me. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- Sir, I have no intention of referring in detail to the finances of the colony as submitted to us in the Statement now under discussion. Speaking broadly, it seems to me that the Statement shows that the position of the colony is perfectly sound. Some honourable members who have been attacking the various proposals of the Budget have complained that the amount we have borrowed since the present Government came into office has been largely in excess of the amount that ought to have been borrowed ; but, Sir, if the honourable gentlemen who adopt that line of argument will have the fairness to deduct from the total sum borrowed the amount that has been invested in real estate-in the purchase of land under the Land for Settlements Act-the amount re-lent at interest, and the amount expended in interest-earning services, they will find that the balance of the money borrowed, and which may fairly be called an addition to the public debt of the colony, is not at all disproportionate to the increased population and the increased wealth of the colony. Sir, I look upon the question of the settlement of the lands of the colony as the most important question to which the Government can address themselves or which this House can discuss. It, Sir, is at the foundation of all possible progress and prosperity that we should have an increase of land-settlement. Sir, the present Government, if it is deserving of credit for anything, is deserving of credit for the manner in which it has endeavoured to place, and has succeeded in placing, people upon the lands of the colony. Mr. WITHEFORD .- Except in the North Island. Major STEWARD .- The honourable gentleman is very anxious that I should refer to the North, and I will do so presently. I have endeavoured, Sir, to find out from two statements that we have before us precisely what has been done in this direction during the past year ; and I find, Sir, in the Budget, at page vii., a tabulated statement which runs as follows : "The purchase of land for close settlement is being vigorously pushed forward." I shall have something to say as to what I think about that

passage presently; but in proof or at- tempted proof of the fact that it is being pushed vigorously forward, we have the table to which I refer, and which states as follows :- "The following table gives the names of the provincial districts in which the land during the year has been purchased, the acreage, and the prices paid therefor :- Price. Acres. Hawke's Bay- £ Hatuma 26,350 141,618 .. Mangatoro 19,550 87,975 Wellington- Langdale 9,406 30,669 .. Mangawhata 1,226 16,129 .. Maungaraki 423 3,000 .. Epuni 103 9,146 Marlborough- Waipapa 3,600 8,250 Canterbury- 4,243 Lyndon 15,750 Kohina 3,864 28,093 .. Raincliff 745 2,424 Taranaki 2,858 32 .. Pukaka 39 981 Mrs. Delargy . . 100 300 Otago - Earnsclough .. 1,152 3,000 .. Total .. \$350.193 70,833 .. Now, Sir, although this table professes to give the amount of land purchased during the past twelve months, I think it is obviously incorrect, inasmuch as the very first line, "Hatuma, 26,350 acres, £141,618," was, I believe, pur- chased during the previous year, and only came up for payment during the present year. If that estate were omitted. it would leave a balance of £210,193 as the total that has been expended in land purchased for settlement pur- poses during the year 1900-1901. But, Sir, these figures do not tally with the figures in the Lands Report itself. These, curiously enough, are also given on page vii. The figures in the Lands Report, which was laid on the table yesterday, are these, - "During the present year ten estates, con- taining 43,942 acres, were dealt with. The cost of the land purchased was #168,193." Now, whether the #168,000 or the £210,000 is the correct figure, and giving the Govern- ment the advantage even of the statement of the Treasurer that the amount is \$210,000, it will be seen that that does not bear out the opening statement that "the purchase of land for close settlement is being vigorously pushed forward" ; inasmuch as this House has granted authority for the expenditure of \$500,000 a year for the purpose of purchasing land for settle- ment, while even on the very best showing not more than two-fifths of that amount has been so expended. Sir, it seems to me, indeed that a partial paralysis has fallen upon the Lands Department in connection with this very im- portant branch of the duties of the Govern- ment. Mr. WITHEFORD. - More espe- 5.0. cially in the North Island. Major STEWARD .- My honourable friend says, " Especially in the North Island." Well, that may be so, though I am thinking of the South myself; but I am quite prepared to hear from the honourable gentleman that this acqui-

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North Island ought to be carried on as vigor- ously as in the South. I agree that it ought to be carried on vigorously in both parts of the colony, and it is not satisfactory to find that, while the Government was given authority to expend \$500,000 for these purposes, and whereas the previous moneys that have been expended in purchasing land have been yield- ing good interest on that expenditure, there has only been about 2200,000 so expended during the past year. I hold that there is no excuse whatsoever for the Government staying their hand, and not going half as far as this House has authorised them to go. Therefore, I hold that the manner in which the policy of land for settlements is being carried out is not satisfactory to this House, inasmuch as it ought to be going on very much more ex- tensively and rapidly than it is at the pre- sent time. And now, in connection with the North Island, I will just say, in passing, that we have had from year to year during the last quarter of a century and more I can remember for thirty years in this House-we have had in those thirty years many honour- able gentlemen holding the position of Native Minister coming down to this House, pointing out the difficulties there were with regard to Native land tenure in the North Island, and showing how necessary it was that the large areas in the hands of the Natives that they did not require for their ow!Suse should be thrown open for European settlement, and yet what has been the result? I remember when that honourable gentleman, who used to be called "Te Makarini," Sir Donald McLean, -was Native Minister; he was believed in most thoroughly by the House, and was given every- thing that he asked for. I remember, too, when he was succeeded by the late Mr. Sheehan, who used to be familiarly spoken of as " Johnny Sheehan." We had him making his proposals in this House. I have seen Native Minister after Native Minister - I have seen the Hon. the Premier himself

try his hand at this business ; and now we have in that position a gentleman who is himself of Maori blood, and who is supposed to more especially understand the matter, taking it in hand, and, with the greatest possible good faith, those of us who do not profess to be Maori doctors have supported those gentlemen one and all in the demands they have made for legislation to accomplish what we would all admit would be a good thing to have done-namely, the opening up of surplus Native lands for settlement. But only the other day the member for Napier, Mr. Fraser, who claims to know all about Native land legislation, declared that the position is worse to-day than it was before we passed the Bill of last year. I recommend the honourable gentleman, who is a strong Government supporter like myself, who has great influence in Auckland, and who has two or three times lately made interjections on the necessity for land settlement in the North Island (I refer to Mr. Witherford), I recommend him to bring pressure to bear to secure that we shall have ! Major Steward as will enable the large area of land which I believe is practically tied up at present to be thrown open for settlement in the Island in which he is so much interested. I speak with a great deal of interest in this matter of land settlement, because the portion of the colony from which I come has naturally been the theatre very largely of these operations. Sir, I say "naturally," because we have good agricultural land, open land, land that is admirably adapted for wheat-growing, and, indeed, for any agricultural purpose ; and it is a matter of fact that within the electorate which I have the honour to represent there are some ten or a dozen settlements under the Land for Settlements Act. I am glad to find that they are all prosperous settlements, and if honourable members will refer to a table appended to the Lands Report they will find that statement borne out. In the Pareora Settlement there are twenty-five resident selectors-that does not include the families of the selectors or their employes ; Studholme Junction, 3; Kapua, 10; Otaio, 9; Waikakahi, 132 ; Pareora No 2, 25 ; Pungaroa, 10; Maerewhenua, 61; Tokarahi, 43. Those numbers do not include Nukuroa and Wainono, which were not taken under the Land for Settlements Act, but were obtained by exchange. The number of settlers in those settlements is about forty, making a gross total of about 358. You may count the settlers' families and employes at not less than five in each case, so that if you multiply that number by five you have a total of 1,790 persons placed on the land in my electorate alone. As to how those settlements are progressing, I may read what appears in the Lands Report : With regard to Pareora, we find, "satisfactory, and settlers prosperous " ; Studholme Junction, "satisfactory progress " ; Kapua, "satisfactory ; floods troublesome." There a creek runs close by the settlement, and, owing to its peculiar location-the land having originally been a swamp-the settlers are liable to be flooded out at certain periods of the year. I have frequently urged upon the Minister that he should carry out certain drainage-works-not necessarily expensive-which would enable the settlers to utilise their holdings to the greatest advantage. They have for two or three years suffered very great loss, and, though there has been a small expenditure of \$150, it has not satisfactorily coped with the difficulty; and, as I think the expenditure of another £100 would put these settlers in a comfortable position. I hope the Minister will provide that relief which is necessary for them. Then as to Otaio, the report reads, "doing well." As regards Waikakahi, we have "prosperous; advance considerable." Any honourable member who travels along the main South railway-line between Studholme Junction and Glenavy will, if he looks out of the carriage windows-particularly on the right-hand side . as the train is running nearly the whole distance through the Waikakahi Estate, be pleased to see the comfortable homesteads of numbers of thriving settlers on that estate. Formerly-even in

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the busy season at shearing-time-there were probably not one hundred persons working on the Waikakahi Estate. Now, there are some eight hundred people on that estate, and if you look at the railway-stations as you pass through you will see piles of grain alongside the line, which has been grown by the settlers. Then, with regard to Pareora No. 2, the report says "improvements substantial"; and of

Punaroa, " large holders doing well ; small backwards." What that means is this: in a few instances the areas have been too small, and that is a matter which should be taken notice of in the laying out of these settlements in the future. Then, there is the Maerewhenua, of which we read, " heavy loss by hailstorm ; condition sound " ; and Tokarahi, the condition of which is stated to be "very satisfactory." Thus, Sir, we have a satisfactory report with regard to the whole of the settlements in my district. But, Sir, the earth-hunger is by no means satisfied ; there are still hundreds of young men, sons of settlers, who desire to settle upon the land and to have homes of their own, and there is not enough land being put in the market to enable them to do so. Some honourable members say, "Well, let them come to the North Island " ; but what is the use of their doing that? My friend opposite says that there is not sufficient land there for the demands of their own people, and I believe he is quite right. I contend that whilst there is a considerable amount of land obtainable at a reasonable price-as there still is in the South Island-that land ought to be obtained, and also in the North Island, wherever the same circumstances occur, land ought to be got so that men from the particular neighbourhoods may settle on it. I mean by this that men accustomed to the bush districts of the North Island are far better able to take up areas of bush land, and to gradually convert it into farms, than men from the South who have never seen a stick of timber growing ; and I contend that if the North Island lands are settled by the sons of men who have themselves lived in the North Island, those sons will be well acquainted with the best way of dealing with bush land, and we shall have much better and more successful settlement than if the settlers are brought from the South. Therefore, it follows that land should be opened up in both Islands, and I say that the remark which the Premier has made in his Statement to the effect that this policy is being vigorously carried out is not borne out by the facts. There was certainly vigorous progress two or three years ago, but there has not been the like progress during the past year. It is true that it has been an exceptional year ; Ministers had for months to travel about to attend various functions, some of them being out of the colony for considerable periods, and for that reason perhaps it is not fair to harshly criticize. These circumstances have, however, now passed away, and I wish to give a clear indication of my feeling, and it is that this policy of settlement which I have heartily and consistently supported for years past must now be pushed on vigorously ; and if this is not done, then those who like myself have hitherto given a loyal and unwavering support to the Government will have to consider whether in the future that support should be continued to the same extent. Some honourable members have urged that this policy of purchasing land for settlement should not be pushed on just now, because they consider that it is quite possible that there will be a slump in the values of land, and that in consequence the Government will stand to lose. In reply to this I would point out that, so far as I am aware, in the case of my own district at any rate, there has not been during the past two or three years any marked increase in the value of land, and if it was wise to buy land two years ago at the price then paid for it, I say that it is not unwise to buy land now. It is quite true that wheat is selling at a very low price this year, but it is also true that for several years past it has been selling at a low price. It is further true that oats are now selling at a paying price. Mutton is at a good paying price, and though wool is at a phenomenally low rate, I think that that very fact is an argument that that low rate cannot long continue to be maintained. There is not likely to be any further fall, and I think I can show reasons for the low price of wool, other than that of large production. I believe that there is a combination for the special purpose of keeping down the price of wool, and I think that this is one of those matters which will have to be dealt with, though it is difficult to say at present in what way these combinations and trusts are to be put down ; one thing is certain, and that is that they are undoubtedly making great mischief. Now, Sir, also in connection with this matter of lands for settlement, I want to say a word or two about the roading of the settlements. The Land for Settlements Act very properly provides that before land is opened up for application there shall be added to the purchase price a sum which, in the Minister's opinion, is sufficient for the purpose of roading the land acquired, and then the rentals are

based upon the total sum, including the allowance made for roading, and consequently the settlers pay through their rents for the roading itself. But, Sir, the roads are not always made-the roads in respect to which they are paying this increased rental- and i object altogether, as a member for a district which contains many of these settlements, to have to go to the Minister and urge him, as a matter of grace, that these roads should be made for the benefit of the settlers placed on any particular block of land, when the cost of the roads has already been actually paid by the settlers for the very purpose of making them. Yet, this notwithstanding, I have found myself over and over again in the position of having to apply to the Minister of Lands for a grant of a hundred pounds, or a couple of hundred pounds or so, for this or that road on the application of the settlers, backed up by the recommendation of the County Council, and I am usually told that the matter will be taken into consideration ; and when the

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finds that the Minister has had to reduce the estimates of his department, and that the result is that a number of these roads have been struck out so as to make the amount of the total vote as small as possible. I protest against this as being altogether an unjust state of things. If the amount intended to be spent for roading is added on, as it is added on, to the purchase-price, and the rent is based on the total sum, then this is what ought to happen-namely, that the sum so loaded on to the purchase price should be placed at the disposal of the local governing body for the purpose of carrying out the necessary roads and works on that particular land. If that were done there would be no occasion for complaint, and the Minister is practically provided with the funds for doing it. Then, it is not only a matter of roads, there is occasionally a demand for drains. It arises in this way : Take the case of the Waikakahi Estate of 38,000 acres. Suppose there is an area of 400 or 500 acres, in an estate of 38,000 acres, which is during a considerable period of the year under water, it does not so very much matter to the owner of the 38,000 acres, because he has 37,500 that are not subject to flood, and it might not be a disadvantage to him to have occasionally what is practically a small lake within the area of his estate. But when that estate comes to be cut up, and perhaps half of that particular 500 acres is under water, and forms part of a 400-acre farm, then it becomes a very serious thing for the occupier of that farm. It therefore becomes necessary, when providing for the requirements of these settlements in this way, that provision should be made not only for roads giving access to the several sections, but also for the carrying-off of water, where necessary, so as to prevent any of the holdings being flooded. There are one or two instances of the kind which I have had to bring under the notice of the Minister. The cost of remedying the evil was in no instance more than 4150 or \$200, and I submit that the settlers have just as good a right to ask for assistance in this direction as they have in the matter of roads. Now, there is one other point in connection with the acquirement of land for settlement. Speaking generally, the Government have made a success of it ; but there are, as was inevitable, one or two instances of failure-Pomahaka is undoubtedly one; but it should be admitted openly and plainly, and the rents should be reduced to a sum which the tenants could afford to pay. There is no use mincing matters in an endeavour to show that no mistake has been made. Let us admit that a mistake has been made. It was to be expected that some mistakes would be made ; but, even admitting the mistakes, the whole thing has been a great success ; let us admit the mistakes, and let the rents be reduced to such a sum as the land is capable of bearing. But, in my opinion, there needs to be some recognised system of reducing the rentals when they are found to be too high. We have had from time to time a Fair Rent Bill brought before the House, but it is never Major Steward ties surrounding the practical carrying out of the principle of the Fair Rent Bill, and the principal difficulties have been brought about by the adoption of the 999 years' lease. If there had been no such thing as that, but only a perpetual lease with revaluation, then there would be no great difficulty about a Fair Rent Bill. If a Fair Rent Bill is passed some provision will have to be made for the 999 years leaseholders ; what direction that should take- whether by allowing them, as proposed by the late member

for Selwyn, to pay off, say, nine-tenths of the freehold price, still leaving the Crown in the position of landlord, but enabling the rentals to be reduced to a comparatively nominal sum-is a matter for the House to determine; but if some such concessions were made the holders of leases in perpetuity might not resent what they would otherwise consider a breach of faith-namely, bringing them under a Fair Rent Bill, one of the possible results of which might be their rents being raised on the demand of the Crown. If a Fair Rent Bill is passed, provision will, of course, be made for the reduction of rentals where they are too high. There are undoubtedly cases where they are too high, and what is to be done to meet these cases ? If there are to be no means of reducing the rent when it is excessive, then the settler must be starved out ; that is to say, if the land does not produce enough to pay the rent, and leave him a livelihood, in the course of time everything he possesses must be swallowed up. Now, what advantage is there in dispossessing a man who, at a fair and reasonable rent, would be a good tenant, for the purpose of putting another man in his place? It is only when the first tenant is displaced that the Land Board has the power to reduce the rent, but there should be power to reduce it to the man in occupation. It should not be necessary that he should be first turned out and another man, who is no better settler than he, put in possession on more favourable terms. In connection with this matter of land-settlement I want to say a word or two about the railways. We are all quite satisfied to have them administered by the honourable gentleman who is now at the head of the department. For myself, I believe he is the best Minister we could find in the House, and probably the best in the colony. And I congratulate him on a good deal he has done in connection with the railways. It is wise, so far as it goes, no doubt, to say that you should not require the railways to earn more than it costs the country to make them. The honourable gentleman's policy is, I understand, that the railways should not be required to earn more than 3 per cent .. and that any balance over shall be returned to the users of them. I think he may well go even further: for I deny that it is necessary in principle that the railways should be made to earn any interest at all. For, what is a railway but an improved road ? Now, we have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds-nay, millions-in making the roads of the country. Do we require the settler to pay interests on these roads ? Not a single penny.

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Major STEWARD .- Not a single penny for sary that more rolling-stock should be obtained. And, further, I want to point out to the honourable gentleman the use of them. The honourable gentleman may say that we get interest on the cost of the rolling-stock and to the House that it is absorbed in an indirect way through the land-tax ; but it is utterly necessary for our farmers and settlers that there should be sufficient shed accommodation, but, while that is true, it is also true that we get at people through the land-tax in respect of taxation at the railway-stations for the storage of railroads in precisely the same way. So that, their produce during the time it has to remain for the purposes of my comparison, it is fair to there before it can be forwarded by rail. If the gentleman says that we do not make them pay anything in honourable gentleman travels down the main line between Christchurch and Dunedin he will respect of roads, while we do make them pay in see, as he runs through Canterbury in particular, respect of railways. I am quite aware that the colony cannot afford to make a big loss upon at every small station, as well as at the larger stations, piles of grain lying alongside the line the railways, because any such loss must be made up in some way or other ; but I challenge which cannot be put into the sheds because the position altogether, that it is absolutely sheds are not large enough. True, it is covered necessary, as a matter of principle, that rail- with tarpaulins so far as the department is able ways should be made to pay interest upon the to cover it-that is, perhaps, on one side, while the other is left exposed to the weather ; but cost of their construction. It is only as a matter of expediency, not of principle, that we have that is a most unsatisfactory state of things, do that ; and, so far as the honourable gentleman more particularly when grain is at so low a price man is able to go, I think he should go in the as it is now, and when the farmer finds it most difficult to make both ends

meet. Under such way of reducing freight upon such articles as wheat and wool, which are now at an exceed- circumstances it is absolutely necessary that the farmer should be able to send his produce ingly low price. The best way of helping the to market in the best possible condition. In- producers of the colony-the very best way by which the Government can help them deed, it is a question almost of life and death to -is to reduce the cost of sending their pro- him that his grain when passing through the railway should be properly protected. I know duce to a port. And if honourable gentlemen will look at what is done in other countries, the honourable gentleman is most anxious to -take America, take even Russia, where they do his best for the public, but concerning these have thousands of miles of railways from, say, grain-sheds I have sent in request after request, and so far, at any rate, I have not received the interior of Siberia to the seaports-and they the definite and satisfactory assurances which I will marvel at the very low rates at which pro- duce is carried. Surely, Sir, claiming as we look for. The honourable gentleman is always do. sometimes perhaps a little unwisely, to lead exceedingly polite, always courteous, and I be- the world with regard to our legislation and lieve he is always willing to do what he can ; but administration, we ought to see that New Zea- good-natured people like myself, I am afraid, land does not lag behind in this particular, and are very apt to be shunted on to a side-rail. that, so far as we are able, we should reduce the I want now, therefore, from my place in the cost of the conveyance to port of the produce House, to say to the honourable gentleman that which we have to send to markets outside the I have endeavoured to get him to come and colony. The conveyance of the produce of farm see for himself what are the requirements of or station to the seaport should, I hold, be my district, but he has been unable to do so reduced to the lowest possible limit. The because of circumstances during the recess honourable gentleman has had a very diffi- which took him elsewhere. 'Therefore, I urge cult task, I know, Sir, in endeavouring to upon him again that provision must be made overtake the demands of the enormous ex. for these requirements, because it really is a tension of our railway business, and not vital matter for the settlers. the least of those difficulties has been that of Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER left the chair. providing sufficient rolling-stock. Even now there is a shortage in this respect. I may tell him that I have in my pocket now a letter that only arrived by the last o'clock. mail containing a complaint from a settler that he cannot get what are called "T" trucks ; although he has given a week's notice member for Waitaki will perhaps pardon me he cannot obtain them ; and in view of such interrupting him continuing his speech while complaints it seems to me that there is still I make certain statements to the House. I not sufficient rolling-stock to overtake the re- have been requested by the Hon. Sir Maurice quirements of the railway business. I think O' Rorke, the Speaker, to read the following the honourable gentleman himself is prepared communication to the House: - to admit that. I know that he is doing the best he can to overtake it ; but, at the same time, as representing a large agricultural dis- "To the Members of the House of Representa- trict, and the grievance being one that affects such large numbers of my constituents, who are inconvenienced because of the insufficiency of rolling-stock in the hands of the department, it myself from the Chair; I intend going to Auck- The hour of half-past five having arrived, HOUSE RESUMED. The House resumed at half-past seven # MR. SPEAKER. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- The honourable "Speaker's Rooms, Wellington, 5th September, 1901. tives. " Owing to ill-health I am obliged to absent <page:240>

dulgence to me during my absence, which I hope will not extend beyond the coming week. "G. MAURICE O'RORKE." Mr. SEDDON (Premier). - I am sure, Sir, that courtesy will be extended to our worthy Speaker. We are delighted to know that he is on a fair way to recovery, and we shall be glad to have him with us again. # DEPARTMENTAL STATEMENTS IN HANSARD. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER had to state that the Railways Statement and the Mines State- ment were laid on the table of the House, one on the previous day and the other that afternoon ; but as there was a standing rule that those documents were not to appear in Hansard unless a motion to that effect was carried, he would ask the honourable gentle-

men who laid those documents on the table whether they desired that they should appear in Hansard. " > Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) thought it was important that the Railways Statement and the Mines Report should appear in Hansard ; and he desired to move that the Railways Statement should appear in Hansard at the end of the financial debate, and his colleague would similarly move to have the Mines Report included. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why ? Sir J. G. WARD .- If it came right in between members' speeches it would stop the whole sequence of the financial debate, which he did not think would be generally approved by honourable members. Captain RUSSELL (Hawke's Bay) asked where the Railways Statement was? The House had not got it. Sir J. G. WARD said he had laid the Railways Statement on the table early in the afternoon. He had received a note that the Government Printer hoped to have members' copies circulated that evening. They had been detained on account of a plan attached to one particular return requiring to be re-lithographed. It had been simply an accident, and he was advised that the moment this was done the Statement would be circulated. The whole two thousand copies of the Statement were finished in the Printing Office on the previous day. The Printing Office was not responsible for the delay, but the hitch in connection with the lithographing of a plan had necessitated the re-lithographing of it, and it had to be in its proper place. Captain RUSSELL asked, as a point of order, if the House had any right to accept, as a public document to be printed in Hansard, a report which was not in the possession of members. The report, they were told, had been laid on the table of the House, but he was really beginning to doubt if it had been laid on the table. At any rate, it appeared that the document laid on the table was not the document members were subsequently to have in their possession. Mr. Deputy. Speaker Captain RUSSELL said they had been told it was to be altered. It might be a matter of lithographing or something of that sort, but, at any rate, the report has gone from the custody of the officers of the House, and the document to be submitted to members was not the same document that the honourable gentleman had laid on the table Sir J. G. WARD said, Yes, the document was exactly the same. He could assure the honourable gentleman he was mistaken. Captain RUSSELL said he had been informed by his friend on the right that the report was still on the table, and, if so, that modified his contention. However, he contended that the report passed out of the custody of the officers of the House, and went into the custody of the Printing Department, and therefore did not properly remain as a document in the possession of the House. Under those circumstances the House had no right to deal with any document that did not remain on the table or in the custody of the officers of the House. He did not agree with any deviation from proper parliamentary practice. When a document was in the possession of the House it ought not to be altered. This document had been laid on the table, and the Minister had no right to withdraw it from the table without the consent of Parliament. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said he was informed by the Clerk that the original document which was laid on the table of the House on the previous day was still on the table. Captain RUSSELL said it was not the one that was to come into the possession of honourable members. Sir J. G. WARD said, Yes, it was exactly the same one. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the order of the House was that the document was to be printed, and the document that was laid on the table was the document that would be printed. Sir J. G. WARD said the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was quite mistaken. The Railways Statement which was laid on the table of the House was printed before he laid it on the table, and it had all the plans of every kind attached to it, and the Statements to be given to honourable members would be exactly the same in every detail as the document that was laid on the table. There had been no sending of the report back to the printers. It was printed, and the copy he laid on the table remained in the House. What had occurred was that something in the lithographic office in connection with one of the lithographic plans went wrong, and the balance of the printed Statements could not be circulated until all the plans were attached to it. It was an accident. the result of which was that the required number of copies could not be produced for circulation among members. The lithographic block had to be adjusted in order to have it the

same as the copy that was laid on the table of the House. The honourable member, in his desire to uphold the forms of the House, had

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appear in Hansard, and he said he could not bring under a misapprehension. He could rest assured that no alteration had been or would give any authority unless the House passed a resolution to be made in the Statements that had been laid on the table of the House, and that was why he asked the Hon. the Minister whether he would move a resolution. The resolution was now before the House, and that the document submitted to the House on the previous day. It was the Railways Statement now appearing in Hansard. The very rigid ruling in possession of the House that he wished to appear in Hansard. When the honourable member received his copy of the Statement he could compare them, and he would find it was having been put into Hansard which had not been delivered in the House as part of a speech, exactly the same as the one that had been it was ruled that nothing should be allowed to be laid on the table. Mr. HERRIES (Bay of Plenty) said it seemed appear in Hansard that was not read in the House. And Mr. Speaker would remember to him the House should consider whether it was doing a wise thing in allowing these State- that, in consequence of that ruling and members being subject to the time-limit, in order to Statements, which were not read in the House, to appear in Hansard. Sir J. G. WARD .- It has been done for all in Hansard we had to gabble at a racing pace time. Mr. HERRIES said it had not been done for make them quite unintelligible to members of all time. He believed the first time the Railways Statement was printed in Hansard was out of courtesy to the then Minister for Railways (Mr. Cadman), and the printing of the Mines Railways Statement should appear in Hansard Statement was quite a new innovation. He believed that it was only for the last couple of years or so that the Mines Statement had been printed in Hansard. Now, the proper place for these Statements was in the Appendices, where all the tables and plans illustrating the State- gentleman's motion, but, as was already said, Statements appeared together. Members looked for them in the Appendices. They would get Hansard full up of Statements if this precedent was continued. Hansard took up several volumes adhered to was this : that Hansard should contain every session, and was getting larger and larger every year, and if these Statements were put in, the next thing would be, that the Lands State- ment and other Statements would have to be put in. The only ending to this would be as he had he did not think it should be departed from always contended, that we would have to abolish Hansard, and if they did that it would be now. He was sorry to run counter to the a blessing to the country and every one else. not help saying that Hansard should be continued. He must enter his protest against inserting in Hansard anything not read in the House. It fined rigidly to the speeches delivered in the House was contrary to the Standing Orders, and he submitted that the House would have to suspend the Standing Orders to do this. The another point. They seemed to be getting into Standing Orders and " Rulings of the Speakers " matter. They were interrupting not only the said distinctly that nothing was to be put in debate on the Financial Statement, but also Hansard except what was spoken in the House. It would have to be done by the vote of the House, and he maintained that Mr. Speaker would have to suspend the Standing Orders to introduce this motion. He did not think that before he put the question. He asked for Mr. Speaker's ruling. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said there was like to quote a passage from " Rulings of the nothing in the Standing Orders of the House Speakers," where Mr. Speaker O'Rorke had which directed what should or should not appear in Hansard. There was a report from the Reporting and Debates Committee which we acted upon, and he held in his hand Hansard any individual member could from day to day read a paper, and then, by moving that it be of last year, page 271, July 31st, where Mr. Speaker put the same question as had been laid on the table, thus interrupt the

course of the day's business by raising a debate on the motion moved by the Minister for Railways to the subject of this paper. It is distinctly ruled House; and he was following exactly the precedent already laid down. He was asked to that the order of business set down for the day Mr. FISHER (Wellington City) would like read in our speeches what we wished to appear through these figures in such a manner as to the House. He was not in the House this but he gathered that the motion was that the without being read to the House. Well, he was bound to say he agreed with the views of those who had already urged that if these reports were to be printed in Hansard in this way Hansard would become of an unconscionable length. He had no wish to oppose the honourable Hansard was becoming very much too bulky. It was a formidable task to ask one to read Hansard ; but the principle that should be maintained only the speeches of members. That was the original intention in England in the institution of Hansard. It had not, so far as he was aware, been departed from in this colony, and views of the Minister in this matter, but he could Mr. MASSEY (Franklin) wished to raise a very awkward position in regard to this interrupting the speech of the honourable member who was addressing the House on that Statement, in order to enable a Minister to in- was in order, and he therefore asked for a ruling on the point. But before doing so he would " It would be a very dangerous innovation if

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House." It seemed to him they were not in order in allowing any one, be he Minister or member, to move a motion while an honourable member was supposed to be speaking in the course of the debate. Mr. SEDDON (Premier) said the answer to that was this : he understood that leave was asked by the Minister to move the motion, and that the leave was given. Mr. MASSEY said, No; leave was not asked. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the circumstances were these: Major Steward was proceeding in the ordinary way to resume his speech, when he asked his indulgence to bring a matter before the House, and the honourable member at once gave way, although it was within the right of the honourable member to insist on going on with his speech without interruption. Mr. MASSEY said it was a matter which not merely interested the honourable gentleman, but all members of the House. He submitted they were not in order in allowing a motion to be moved at this stage at the request of a Minister. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER must rule that it was within the right of the honourable member for Waitaki; and that that honourable gentleman gave way to allow this motion to be brought on. He brought the matter before the House because he was informed the printing of Hansard would be delayed unless this motion was moved to-night. Mr. PIRANI (Palmerston) .- I do not see any very great objection to the motion before the House, but I would like to enter my strong objection to the practice of a Minister laying on the table of the House important papers at half-past five in the evening, in the middle of a debate ; that practice has grown up this session, and I think it is a very bad one, because it is manifestly intended to balk the discussion of these papers. Sir J. G. WARD (Minister for Railways) was quite sure the protest of the last speaker would have a great deal of weight with Ministers, particularly when he told him this Statement was not laid on the table at half-past five in the evening, but at half-past two in the afternoon ; and he agreed with members that papers like this should be laid on the table as early as possible, and in this case that was done. He only wanted to say that the question had been raised about the introduction into Hansard of the Railways Statement, and it appeared to him to be a little extraordinary that there should be any opposition to it, inasmuch as upon more than one occasion previously the same course had been followed, and no : exception was taken to it; and it would therefore appear that some honourable members were anxious to stop a practice which hitherto they had not been adverse to. The : business to be transacted thereat. I could Railways Statement had previously been put into Hansard, and no exception was taken to ; to time I have brought under the honourable it ; and he should have thought that honourable gentleman's notice. Now, I want to point out able members who had professed to be very ; that when a member sends a request for railway Mr. Massey the table of the House would have been de- lighted to

have the opportunity of sending the Statement to their constituents through Hansard in order that they might know what was going on in connection with an important branch of the public service, a department in which every one in the country took a very deep interest ; and why an attempt should be made to prevent publicity being given to those important departmental reports, and so prevent their constituents perusing them, he was unable to understand, unless it was that the report was so favourable that they wished to keep it out of Hansard. An Hon. MEMBER .- We do not object. Sir J. G. WARD said, Then, if that were so, why had the House lost twenty minutes in discussing points of order with a view of keeping these reports out of Hansard. An Hon. MEMBER -- No ; we wanted them in proper form. Sir J. G. WARD said the custom of the House, he thought, ought to be that when the report of an important department such as this was presented to the House, it ought to be put into Hansard, so that people all over the colony interested in the working of a great State department could have an insight into its working, and they could then judge for themselves whether the department was going on satisfactorily or otherwise; but, evidently, the honourable members who wanted to keep it out did not desire the people to know what was going on. Motion agreed to. Mr. McGOWAN (Minister of Mines) .- I beg to move a similar motion with regard to the Mines Statement. Motion agreed to. FINANCIAL STATEMENT. Major STEWARD (Waitaki) .- When I was interrupted at half-past five o'clock I was endeavouring to impress upon the Minister for Railways the importance of granting every possible facility to farmers and settlers for the safe storage of their produce at railway-stations and for the loading of their produce, and that he should also reduce as much as possible the rates upon agricultural produce between the place of loading and the port of shipment. There is also another thing which requires to be done. The honourable gentleman has admitted that there is an insufficient amount of rolling-stock, and has told us that the department is endeavouring to supply the deficiency. I would urge upon him the importance of pushing on that work as fast as it is possible, because the want of sufficient rolling-stock is a very great inconvenience to producers. There is another matter, and that is that in some country districts the railway-station buildings are quite insufficient for the instance two or three cases which from time

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understand, for the Minister to forward that money can be applied to more useful purpose, request to the officer in charge of the particular railway district for his remarks thereon. promises to be the largest revenue-producing service that we have, and money expended Now, it nearly always happens that re-wisely in the direction I have pointed out will quests from outlying districts are, if not absolutely refused, at any rate deferred sine be money well expended. I would now like to say a word or two in passing to express the die in consequence of the reports received from the officer in charge of the district. pleasure that I felt at the decision of the Rail- Now, Sir, this is what obtains: The officer in ways Committee to inquire into the stage system charge of the district is usually the Stationmaster as propounded by Mr. Vaile. I know that that master of a place of the size of, say, Timaru or gentleman's ideas have been pooh-poohed in Oamaru, and is not himself personally inclined this House, but I know also that in Hungary venienced by the want of facilities at the out- and elsewhere a system similar to the one proposed by him, though not so good a system as pinch so far as he is personally concerned, and his, has been worked with the greatest possible. I believe there is an impression on the part of success. It has certainly meant an enormous. the railway officers that the man most likely to reduction in fares, but it has also meant a very be in favour with the department-the man, large increase in the number of passengers therefore, most likely to obtain promotion-is carried. The only argument of any weight that he who can keep down expenditure to the I know of that has been urged against the lowest possible limit in his district. Take the attention that the adoption of a similar system would produce similar results in New Zealand case of Oamaru: If something were wanted at Oamaru the Stationmaster would naturally is the argument of want of sufficient population back up the request,

because he himself to enable it to be carried out successfully. It is personally aware of the necessity for what is asked for, and feels the inconvenience of the want of it. But, in the case of anything cannot expect that under the stage system of Mr. Vaile we should have a sufficiently large wanted for an outlying station, that same increase in the number of travellers to counter- officer- I do not speak of that one in particu- balance the loss entailed by the reduction of lar; they are all tarred with the same brush - I say that same officer, not feeling himself fares. I think it can be shown, on the other personally inconvenienced, as the sub-Station- side, that if only with the population that we have we shifted that population by rail as often master does, and being himself inclined to go as they do in Hungary, then even the very much against any increased expenditure for the reason reduced rates proposed by Mr. Vaile would yield I have indicated, sends in a depreciatory report very much better results than are obtained from to the Minister. Sir, I should like the Minister the existing traffic under the rates that now to himself visit these outlying places, and if he obtain. I know I shall be told that to carry does so he will, I think, see that there is a good out any experiment with regard to so large a deal in what I say, and he will find the explana- tion of some of the reports that have reached matter would be to encounter the possible result of a large loss, which is more than under him. I may tell him that the replies which present circumstances Ministers can see their have been given in this House on many oc- way to recommend to the House. But I think casions, as to their being no necessity for what has been requested, are absolutely laughed at it may be possible, and I hope it will be found to be so, to give an experimental trial of the hy the people of the districts concerned, for stage system on some part of our railways in they are quite aware that the information New Zealand for a reasonable time. I think, supplied to the Minister, although used by him in good faith, is not in the least degree Sir, that, with a view of the possible very la ge reliable. I hope the Minister will bear this benefits that may result, it would be worth in mind, and that he will this time grant our while to make the experiment. I express that as my own opinion, and I look for- some of the requests that have been repeatedly ward with great interest to the report of the made for necessary railway buildings in various Railways Committee on this subject. Now, parts of my electorate. There is another thing Sir, I want to say a word or two about the that I wish to refer to. I have already said proposal of the Government to establish cool- that one always gets exceedingly courteous replies from the Minister in charge of the stores in South Africa. I am of opinion that that is a step in the right direction. Any one Railways Department - no Minister is more who takes up the papers on the subject, and courteous than he; but the honourable gentle- finds the enormous dividends that are being man generally replies to me, and I have no paid by those private companies that have doubt to other honourable members also, in terms something like this : "It is ad- cool-stores in South Africa, must see that the mitted that such an improvement is desir- rates that are being charged are far too high ; able, and I shall be very glad to carry it out and the charges that are made, of course, have to be deducted from the proceeds of any frozen so soon as sufficient funds have been pro- vided." Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman meat we may send over there, which reduces the net result very much indeed. And if only has only got to ask this House to provide those cheap storage can be provided on the spot funds, and for all reasonable requirements I under control of the Government, where the feel sure the House will do so, because there is is said by the objectors that with the 8.0. limited population of the colony we

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evitably would be that our exporters of frozen mutton would receive far better net returns. I think the Government have done a great deal for the farmers, and I am speaking as the representative of an agricultural district. There have been large reductions in railway freights, There has made mainly in their interests. been, since this Government have been in power, the remission of the tax on im- provements. There has also been a large development of the dairy industry, for which the Government may claim a great deal of the credit -not the whole of it ; but a good deal of it is fairly claimable by the Agricultural

Department, and in this and other directions large and substantial benefits have been conferred on the farmers. But, Sir, there is a great deal more still to be done in the same direction. The farmers, pastoralists, and agriculturists are the backbone of the country, and I do not think their interests have relatively had the same amount of attention at the hands of this House as have the interests of those who are termed the "workers," although that term is not properly restricted to artisans, for if there are any workers in the country it is the agricultural farmers themselves. But, Sir, as distinguished from workers, as we understand them to be defined by that term, I say I think that the farmers have a right to band themselves together, as they are now doing, for the promotion of their interests; and I am very glad that they are combining with a view to bringing their reasonable requests before this House and the Government with a united voice, a voice to which I feel sure it will be found politically wise as well as morally just that the Government should listen. Although I am a country member, a member for a district mostly agricultural, I have always stood shoulder to shoulder with the members for the cities in their endeavour to obtain the passing of Liberal labour legislation in the interests of the workers in the towns. But, although the labour legislation we have had has been in the main good, it is always possible to go too far even with a good thing. Food and exercise, for example, are necessary to man; but if a man attempts to take too much of either in the twenty-four hours he suffers for it—food has to be assimilated and exercise judiciously spread over time. So I think, in regard to our labour legislation, we should give time to assimilate the legislation we have passed, to allow our industries to adapt themselves to the altered conditions, and it is unwise to push ahead too far. Now, there is, rightly or wrongly, a considerable amount of alarm, amongst the agriculturists of my district at any rate, in view of proposed legislation not only by the Government, but by private members, in Bills that have been brought before the House. They fear that the conditions are to be made too stringent, that the hours of labour will be too greatly curtailed, and that the result will be practically that larger burdens will be placed on their backs as agriculturists, and they have Major Steward they cannot contemplate this with equanimity. I consider, Sir, that the Labour party has had an exceedingly good innings. I have been very glad to give them my help; but I think it would be well, in regard to the future, to adopt the advice of the Colonial Treasurer and "go slow," and that it is now time that we gave a little more attention, as we ought to do, to the wants of the settlers as distinguished from the workers. The settlers are workers, but honourable members will understand what I mean when I differentiate between the two. There is one point in the Budget to which I wish to refer with regret. I notice that the Treasurer, although he admits that the mortgage-tax presses unjustly, does not propose the reduction of that tax this year. He winds up his reference to this matter by hinting that as to repeal this tax would mean a loss of £25,000, he cannot contemplate reducing his revenue by that amount unless some means be found of replacing it. Well, Sir, I invite the honourable gentleman to come down with some other proposal to replace this tax, and I feel satisfied, if it is necessary that the £25,000 should be replaced by some other form of taxation, that he can easily propose one more acceptable to the House and more just in its incidence than is the present mortgage-tax. I hope, therefore, although the Treasurer intimates that he does not this session intend to reduce or repeal the tax, that he will think better of it and submit a proposal in that direction. There is yet one other point to which I wish to refer. The Treasurer, while he contends—and, I believe, rightly—that the finances of the colony are in a sound condition, yet winds up with this advice:—"I advise, and in all good faith, that at the present time the good steamer 'Finance' should be steadied, and that 'Slow,' not 'Full speed ahead,' should be the order on the dial." Well, Sir, I think if he altered the wording of the metaphor it would be better, inasmuch as to reduce to "half-speed" would be better than going slow, because I understand that where a ship goes dead slow she makes very little progress indeed, and I hardly think he meant that. With regard to borrowing, I hold that we should not do anything to cripple the policy of land-settlement, nor should we attempt to reduce the amount at our disposal for the purpose of loans to settlers, because both these enterprises are

remunerative, and do not really add to the debt of the colony. But I admit that for other purposes than such as these -- that is to say, for purposes other than reproductive public works or services--we should go slow ; and, holding that view, I must say that I do not like to see items of expenditure such as that for the Review of Reviews, while we have refusals given to provide funds for useful public works in the district of any honourable member. Further, Sir, while I admit that many of the increases, and perhaps the larger portion of the increases, on the estimates in regard to the salaries of public servants are automatic, and that cannot be

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avoided, because of following out the proposal to regard to the question of losing population, visions of the Classification Acts which we should not be compared with old and overpopulated countries like India and China. It is have deliberately adopted, there are still some essential that we should have a larger population proposed increases that are outside the Classification Acts, and as regards these I think they are necessary for the proper development of the country. I can only suppose that the honourable member should all be considered on their merits. There for Dunedin City (Mr. Barclay) recognised that, may be instances in which injustice is being owing to our system of civilisation and our system done by the payment of salaries that are too low for the work of the officers. In any such term of taxation, men with families are frequently cases the injustice should be remedied ; but very heavily handicapped ; but, Sir, we must there are also cases, I think, among the higher also recognise that, unless family life is maintained, the country is bound to retrograde ; under present circumstances, and at a time and that has been one of the most serious causes when the Treasurer himself recommends us to of retrogression in France. That is why that go slow. Sir, I think we should go slow in country has gone behind in its influence, and regard to all unnecessary expenditure, but at the has not been able to maintain the position it ought to have maintained in the history of same time I think we may take heart of grace, tions. I therefore think that anything that tends both as to the present and the future, inasmuch as there are ample funds to provide for in that direction is distinctly detrimental to the all necessary expenditure ; and the facts and best interests of the country. In France it is now proposed that great concessions should be figures of the Budget are such as to cause us to feel assured that the financial position of extended to parents of families of over five, and the colony is as sound to-day as it has been at very considerable concessions for seven and eight. That is distinctly in the direction of any period of our history. Mr. T. MACKENZIE (Waihemo) .- Sir, we encouraging. But in this country, and many other countries, parents are made to feel that have listened to a very admirable speech from the burden of families is such that they are the honourable member who has just sat down, but the time-limit will not permit the traversing avoiding. There are no concessions offered in of speeches as a rule, and so it is impossible for this country, and therefore you unfortunately me to allude to it at any length. The honourable avoidance of large families. It is, however, able gentleman concluded by quoting the state-- a dreadful departure, and Nature will, in the event that the Premier is desirous of seeing the future, inflict heavy retribution for practices country going slow. Whether he wishes to see now unfortunately prevailing. I am afraid if the country go slow or not, I think it must be the I went fully into the honourable gentleman's opinion of every honourable member that this remarks I should have to leave my own review debate is going exceedingly slow. The honourable of the Financial Statement out ; but he alluded to the fact that the people in the cities were able member rightly voiced the opinion of the not supported by public expenditure as the farmers, who are at the present time in a considerable state of uncertainty and alarm regard-- people in the country were. He said the many of the laws of the country. Person-- country people were pampered and bolstered ally, I feel that, now that they are combining, up in every direction, and, as an instance, he said that the Agricultural Department was there is a probability of those laws being so passed costing something like £80,000 or £90,000, that the interests of the farmers, at any rate,

will not be so much imperilled. They will make whereas the Labour Department was only costing £7,000. But, Sir, a glance will show themselves felt, and they ought long ago to have combined for that purpose. The honour- that, although the Agricultural Department able member also alluded to the fact, and, I am having that amount of money expended think, disapproved of items such as \$300 for the upon it, the amount which is expended by Review of Kenews coming down on the esti- the protection of industries in the cities far mates. I shall refer to this again presently ; outweighs the money that may be expended but I say, so long as the country is unable to on the Agricultural Department for the develop- extend telephone communication to many of ment of farming in this country. There we the outlying districts-I say emphatically that know the total cost, but we who represent the agriculturists and the miners know not what items such as the honourable gentleman has referred to certainly ought not to appear upon amount is added to the cost of living through our expenditure. The honourable member for the system of protection which prevails in re- Dunedin City (Mr. Barclay), in his address last year to many industries in this country. And, night, advanced a principle which, I think, is Sir, I think if those men living in towns are of new in the political economy of nations. He opinion that the agricultural life is so enticing, why do they not take it up. We never see any of approved of the principle of a steady decrease them drifting towards the country. The whole of population of countries and of nations, and he quoted in illustration of his contention that tendency of the population is steadily towards India, China, and other countries had suffered the towns, because there they have less work, dreadfully through over-population. The de- higher pay, and shorter hours. Now, I want to duction to be derived from his argument was, refer to the Statement itself, and I shall do so as I suppose, that this country would be the briefly as possible. We have there a reference to better if the population did not increase. prudence and economy in the public accounts, and I thoroughly indorse that principle; but Now, for my own part, I have never been able to realise but that a country such as ours, in do we have it in practice? We do not, I ven-

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ture to say, realise in this Statement that economy which I think the present condition of the country justifies. I think our expendi- ture is too high, and unless we boldly face the position and economize we will have the drastic work of 1887 to do over again. We have had a challenge from one Minister, who asked which of the members of this House would agree to any of the votes in his district being reduced. I accept his challenge at once, and I say I am perfectly willing to accept pro rata with any member in this House a reduction in the public expenditure. I think our public expenditure now is far in excess of what the position of the country justifies, and that in every department of the service my words of prophecy will soon come true. The first item of importance we find in the Financial Statement is a refer- ence to the land- and income-tax, which at once gives an opening for the full discussion of the question of taxation, and this w is fully availed of by members. We had the member for Auck- land City (Mr. Fowlds) advocating that the land- tax should not only be increased 1d .- which is double the ordinary tax now prevailing -but that it should be increased to 3d., which opinion is indorsed by the member for Lyttelton. He says, "Quite right." The land-tax should be increased to 3d., he urges. Now, the land-tax produces something like £294,000 a year, which includes some mortgage-taxes, but all from land, and if you increase the tax to 3d. it would be an enormous increase nearly three times as much -on that taxation which the agri- culturist is at present paying. But what underlies this advocacy ? It is built on a false basis. These honourable gentlemen represent- ing cities are under the impression that the presence of population in our towns is in- fluencing the values of the agricultural lands in the colony. That is the contention, I under- stand, of the honourable member for Lyttelton -that the expenditure of public money and the presence of population are influencing the value of produce in the country ; and the Premier makes the same statement. Why, what influences the value of produce is not the presence of population in this country at all. It is the presence of consuming populations and competition in the markets of the

world, especially London. Sir, these same theorists would tell us that the great population in London influences the values of the agricultural lands surrounding London. It does nothing of the kind. The value of the agricultural land surrounding London is largely determined by what other countries can bring . such produce as they can produce-to compete with them in their own markets. That being so, I would urge these honourable gentleman to go deeper into the subject, and not to jump at rash conclusions. If it were possible for the people resident in the colony at the present time to consume the whole of our agricultural produce and to leave no surplus, we could understand that the presence of population in the towns would enormously influence the cost of the goods produced by the agriculturist, but until that comes about it is wrong for these honour- Mr. T. Mackenzie able members to urge an enormous increase of the taxation upon any one section of the community not balanced by a corresponding tax on other forms of wealth. Sir, we have in connection with this land- and income-tax the denunciation of the old property-tax. Now, who was stronger in pleading against that tax than the honourable member for Masterton (Mr. Hogg) ? But he represents an agricultural constituency; and what astonishes me in that connection is that while he denounces the old property-tax he supports the property tax in all its forms regarding the agriculturists he represents in this House. There were some exemptions that ought to have obtained under the old property-tax and which those who favoured that system would have carried if they had had the opportunity, but I say that if these exemptions had been carried it would have made a more equitable, workable, and better tax than that which was substituted in its stead. Coming back to the honourable member for Masterton, I say that for him to denounce the old property tax, and still support a property tax as far as land is concerned, is to take up an illogical position and one he ought to abandon at once. Does the honourable gentleman not know that every other form of investment in this country is first of all permitted to earn a clear \$300 income in return to the investor before any tax is put on ? But how does that apply to the agriculturists who have put the honourable gentleman in this House ? Whether the agriculturist goes to the bad every year or not, so long as his property is above the exemption he has to pay every farthing on that property, whether he is making anything out of it or not. Surely, if the system of property-tax was wrong regarding all other forms of property than land, it is wrong to say that a tax shall be paid by the agriculturist irrespective of results, and to free the man who has another form of investment. Then, Sir, this mortgage- tax, which has been alluded to by the honourable gentleman who preceded me, is another form of taxation which ought also to be dealt with. I am a trustee of an estate where £3,000 is invested in mortgage. It is an estate that is left for a family, and the whole income of that family is about \$140 out of this investment. But under this system of taxation there is £12 10s. deducted from that income for taxation, and there is no other income coming in. The taxation amounts to 1s. 10d. in the pound of every pound of the income. Now, that is a system of equitable taxation that is lauded to the skies by those honourable gentlemen who have never studied it. Another person, who invests no less than \$10,000 in a bank, and who will receive his \$300 a year, and who will live in a very excellent house, has not to pay any taxation whatever. Do members mean to say that is a fair and equitable system of taxation ? Is that placing the burden of taxation on those best able to bear it, and removing it from those least able to bear it ? I venture to say the reverse is the case, and the system of taxation that permits one person with a property of the

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extent of £10,000, and an income of £300, to entirely escape taxation, while it taxes another person - a widow- with only £3,000, and an income of only £140, to the extent of £12 10s. is surely an inequitable system of taxation, and one that should not get the support of those who, we are given to understand, are the liberal and intelligent members of this House. But, then, as the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) stated in Auckland, on the Opposition side of the House there are many better Liberals than are to be found on the Government side, and, when that is so, we can understand that these doctrines

which they declare to be Liberal in many instances meet with his approval, and do not meet with his disapproval, as is also the case with many other honourable members in this House. And then the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Fowlds) says that there is something like a million per annum spent on public works every year, every penny of which goes to enrich the privileged few of the country districts, and is robbed from that section of the public who have no lands. And then the honourable member analyses the position, and says there are 367,000 people who have an interest in land and 407,000 who are landless and are not interested in land at all ; and he points out that the 367,000 - owning, he said, ninety-six million pounds' worth of property-only pay \$294,000 under the land-tax. He, of course, ignores what these men may own, and he conceives that the amount paid to the Customs will bring their contribution to something like £430,000. That is the honourable gentleman's contention, and he then maintains they ought to pay a million and three-quarters more taxation than they are now doing. How he arrived at that conclusion is beyond my comprehension. I have analysed his figures, and have not been able to trace it. The honourable member goes on to contend that these 407,000 who have no interest in land contribute no less than £2,700,000. Why, Sir, the honourable gentleman's figures are entirely fallacious ; he has jumped to conclusions ; he has never analysed the situation, and is about as much at sea as the honourable member for Lyttelton when he talks about land - values, and wishes to insist upon an enormous system of taxation being levied upon them. Then we come to the question of land-settlement, and we understand that something like #2,000,000 have been spent in that direction. Now, Sir, I have always held, in connection with the money expended on the settlement of lands, that there should be a proportion of the cost of that property paid by the people who go in for their occupation, so as to secure a safe margin to the Government on the investment. The Government ask for some margin in connection with the advances to settlers, and if they ask that, why should they not also ask that a margin of security should be afforded the State in connection with the property so settled. The Government ought to give the settlers this chance, and enable people when they take up lands under these conditions,-if they have the money and are willing,-to pay off a portion of the cost. Of course, it is no use now to refer to the question of the freehold, but yet one wonders why a man who has £1,000, and has taken up a thousand pounds' worth of land under that system, should not be permitted to invest that #1,000 in the estate, and thus save himself the trouble of finding an investment in another form for it-of course, providing a limit a man may hold. In connection with the values of the estates, very great pressure is frequently put upon the officers of the department by irresponsible members to induce them to purchase the estates at a higher rate. Now, I am glad to know that such excellent men as Mr. McGowan and Mr. McKerrow are at the head of the Land Purchase Department. They are men who, I think, can be trusted to insist upon what they think is a just limit, and they are, I am glad to say, strong enough to withstand that pressure. They have, too, the best men in Parliament with them in this matter, because one must realise, as many of us have realised, unfortunately, although I am no pessimist, that the land-values of this colony are hardly likely to be maintained. Land - values have been forced up in many instances to such a degree that people are paying as much as £25 an acre for land that is being used for dairying purposes. Why, Sir, that money must in many cases be extracted from the bone and sinew of the children whose labour has to be utilised in order to make the industry pay. I think people should insist on children having their proper amount of rest, and that every benefit which their youth entitles them to should be extended to them. I say, therefore, the running-up of the values of your land beyond their true value is wrong. Will it pay to employ labour ? Hon. MEMBERS .- NO. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- Well, then, the industry is on unsound lines, and values of land too high. If it will not afford to pay labour I say it is not on a sound basis, and the value of your lands has gone up to too high a rate. I have it here, on the authority of a very competent man, who declares there are thousands of acres fit for dairying, of equal quality, which are nearer to a market than this land, which may be bought for £10 an acre, while land as good is sold in

New Zealand at \$25 an acre. This opens up a very large question, and it is one that ought to be thoroughly discussed, because if too high prices are paid for the land that you require for settlement, and if a depression occurs in your prices, then those unfortunate people who spent their money in buildings and in improving their farms will be placed in a position in which they will be unable to maintain themselves on their allotments; and, therefore, I think the Government should be exceedingly careful not to pay the full or current rates for land that they intend to settle people on. We have, of course, honourable members in this House who declare in the freest manner possible that this country has nothing whatever to fear from either North or South

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America, and particularly nothing to fear from the Argentine. This opinion emanated from the honourable the mediocre member for Auckland City (Mr. Napier), who declared that we have nothing to fear from these countries, and then in his next phrase he stated that wool was no longer the chief item in the exports of this colony. And he quoted authorities. Why, the honourable gentleman himself is brimful of authorities-and late, recent, and authentic authorities-and of these the highest and most reliable authority is himself. So much so that he instanced a telegram, which said his speech amazed Parliament, and was the talk of the lobbies. If this does not secure him the senior position in Auckland City, it certainly should do so. Mr. NAPIER .- I have got it now. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- Well, we did not realise it. But, at the same time, I urge the honourable gentleman to be more careful in his authorities. Now, if he will look up the statistics with regard to our exports he will find in the Statistics for the year 1900 that our exports of wool amounted to \$4,347,000 and the export of mutton was considerably over two millions. You have therefore six millions and a half out of eleven millions and a half of exports coming from the sheep alone. Over four millions of that-more than one-third of that-comes from the wool. And yet the honourable gentleman rises up in this House and tells us that wool is not a premier export from this colony. When he reads these high authorities, and he ought to read them, he will see how far he has been from stating what is correct. Why, from the sheep alone at the present time there is a greater amount of export value than our total export value of all produce from this colony was when my honourable friend Sir Joseph Ward and I entered this House in 1887, and Sir Henry Atkinson took office ; and yet we are told that it does not occupy the premier position. We might here glance at our position as a meat- and mutton- producing country ; and to me it is amazing that wool is so low, because the flocks of the world have been decreasing enormously. In 1895 the flocks of the world numbered 583,000,000, and five years later the flocks of the world had decreased by 93,000,000. They were then 490,000,000. And yet we see, in the face of that, that wool goes steadily down ; and, so far as the value of mutton is concerned, it takes it all its time to maintain its own. Of course, wool is bound to rise again. Coming to the question of what this country may be afraid of in the matter of competition-and this is a point which has a great bearing upon land I will not allude to competition from Russia, because I dealt with that the other night, but I will refer to the competition of North and South America. There has been an abnormal development in Canada-at any rate, so far as dairy produce is concerned -and that country is a rival we may well consider. Then, with regard to the United States of America, that country has increased in population at a rate perhaps never witnessed Mr. T. Mackenzie before in the history of the world. Although its population is increasing enormously, yet the surplus exports of that country have correspondingly increased, and never before have they had such a surplus for export. I think, therefore, that we may look for great competition from Canada and from the United States. Why, there are individual firms in the United States of America that kill and export more meat than the total exports from this colony comes to in one year. Individual firms kill over twelve million pounds' worth of meat. An Hon. MEMBER .-- Pork. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- Oh, no; I was alluding to Swift and Co., which company kill no less than two million sheep a year, and cattle in proportion. There are also other large firms- Armour Brothers, and others. When you consider the present competition, and the fact

that the population of America is not absorbing the consumption of the stuff as it was at one time expected, you can understand what competition may be expected from North America. Then, let us go to the Argentine, that country which of all countries we must feel most anxious about. All this shows the necessity of making the most of our position and resources. We are, as it were, fighting giants. It is not an equal fight. We may be likened to a well-knit small man fighting great powerful men ; but so long as we reserve our energies, practise economy, and extend to our people every facility to successfully enable them to develop their agricultural and mineral wealth and their manufacturing wealth-so long as we do that we need not fear the issue. But let us understand distinctly what we have got to face. We cannot trifle with ourselves or our resources. Fifty years ago the entire flocks in the Argentine Republic numbered sixteen millions, and thirty years afterwards they had increased by sixty millions. Within a very short period they reached eighty-six millions. The whole of the flocks of all Australasia did not number more ; and Gibson, one of the best authorities, asserts they will double in twenty-five years from 1886, and it bids fair to seeing that done. Then, whilst that was the actual increase in numbers, owing to the importation of the best stud flocks-on which within recent years they spent \$600,000-they have vastly improved the breed of their sheep, and they have increased the staple value of their wool, and its weight by 1lb. per sheep. The staple of the wool has been improved in fineness, and there has also been an increase in the weight of wool per sheep. The quality of the meat has also improved, so that they at times get ad. per pound more than Australian meat brings, and authorities assert that soon they will equal New Zealand in quality. This I do not believe, if we do our duty. That is something important to think about. Then, let us take the area of that vast country. In it there are 73 1,000,000 acres of land, 19 per cent. of which is covered with magnificent forest which will some day come into cultivation. Eighty per cent of that country is fit for agricultural and pastoral pursuits, so that, practi-

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cally, there is no waste land in that great area. Then, there are other countries adjacent entering into a competition which we will have to face. be perpetuated. Now, Sir, I come to consider Labour is got from Russia, Italy, and other countries for £2 a month. Land is procurable for wheat-growing in those countries referred to from 10s. to 40s. an acre within five to fifteen miles of railway-stations. Pastoral country can in character it is more for the convenience of be had from .£1 to £2 an acre ; but the nearer it is to the centres of population the higher the price that has to be paid for it. Now, sir, what is the taxation of that country ? The land-tax amounts to £1 per £1.000. We have to compete against that country, with its vast resources, cheap labour, and low taxes. It is not half the distance from the great markets of the world that we are. The freights for its produce are therefore nothing like what we have to pay. There is another matter in connection with this subject which I think is most important : The people of that country are able to take meat there under a system of chilling, which enables those receiving it at Home to get it placed as English meat. Those of us who would lull the people of this country into the belief that they have nothing to fear from the competition of the world make statements that cannot be borne out by facts, and which should not be mentioned in the face of the heavy competition that we shall have to face in the near future. Of course, I believe, in connection with this great question of trade, that we must develop a better system of inter-exchange within our Empire, so that we may not have to compete against the produce of those countries having a population such as we have not got here. I hope that what I suggest will come about, in order that the higher civilisation of our people may continue. I hope that our people will never be placed on the same level as those countries where cheap labour is used. I venture to think that if such & system of inter-exchange takes place we shall hold our own to a greater extent than we do at present. Although the Premier has not seen his way to help the Imperial zollverein scheme, I think great good would result to the Empire in the future if it were adopted. Some time ago the foot - and - mouth disease broke out amongst the cattle of the Argentine, and the British Government stopped the importation of cattle from

that country into the Home market. In consequence of this the value of cattle in Australasia, particularly in New Zealand, went up to such a price that the meat business was one of the most profitable industries in this colony. If we had had that system continued it would have been made and the doctor's advice would have given security to our agriculturists, and insured a bright future for the development of this country. As an exchange, we ought, of been with their families who are now lost to course, to grant facilities to them to send their manufactured goods here which do not prevail politic policy that demands from every com- at present. At present all nations under the sun have the same facilities for getting their munity that requires a telephone a guarantee goods into our markets as Britain has. We extend the same facilities to those who have sent from the Post and Telegraph Department was their sons to assist in driving us out of South Africa as to the sons of the Empire who have stood shoulder to shoulder with our boys in VOL. OXVIII .- 16. maintaining our influence in South Africa. To my mind, this is a system that should not the question of the Post and Telegraph De- partment. We have now a Statement of the Hon. the Minister, in which he says that the Postal and Telegraph Department is to be used for the public convenience as much as possible. the people than for revenue - producing pur- poses ; yet, notwithstanding the many unpaid services, there are certain profits. Last year the profit was £84,000, and it is anticipated that the profit for this year will be £44,000. Well, first of all, I say that I think the honour- able gentleman did a wise thing to promote the penny postage, and for that I congratulate him. But it is one of those benefits that are enjoyed much more by the city people than by people who live in the country, especially the big mer- chants, some of whom save as much as £100 a year. In my opinion, a farmer would sooner plough an acre of land than write a letter once a month. I am not quoting that in disapproval of the penny postage, but my contention is that in the outer country districts you ought to extend better telephonic conveniences than at present exist. I know that the Hon. the Minis- ter in charge of the department is in this mat- ter greatly handicapped by his officers. He has had to fight his officers at many points. There is the old conservative red-tape that is hard to get over ; but I venture to think that there is no reform more urgent than the reform of ex- tending better telephonic communication to the remoter country districts. . Electricity, as we know, annihilates distance, and enables those in the remote parts to be at once in touch with the centres, and for no reason is this more necessary than in the case of medical attendance. I have been in many backwoods districts, and I have seen some fearful accidents occur there, where, if the people had been able to communi- cate by telephone with a medical officer and procure assistance, great relief for the sufferers would have resulted. I have known cases of terrible sufferings on the part of women which they have had to endure because they were not able to communicate with medical men. Many of these young women with stout hearts and determination have accompanied their husbands and become settlers in the prim- eval forests and back districts. They are pre- pared to take all the risks ; but I say, if there were telephonic communication with these places, when illness occurred the communica- tained. If that were made possible to these out - of - the - way places many valuable lives would be saved, and mothers would now have their dear ones. I say it is an illiberal and im. that that telephone shall be made self-support- ing. According to the Minister the profit £84,000, and out of that £10,000 might well be spent in extending the telephone to the outer

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to the remoter parts of the country, how do you expect people with families to go into these back-country districts and to take all the risks? As I have said, the tendency of the people is to concentrate in the cities, and not to spread out, and if you can extend those con- veniences you will be doing that which will be in the best interests of the whole country. Sir, the officers of that department are carry- ing on some rather high-handed work in the manner in which they are closing post-offices in the country districts without giving any notice to the people concerned of what they are going to do. When they are going to close an office the people in the district ought to be notified of their intention, so that they might be able to

approach the authorities. There is too much red-tape in the Post and Telegraph Department, and I hope that the Minister, who has successfully tackled a good deal of red-tape before in connection with the departments he has been in charge of, will do so still further in connection with the department I am alluding to. Now I come to the Savings-banks. The Minister states that the deposits in those banks have increased from £2,448,000 ten years ago to £5,809,000 at the present time, and then he gives an analysis of the increased deposits and the values of the deposits. Now, under £100 the increased number of depositors is 178,405 ; over £100 and under £200 it is 11,173; over £200 and under £300 the number is 5,151 ; over £300, 2,679. This shows, at any rate, the smaller depositors are not increasing anything like the higher depositors. Perhaps I had better quote the figures, because I wish to Hansardise the whole passage :- "Compared with the year ended 31st December, 1890, the increase is almost phenomenal, the total at credit having increased from £2,441,876 to £5,809,552, or at the rate of 137.91 per cent., representing an increase in the average amount at credit of each account of £4 6s. 3d. The interest paid in 1900 was £146,169, as against £92,319 in 1890, an increase equal to 58.33 per cent." There is a point here worth remembering. Although the depositors have increased by 137.91 per cent., the interest has only increased by 58 per cent. That is very significant. Now, coming to the analysis of figures, we have the increase of accounts as follows :- "Classifying the accounts, it will be found that those with balances up to £100 increased from 90,115 to 178,405, or 97.97 per cent. ; from £100 to £200, from 4,750 to 11,173, or 135.22 per cent. ; from £200 to £300, from 1,502 to 5,151, or 242.94 per cent. ; and above £300, from 841 to 2,679, or 218.54 per cent." The point I wish to bring out in connection with this is that the money going into the Post-Office Savings-Bank is largely money previously invested by the people in mortgages. The Government has become the agent of the British money-lender, and they have taken the securities away from the people here, who are now compelled to put money into the Savings-Bank at a low rate of interest, with this difference : Mr. T. Mackenzie of interest for the money invested in advances to settlers that they obtain from the British money-lender than they are paying the depositors in the Savings-Bank. The latter interest averages 23 per cent., and those depositors ought to have £50,000 a year more, because they ought to be getting 44 per cent. instead; but the Government are paying more to the British money-lender, who does not pay any taxes or take any responsibility with us, or take the good and bad weather and stand side by side with us in our difficulties. Mr. HOGG .- Yet the settlers receive the benefit. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- The honourable gentleman had better reserve himself, because when I take him in hand we shall have some fun presently. The Premier stated the other night that those who advocated giving trustees of widows in the colonies the first opportunity for securing investments in the country were advocating for the capitalists. Can it be said we are advocating the cause of the capitalists when we have 19,000 depositors, with sums amounting to over £100 each-probably averaging £200-in the Post-Office Savings-Bank ? Is it not right to give the people in the country the first opportunity of these securities? Limit the amount of interest, if you like, to 4} and 5 per cent. on good securities. The honourable member who preceded me said that the advances to settlers are not adding to our permanent debt ; but they are adding to the responsibility of the country; and if you could secure the money to the farmers without adding to that responsibility it is right that that procedure should be adopted. I wish to allude to the Education vote, but as we shall have the full report of the Commission presently before us I shall not take up a great deal of time, beyond referring to the fact that those female teachers who are complaining should not do so. Considering the difficulties the Commission had to face, it must be acknowledged by every fair-minded person that the status of the great bulk of the women and the salaries of women have been enormously improved under the grants recommended by the Commission. Of course, I think it is unfortunate the Treasurer this year has not seen his way to support the £4 2s. 6d. vote, because this would have placed the school-teachers of the country in a position such as he would hope to see them enjoy. They are not sufficiently paid. There is no

class of skilled labour in this colony so badly paid as the teachers are ; and, when you consider that in their hands is the welfare of future generations of this fair country, I say it is most impolitic to stint these men and women of fair remuneration. What is the result even now of low pay? The result is that you will not get a bright boy in this country to enter a school as a pupil-teacher. You will get a number of girls to do so, but do they become permanent ? A great many just shift away in a few years and get married. I think it was shown in Otago that three out of every four of the female pupil- teachers left the service, whilst among the

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quantity of gold exported for the year was on. It is surely the desire of the Education Department to give such inducements that 389,558 oz., valued at £1,513,173, being the will bring the brightest and best boys and highest for twenty-six years previously, the ex- girls into their service and cause them to re- port shows an increase of 24,347 oz., value main there, and I hope the Government will £94,389. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to expect that the yield for the present year will do the best they can to carry out the proposal to allow the grant of £4 2s. 6d. next year. Of equal, if not exceed, that for the year 1899." course, there are many other things that, per- hand the question of handling tailings coming sonally, I should like to see in that report. I should like to see a better allowance to small on to private properties, even apart from the schools ; but, when we consider the vast num- rivers. It is a matter of very great difficulty. ber of small schools that have been established In some parts of Central Otago the farmers are in Marlborough, Nelson, and down the West crying out against it, and at the same time the Coast, you will see the absolute impossibility of miners themselves are in great difficulty as to increasing the salary of the teachers of those getting rid of their tailings, as the farmers are small schools, and of also doing anything like claiming heavy damages. I have also to thank I the Minister of Mines for the concession he has justice to the other teachers in the service. hope that when the £4 2s. 6d. is granted some- granted in respect to the water-supply at Naseby. thing better will be done. An Hon. MEMBER .-- What about equal pay done otherwise, and I thank him for what he for equal work ? Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- That has been pro- has done in that direction. Then we come to this important question-the Premier calls it vided for up to £130 a year. That is what is "How to help the farmers." Sir, that is a very advised. An Hon. MEMBER .- Why not carry it out ? big contract. The honourable gentleman says, Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- It will be carried out. "The importance and desirability of helping those located on and living directly from the An Hon. MEMBER .- To the higher grades ? Mr. T. MACKENZIE. - It was discovered products of the soil is admitted by all." Further on he says, " From the information we have to from the evidence submitted that, with few exceptions, the women were not able to take hand it would be necessary to have cool-stores the Fifth and Sixth Standards. Some of them for New Zealand produce established in South were ; and personally I strongly advocated that Africa." Then he goes on to say the Govern- where they had the capacity for the work it ment will also consider the question of establish- should be within the discretion of the Board and ing cool-stores in London. He says, "The the head-teacher to give that work to them. That erection of cool-stores in the Mother-country alone would be of little advantage " ; and further was the position I took up in that connection. I on, in connection with trade in South Africa, should like, of course, to see technical schools established in mining and agricultural districts, he says, " We have therefore come to the con- clusion that to be a success it is essential that while lads who are going to follow those occu- pations, when they get to the Fifth and Sixth a line of steamers trading with South Africa should not go beyond South African ports, but Standards, could receive important instruction should return to New Zealand." At that point in those departments which they may not have I interjected "Empty? " and the honourable the opportunity of obtaining later on. I should gentleman was a little nonplussed. We do not like very much to enlarge upon this subject, but often find him in that condition, but he cer- my time is so limited that I must at once part tainly was a little nonplussed on that occasion. from it. I must, however,

congratulate the Returned troopers, measles, and enteric is the Minister of Mines upon the fact that the gold only cargo available, and that will not pay; and yield is higher this year than it has been for I say that to subsidise a line of steamers to the over six-and-twenty years, exceeding, as it does, Cape alone is utterly unworkable, and you will £1,500,000. It is very gratifying to see that this have to devise some other method of opening up is so, though, of course, many swindles have trade with South Africa. I quite approve of occurred in connection with dredging : so much the honourable gentleman's action in deciding so that I think the Minister should take the to wait for the advice of Mr. Gow before pro- matter up, with a view of providing legislative ceeding to erect cool-stores there, because I protection to investors, so as to save them from know Mr. Gow to be a capable man, and not the sharpers who have been travelling about flighty, and, if he advises that cool-stores and victimising people. The Statement says,- should be erected, I think the Government " Gold-mining generally is steadily progress- should be largely guided by his conclusions. ing, and, although many companies which were Coming, however, to the question of the floated more for the purpose of collecting calls establishment of cool-stores in London, the from shareholders than for the purpose of win- Minister has said it would depend upon what ning the precious metal have been and are being support was obtained within the colony, wiped out of existence, the yield of gold is in- as to whether the Government should take creasing. . The quantity and value exported for the control of the whole produce trade or not. the half-year ended the 30th June last was Any one who has studied the question must 217,478 oz., valued at £344,888, being an in- realise that the work is a most stupendous one, crease of 38,175 oz., valued at £150,029, over the more especially in regard to cool - stores and first half of the year 1900, and, as compared I hope to see that the Minister will take in That will enable our land to be worked 9.0. profitably, which could not possibly bo

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reaching, and the amount of capital required would be so enormous if the Government took control of the produce trade, that it is doubtful whether this colony would ultimately agree to the outlay and the other conditions necessary to secure success. Early in my experiences in London I came to the conclusion that we ought to establish a market there for our produce. I went to a good deal of trouble in connection with it, and I found a piece of land for a site close to Smithfield, which contained an acre of land, and was connected with the wharves by rail. The site was placed under offer to me, and plans of building and market were prepared. At that time many farmers sending meat to the Old Country did not obtain adequate returns. I know of one instance of a man who sent Home a consignment of lamb, which, after it had been stored for some time, was sold at 2½d. per pound. The charges at the other end, outside cost of insurance, freezing, freight, et cetera, amounted to 23 per cent. The farmer got nothing out of his lambs practically. It was that which caused me to see if I could not devise some means by which we could have the whole control of our produce. I submitted pro- posals to the leading colonists in London, but they did not approve my policy. I would sug- gest that, if such a thing is contemplated, it should be worked very much on the lines adopted by the Colonial Consignment Company. You would require to have cool-stores in London, stalls in Smithfield, agents appointed and competent travellers throughout Great Britain ; and over it all you would require a man of no small ability to control the whole. Unless the Government are prepared for a vast undertaking of that sort they will find, so far as the erection of cool-stores is concerned, the result will be very fragmentary, and will lead to practically little good. I should like to say in that connection that the work done by the Colonial Consignment Company for the exten- sion of the New Zealand meat trade, and for the proper and honest handling of the produce sent out of New Zealand, is beyond all praise. Now, Sir, I will pass on to some other questions in connection with farming. We have, as honourable members will have noticed, the establishment of a Farmers' Union going on in the colony. I congratulate that body on the efforts it is putting forth to or- ganize the farmers of New Zealand. Let me at this point say I sincerely hope that it will be a non-political organization. If it is a non- political organization,

and if it keeps steadily before it certain planks of a platform that it will require the Government to carry out, it will do a great good ; but immediately it becomes a strong party organization its power for influence will be greatly nullified. If that organization had been in existence it would have opposed the mortgage-tax, as a special tax on money advanced on one form of security that is not balanced by a tax on other forms of industry or security, a fact which must raise the rate of interest on moneys specially raised for one particular industry. It is Mr. T. Mackenzie that when a property was taken from a man, if the landowner had grown-up sons, and if these sons were going to live on the soil, the young men would have the right to choose, at any rate, 200-acre farms from their father's own property. From the land they themselves had redeemed from the primeval forest or reclaimed from swamps, and would have urged that these sons ought to have a prior right over a stranger who had only just landed in New Zealand. If the Farmers' Union had been in existence when I moved that motion it would have wired to the Premier; and how would the Premier have acted ? The member for Wellington City said the other night that a member had spent his life in fighting the cause of the strong. Sir, no man has spent his life more devotedly in fighting for the strong than the Right Hon. the Premier. If a strong Farmers' Union had sent up word to him that in the case of a farm being taken by the Government for settlement purposes the sons of the land-owner should have a prior claim to select small farms for themselves, the request, I am sure, would have been granted. Then, it would have sent word to him to say that there is to be no income-tax on any farming industry until \$300 a year has been realised to each partner, and it would also have insisted that until £300 a year had gone to each partner in a farm no tax should be placed on the farmer. The farming industry should be placed on the same equitable basis as all the other industries of the colony. Sir, I am sure the honourable gentleman would have possessed the political diplomacy and seen fit to comply with a request of this nature from that union. As another result of the existence of the Farmers' Union we would not have an increased cost put on so many articles used by the farmers. Sir, where is the farmer to go with every article he produces in this country ? He has to fight the markets of the world. He has to fight cheap land, and to meet other forms of competition : competitors. I might say, who are in some instances within a couple of hours' sail of the markets in which he has to compete. Sir, I must now pass over a good deal of matter which I intended to say. I want to refer for a brief time to the San Francisco mail-service. I think we should discontinue that service, because it is an unreliable service that brings no good to this country. It is a service that belongs to a nation that imposes a prohibitive tariff on the produce of this country, and which precludes our goods from entering it, although in return we have given that nation every facility for sending their goods here. Their goods are practically allowed in free of duty. Our imports from that country are increasing, while our exports to it are decreasing. They will not allow British ships to travel two thousand miles on the Pacific with British goods and British seamen. They send armed cruisers, which might be used against us in time of war ; and I say, Sir, it is the duty of this country to expend its revenues in maintaining a service with countries that are commercially friendly, and with countries that have

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proportionate increase than in the previous opened up trade with us. Before closing my three years. A careful analysis of the whole remarks I wish to refer to what was said by the social, commercial, and industrial condition of honourable member for Lyttelton and the the colony would show a great era of prosperity honourable member for Masterton. The member then setting in. I am exceedingly sorry that Mr. Lyttelton said that the legislation passed the time-limit precludes me from going into in this country prior to 1890 had brought the this subject, but I have a table here which I colony to the verge of ruin. The honourable wish to hansomise, and I will read it at such a member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) said that rate as I think will enable me to get it into the late Mr. Ballance took office subsequent Hansard : - to a very large expenditure of public money. Why, Sir, the exports from 1887 to 1890 went up from six millions

to nine millions ; there never was such an increase in the export figures of this country. The proportion per head of the adult male population was £56, and I say such a result has never been obtained before nor since. The highest figure that has been The balance of exports over imports shows the reached, so far as the exports in the last ten prosperity of a country. The following is a. years are concerned, has been from £9,900,000 table showing the comparative increase of trade in 1891 to some \$13,000,000 in 1900, an in- from the years 1880 to 1890, and from 1890 to crease of less than \$4,000,000, which is a less 1900 :- Comparative Increase of Trade, 1880 to 1890, and 1890 to 1900. 31st Decem- 130th Septem- ber, 1880. ber, 1890. Numerical. Population 620,545 500,901 . . Total exports £6,232,388 \$0,985,240 €3,752,852 Output of coal (tons) 337,362 637,397 300,035\| 66,860,150 Export of wool (1b.) 102,522, 185 35, 662, 035 Occupied area (acres) 26,845,466* 31,867,505 5,022,039 12,985,085* Sheep 16,116,113; 3,131,028 Open railways (miles) 1,181 1,842 Telegraph (miles) .. 5,060 3,638 Savings- £903,765 Deposits, £2,441,876 €1,538,111 170.00 €5,320,370 Bank *1881. Now, from this I wish to show that the in- vious to that. Although the Hon. the Premier creased trade from 1880 to 1890 was a much shakes his head, I say that in 1888 some nine greater percentage than for the years 1890-1900. thousand odd people went away; but in I do not wish, though, to say one word against 1889 the balance of immigration was in favour the splendid record that has been obtained. I am of the colony. Sir, the honourable gentle- delighted with it; but I do most emphatically man cannot deny it, for here are the statistics. resent the reflections which have been cast upon But the honourable gentleman has brought the trade and commerce of the colony for the about this wretched time-limit, which strangles three and ten years previous. I say, in con- debate, and which will not allow me to shove nection with the administration of Sir Harry down his throat the extracts from the figures Atkinson, he was one of the brightest and ablest which I have here. Fortunately, however, I men who have ever administered the affairs of shall have another opportunity to go into them. this country-he brought this country himself Sir, there are many other matters I should like from the verge of ruin in 1887. He lived within to refer to, but I am afraid time will not per- his income, and he reduced expenditure on mit. I would like to refer to a statement of the public works to very little more than the sum honourable member for Masterton. He said we are now paying for old-age pensions. The that in 1890 the only alternative for the young total amount of money spent on public works women of this colony was either starvation or the in the three years of Sir Harry Atkinson's ad- streets. Sir, that is uttering a slander against ministration was £1,648,000, whereas during the settlers of this country that every settler in the previous three years the expenditure on New Zealand ought to resent. The women public works was over two millions beyond that of this colony never were reduced either to star- amount : and the proposals this year are vation or to the street. 52.000.000, a sum this colony cannot possibly afford to pay. He stopped the exodus in 1889, although it had gone on before, and although able gentleman has referred to me as having a number of people had left this colony pre- stated that the occupation of women in New Exports over Imports. 616,000 1887 1890 3,640,000 1891 3,129,758 . . . 1900 3,015,932 .. Increase. Increase. 30th Septem- ber, 1900. Per Per Numerical. Cent. Cent. 119,644 23.86 143,636 764,181 23.15 60.07 £13,661,226 £3,675,986 36.81 53.00 88.9 337,837 975,234+ 42,307,330 53.45 144, 829,515 41.27 18.7 34,422,653+ 2,555,148 7.42 20.06 3,232,393 19,348,506 24.3 661 19.22 2,196 55.95 354 1,422 6,910 39.8 1,850 36.56 £2,878,494\|117.88 \+ 1899-1900. Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER .- Time is up. Mr. HOGG (Masterton). - Sir, the honour-

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honourable gentleman used, and this is exactly what he said: that the men could not find any occupation, and that the girls in the colony were reduced either to starvation or the streets. I wrote it down at the time. The honourable gentleman, of course, is now ashamed, as he might be, of the language he used. Mr. HOGG .- My speech by this time is re-ported in Hansard, and it is an emphatic con- tradiction of what the honourable gentleman states. Mr. T. MACKENZIE. - The honourable gentleman has struck it out of Hansard. Mr. SYMES (Egmont) .- We have just heard a very fiery and eloquent speech from the honourable member for Waihemo; but before I proceed to deal with it I should just like to make one remark about the previous speaker. The previous speaker, the member for Waitaki, was filled with alarm at the labour legislation. He waxed very wroth over the labour legisla- tion and the effect it would have on the farmers, and yet, strange to say, he supported and voted for the Eight Hours Bill, no doubt thinking at the same time that in doing so he was securing another vote for the elective Execu- tive. The honourable member for Waihemo has denounced other honourable members for speaking on subjects which they did not under- stand. Well, Sir, I thought he might have ap- plied that to himself in respect to the dairy industry, because he absolutely knows nothing about it. He talks about the price of land, and says that no one can farm land at the prices they were paying. Well, perhaps they could not at Waihemo, but if the honourable member will only come up to Taranaki we will show him how they can farm there and make it pay. The honourable gentleman also told us a great deal about the Argentine. Why, I remember hearing about the Argentine when I was in pinafores. We were going to be smothered then by the Argentine. We could never successfully carry on the frozen meat, wool, or any other industry in this colony as against the competition of the Argentine. Well, Sir, we are still living ; the Argentine also. As for the dairying industry, the honourable gentleman said it was simply being carried on at the expense of the children -that the children were being worn out. Why, Sir, if he will only come up to Taranaki ho will see a different state of things there. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- We have had it from the teachers that the children fall asleep at their lessons. Mr. SYMES .- We will deal with that pre- Mr. Hogg sently. It is a marvellous thing that in our schools in Taranaki we get the highest per- centage of passes that are obtained in New Zealand. That does not look much like falling asleep. The honourable member also waxed eloquent over the telephonic communication with country districts. Well, it is a very simple thing. The local bodies hold the matter in their own hands. Surely in Waihemo, which is an old electorate, what can be done in a new country back-block district ought to be done there without much trouble. In the back block settlements we get a telephone by the local bodies or the settlers guaranteeing 5 per cent. on the cost of erection and equipment, and I think it is a very good system ; so that if the people desire to have the Government tele- phonic communication it can be easily and readily obtained with the centres of population. Now, Sir, one is somewhat diffident in speaking on the Financial Statement after hearing all the 4.7 guns of finance fired off in this House. We have had the big financiers, both on the Opposition and the Government side of the House, and also those who I am not sure which side they are on. They are neither on the rail nor do they belong to the " left wing," the Go- vernment will not have them, and I am per- fectly certain that the Opposition do not want them. I really do not know where they are ; but, at any rate, they all imagine that they are heaven-born financiers. They have given us figures ad nauseam, no two of them agreeing, and each one of them is quite correct according to his own showing-in fact, his figures are the only correct ones that have been quoted in the House. Now, it is not my intention to quote figures after the maze of figures we have had to listen to. The figures that these honourable gentlemen quoted I do not think they under- stood themselves. Take, for instance, that table which the honourable member who has just sat down quoted. I am perfectly certain he did not understand what he was reading. and I am quite certain there is not one mem- ber in this House who knew what he was read- ing either. Mr. T. MACKENZIE .- It will all come out in Hansard. Mr. SYMES .- I expect so; but it will be no use. It is a very good thing, because I do not suppose any one will ever take the trouble to read it. As to the fourth party in this House,

their figures are made up in a similar manner to the table quoted by the honourable member. The balance of their speeches were made up of abuse of the Government, and in trying to show that the country is going headlong down to the depths below-that the Government have borrowed and squandered millions of money. Yet, strange to say, these gentlemen, one and all, voted most consistently for every shilling of that money, knowing that some of it was going to be spent in their district. The present financial proposals are practically the same as those which have been in force for some years past-they are simply a continuance ; and yet those heaven-born financiers saw nothing wrong in our finance

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not the finance that is wrong, but that their figures." When I first entered this House I objection is due to some disappointment. They are either disappointed because they have not been appointed to Royal Commissions or because they are not Ministers. I Treasurer that we had ; but after getting used would advise the Premier to create three or four more portfolios and dangle them like a quence, I have come to the conclusion that he bunch of carrots before honourable members. If ever I become Premier-and there is no knowing what may happen - I will always keep several portfolios vacant, and I will say, " You must not play the silly goat or you will not get one of these portfolios," and thus I will keep these members in order. As to the member for Riccarton, no one ever knows where to find him. It reminds me of a story that I heard about him when he was engaged in another occupation ; and, in my opinion, the honourable member has mistaken his calling honourable members and the messengers on in becoming a member of this House. It was said that the honourable member sometimes formed his arm ached for a week afterwards. preached the same sermon three times in one day, but upon three different texts-he worked in one sermon on three texts. I am of opinion that the honourable member thinks he knows more about every subject under the sun than any other man. It does not matter lobbies. whether the subject is land, labour laws, finance, factories, insurance, marine, defence, pharmacy, Native land, or dairy industry, he knows more about every one of these subjects, according to his own showing, than any other man. In my opinion, however, he knows less about these subjects than any other man I have ever met. He dares to lecture the members of this House, and yet he is never prepared to take any " gruel " himself. He is the most thin- sition benches, and he challenged any member skinned member of this House-politically, I mean. The honourable member makes frequent interjections and interruptions in other members' speeches, but the moment any one attacks the honourable member he is at once up in arms. An Hon. MEMBER .- Who is that ? Mr. SYMES .- The member for Riccarton, the member who represents a majority of one. The other night the honourable member advocated the buying of estates round Wanganui for the purpose of cutting them up for close settlement. I then said it was rubbish-that he did not know what he was talking about- and I still say so. I know Wanganui as well as I know this room, and I can safely say that, if any land is wanted around that place, the people there are cute enough to cut it up for themselves. They will not wait for the Government to do so. The honourable gentleman's knowledge of Wanganui and the purchase of estates is just about as reliable as his knowledge of finance. The next member of the fourth party I want to refer to is the honourable member for Nelson City, Mr. Graham, who used all the eloquence at his command to condemn the Government. He challenged any one, in the most pleading and pathetic tones, to disprove his figures. In my opinion, no one need bother with his figures, as they are on the 31st March last (1898), the respective thoroughly unreliable, but perfectly harmless ; sums being: 1891, £143,966; and 1898, an "audacious and odious juggling with was under the impression that the member for Nelson City was the only heaven-born Colonial to his venerable appearance, combined with his liberal and persuasive manner and power of elo- does not understand finance, notwithstanding his long acquaintance with and manipulation of metals and handling of tin, and I do not think he could be relied upon as a Colonial Treasurer. When he was delivering his eloquent oration the other evening my thoughts were carried back to a much more

memorable occasion in 1898, when he was so warmly congratulated by, I think, nearly every member of the House. So many hand-shakes do I believe he received from account of his eloquent address that I was in- In view of this, it is strange to say that we did not see a single member congratulating him the other evening, not even a member of the Opposition or a messenger. An Hon. MEMBER. - You were not in the Mr. SYMES. - I did not see him in the lobbies ; but it is clear to me that he is not wanted by the Opposition. And at that time we saw a long article in the leading paper in the City of Nelson lauding him to the skies. Whether it was inspired or not I cannot say, but it looked as if it was. On that memorable occasion in 1898 he not only denounced but absolutely demolished every financier on the Opposition side of the House to disprove one of his facts, figures, or tables. He went further, for he offered to put up a large sum of money on these conditions, namely : that if any honourable member on that side could disprove his figures the money was to go to the Nelson Hospital. He had in view, no doubt, the getting of & Government subsidy of £1 4s. in the pound, clearly showing that he has been reckless from the beginning, and could never make a careful Colonial Treasurer. Now he condemns the Government. Sir, he also offered to double his stake if any honourable gentleman on 9.30. that side of the House would swear or take an affidavit that he had of himself, without the use of the Treasury officials of this colony, disproved one of his facts or figures. And, strange to say, that stake has never been claimed, clearly proving that at that time the honourable gentleman's figures could not be refuted. This clearly shows his masterly grip of finance at that time, gained during his tenure of office as Chairman of the Banking Committee; but he has forgotten his lesson for want of practice, notwithstanding his handling of the baser metals. This is what he said at that time :- "The surplus of this prosperous seven years is the difference between the balance to credit on the 1st April, 1891, and the balance available

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£377,178. . . I am going to show that this ex-financier of the House is wrong, and that the accumulated surplus is over two millions, and £521,144 is all, excepting £54,286, the surplus of last year, notwithstanding Mr. G. F. Richardson, the late Minister of Lands." Well, Sir, that was in 1898; but things have progressed exactly the same, so far as I can judge, since then. Yet the other night he said that the finances of this country were being pushed to perdition, and they had been going wrong for years and years past by the squandering of the present Government. He was and has been a member of the party since then, and has consistently and knowingly voted for every sum borrowed by the Government now in power. In fact, he has done worse : he has helped to spend every cent of it. He was one of the Royal Commissioners last year, and he also had a very nice road made in Nelson, known as the Rocks Road, at the expense of the colony. Last year the Nelson Harbour Bill was passed, giving them something like £70,000. Now, I have no doubt in my own mind that he has approached the Government with the view of getting the mud-flats over there walled in, and they have declined to do it, and that is what has hurt the honourable gentleman's feelings. He thinks that he is a heaven-born financier. but if we are to get such a financier as that, well, heaven help the country. Now, coming to the greatest question of the day-the settlement of our lands-I am very pleased to see that we have got the Lands Report for this year already. One honourable gentleman said to-day, and I quite agree with him, that the administration of our lands is the first duty not only of the Government, but of every member of this House. It is the one department that wants attention more than any other. It is the one thing that either makes or mars a country. The lands of our country should be administered in the most liberal manner that it is possible to administer them ; they should be administered in the most live way that is possible, and they should be administered by the best men it is possible to get to administer them. I regret that I cannot say that this is the case altogether throughout this department. A great many of the systems are fossilised. Take, for instance, the administration of our Land Boards. I think this is one of the most fossilised bodies in the colony. It is one of the things that should have been blotted out years ago. If we are to have Land Boards

they should be elective. Do not let us continue the present system of having nominated men, who know nothing at all about lands, and care less. In most cases their object is simply to attend as many Land Board meetings as they can and draw their expenses ; and they like to be able to say, " I am one of the pets of the Government - a member of the Land Board." I am not going to discuss the question of leasehold versus freehold, because, it matters not whether this Government or any other is in power, every estate that is bought we are putting the people nearer the freehold. The more estates you buy Mr. Syntes the freehold ; and when the people get strong enough they will demand the freehold system if they wish it. In taking up forest land I would let the settler have it on any tenure he chooses-leasehold, freehold, lease in perpetuity, or license to occupy with the right of purchase. In my district we have all the various systems, and the settlers are all, where properly treated, prosperous. Last year I find the forfeitures were 310, because they would not or could not pay their rent. It is very nice for the Commissioner of Lands to say they would not. No doubt many of them could not pay their rent ; but he knows quite well why they could not, and had to forfeit in most cases, for the simple reason that they had no roads. The Land Boards insist upon the regulations being strictly carried out in all cases, yet they neglect to carry out the regulations themselves. A man is loaded in many cases from 2s. 6d. to £1 per acre for roads : that is, he pays 4 per cent. on the loading for 999 years, and has not got a road. Some have been six and eight years and have not even got a pack-track yet. The Land Board says that if they do not go on their land it will be forfeited, and yet a man has to take his wife and family there, and has no means of taking anything to his land unless in a balloon. The Board should be prepared to carry out their part of the regulations before insisting upon the settler carrying out his. You would not hear of the forfeitures if the people could get to their lands, but unfortunately they cannot. Ninety-nine leases were surrendered chiefly because the rents were considered by the lessees to be too high. Of the lands which reverted to the Crown in this way, 124 sections were again offered to the public, and eighty-eight were selected by other tenants. So that the forfeitures were not so much. But why should these unfortunate people, who in many instances had spent \$20, £30, or \$40, have lost everything? Why not help them out the land, and where the rent is too high reduce it, and thus keep the same tenant. Now, in connection with the improved-farm settlement, there are at present forty-six settlements, and they are situated in Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Wellington, Otago, and Southland. They contain an area of 76,069 acres, of which 27,094 acres have been felled and grassed, and are occupied by 490 settlers. These settlers' improvements are worth \$108,835, towards which the Government has paid \$67,812, which amount is added on to the value of the land. Now, Sir, the honourable member for Waihemo was just now saying that these settlers, before they went on the land, should contribute something towards it. Does he not call that contributing something towards it ? I think these settlers have, at any rate, contributed something which proves they are bona fide settlers, and secured the Government and colony against any possibility of a loss. Now, in Taranaki the area felled and grassed is 8,388 acres, and the Government expenditure was \$15,603, the number of settlers 130, and the value of their

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these people, at any rate, have contributed to Otago £347 2s. 7d., to 790 tenants, was remitted ; the value and welfare of the country. And they in Southland, £101 17s., to 206 tenants; in would do a great deal more if the Government Marlborough, £93 6s. 2d., to 35 tenants ; and in had some better system of dealing with for- Nelson, £5 19s., to 42 tenants. In the Districts forfeited and surrendered sections ; but, in all of Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and West- these improved-farm settlements, when a section land no rebate was given during the last is forfeited an unnecessary amount of red-tape financial year." has to be expended before they put it up for selection. Under the village-settlement system up. in Auckland in 1895 there were 236 selectors, who held 9,781 acres ; in 1901 there are 190 was not allowed by the Commissioner of Crown selectors, holding 7,837 acres, and they owe £515 Lands and Receivers of Land

Revenue. The in rent. Village settlement, at any rate in Act gives these two officers the power to say "Yes" or "No." Auckland, has not been a success. In Taranaki in 1895 there were thirty selectors, holding 176 Bay of Islands acres; in 1901 there are twenty-five, holding 101 acres. So that there, again, they are reduced. Well, if honourable members could Hawke's Bay :- only see the land that has been set apart for small holdings they would not be at all surprised, as the Crown tenants paid prices at these village settlers leaving; but I promptly without it." say they would have remained there if they could have leased the forfeited sections, instead of Land Revenue and the Commissioner of having them put up and sold to outsiders in Crown Lands did in Taranaki. The settlers every case, and thus altering the original tenure went to the office and were told that it was not from lease in perpetuity to freehold. Now, in yet decided whether they would get a rebate connection with the settlement conditions, or not; they were told to call later on. They "The inspections made by Crown Lands called later on, and they found the Commissioners disclose that, on the whole, the Commissioner was not in, and they were told to call conditions of lease are well complied with. They again. Then, at the end of the month, they said show that they examined 6,028 properties, it was no use going to the Commissioner on the occupied by 5,597 settlers, holding 1,173,093 acres, because the money ought to have been paid by that time; and as a result they got were worth £876,363, or £407,889 in excess of no benefit from the Act. They had actually again and again tried to find out the position what the lessees had undertaken to do, although they occupied. They were the very people who there were 339 selectors who had not quite wanted help under the Act, and yet they did effected the requisite improvements." not get it. It is a case of the old saying, "To This clearly shows that where the areas are of him that hath shall be given." It has been anything like a respectable size the holdings are given to every Crown tenant in Canterbury, a success. That takes me right down to the Crown Tenants' Rebate of Rent Bill of last year where we were informed the tenants neither year. I have said before, and I say it again, wanted it nor should they have got it; but I believe the members of the Land Boards there that was one of the clumsiest and most unstatesmanlike pieces of legislation I have ever seen fixed the matter up for the tenants and said, "We will give you all a rebate." Yet in my introduced into this or any other House. I voted for it simply because I considered that half a loaf district no rebate was allowed to the Crown is better than no bread, and it was the only way tenants. When one tenant waited on the Re- in which we could get half a loaf. But, Sir, Receiver of Land Revenue that officer said to unfortunately, we have not got that. him, "You fellows will want us to give you An Hon. MEMBER :- What will the Taranaki the land next "-a remark that would suggest that the whole of the land belonged to him. men say? Mr. SYMES :- I am going to tell you pre- Why, Sir, if we had no Crown lands in the colony that officer's occupation would be gone. sently. Now, that measure was chiefly opposed by members from the other Island, more particularly from Canterbury. It was an instance of the servant dictating to the master. It is only owing to the fact particularly from Canterbury. This is what the Crown Tenants' Rebate of Rent Bill does: that we have Crown lands in this colony that we have Commissioners of Crown Lands and Honourable members will remember that I Receivers of Land Revenue, and instead of asked for a return on, I think, the first or second day of the opening of Parliament, but getting impertinence from these officers our settlers ought to get the best of treatment. up to the present time that return, which ought These, Sir, are the downtrodden Civil servants to have taken about two hours to compile, has we have heard so much about from our not found its way to the table of the House friends opposite. Sir, in place of having the yet :- "The discounts granted under the Act of last Crown Tenants' Rebate Act on the statute-book, the Land Act should have been amended session on one half-year's rent amounted to £2,317 13s. 9d., the largest being in the Land for the purpose of giving relief where necessary. District of Canterbury, £890 Os. 9d., granted to With the Valuation Department and the Crown Lands Ranger, surely any cases of hardship 474 tenants, and the next in Wellington, where An Hon. MEMBER :- They ought to have paid Mr. SYMES :- They all did pay up; but it Mr. HERRIES. - What about

Hawke's Mr. SYMES .- This is what is said about "In Hawke's Bay a discount was considered Now, I will tell the House what the Receiver

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Lands Department. The Minister of Lands' departmental officers I have named, if they have anything in them, ought to have been able to go round and see whether a section was over- valued or under-valued. There are none under- valued in my district ; they are all over-valued, so they could not do wrong if a reduction was given in each case, and it would neither have hurt the country nor the settler. But as the Act is now worked it simply means that the man who has a good section and who can pay his rent promptly will get a rebate, except in the Districts of Auckland, Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Westland, while those who are in poorer circumstances and are struggling hard for a living will never get a reduction, because they are not able to pay exactly to time. Mr. ARNOLD .- I told you that last year. Mr. SYMES .- The honourable member says that now, but we all know how it has worked out. Now, in connection with the improved- farm settlements, we have had something said in this House about the co-operative system of road-making. I say, for road-making, the co- operative system is the fairest and best under the sun, and the work is superior to that gene- rally done by local bodies. I do not refer to bridges : I speak only of roads or earthwork. The men in these cases have all had something to buy bread-and-butter, which they otherwise could not have done. Take the improved-farm settlers in my own district: I think in one dis- trict, the Wangamomona, the late Sir John Mckenzie built one of the grandest monuments ever built in this colony to any man. There is no doubt about it. It is a success, it has come to stay; and the bulk of the settlers in the Whangamomona were unfortunate people taken out of the towns. They are all good, genuine, sterling settlers, and if, as the honourable mem- ber for Pahiataua said, they only had roads they would never trouble the Government. They hate the notion of having to take co- operative works now. They say they can live by their land if only they can get roads to get their produce away. Of course, their sections are all loaded for roads, but they are prisoners for one-half of the year. I am not condemning the Government in this instance, because they have tried to help, and they have helped these settlers as far as they possibly could ; but it just shows that where you get land of this character now it is so far away from the market that it takes a considerable time to get roads. This settlement is some sixty miles from any town; and ten years ago no one had ever heard of it except, perhaps, the Maoris. I do not think a pakeha had seen it up to that time, and now you can drive a buggy or ride a bicycle the whole distance-but only in the summer. Well, I think the co-operative works done in connection with this settlement will more than compare favourably with any work done by a local body. In fact, in my opinion the work of a local body is a very poor imitation indeed. The work has been well done; but then, I say, they have been very fortunate in having had first-class overseers, and the work Mr. Symes settlers were good, genuine, and bona fide, or they would not be staying on their land now. In spite of adverse circumstances, in spite of famine prices for their food, they are still living there, and by their energies are building com- fortable homes for themselves and families, and hope to live there-to end their days there. Now, I have asked, and I am going to ask again, in connection with this settlement, that the Government should in cases of this sort, where they are sixty miles from the nearest medical officer, grant a subsidy. I see in various other parts of the colony they are doing it- at Te Aroha, £50 per annum ; Waimarino, £75 per annum ; Hanmer, £100 per annum; Wa- naka, £100 per annum; Catlin's, £150 per an- num. Now, I hope to see that the Government, at any rate, will increase this vote, so that they can give this special district a subsidy of £75. The settlers there are quite willing to find a sufficient fund to make the honorarium or vote to a medical officer £150 per annum ; and, as these other places are getting it, I trust the Go- vernment will see their way, at any rate, to treat Wangamomona in the same way. Now, Sir, reverting to the subject of the pre- 10.30. sent Land Board system, and the slow manner which they have of cutting up their lands, I might mention instances of blocks of land that we have still unsurveyed. There

is a large block of this kind between Wangamona and the Tangarakau River. And we have blocks of land that we have surveyed and cut up into sections and which still are not open for selection. Now, what we want is to have the lands cut up more expeditiously than in the past, or, when they are cut up, have them opened for selection. At present when you refer to the department on this subject they refer you to the Land Board, and say the Land Board is the cause of the delay. But if the Boards have no power in the matter, then the more quickly they are abolished the better, because we do not want Boards that are mere figureheads. If we can get the land cut up more expeditiously it would be a good thing for the country. If instead of buying more estates in the North Island those lands that have already been acquired were settled and made reproductive, it would be a much better thing for the colony than the present way of doing things. In my district there are blocks of land unsurveyed still, inland of Waitara and Urenui, between Mokau and Awakino Rivers, while the other day a block of land at Hawera was acquired for land-for-settlements purposes at something over £20 an acre. By the time the settler gets on this land it will stand him in quite £30 an acre, before he begins his operations. If the Government were to cut up some bush land they could put the settlers on it at £5 or 6 an acre, and bush land there would carry just as many cows as this open £20 an acre land. I am not averse, Sir, to the land-for-settlements policy. I believe that in the larger districts, such as those in the South Island, it is absolutely necessary. If you look at the electoral rolls used in the

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last election you will see that in some of the electorates in the South Island there are more women than men on the roll. There were more women than men voted, and I say such a state of things as that should not exist in this colony. The cause of that is that there is no land for the young men in that particular locality to go on, and they have to go elsewhere in order to get land, and it has been found absolutely necessary in order to prevent such a state of things as that to burst up large estates. I can speak for my own district in fact, in regard to the whole of the west coast of the North Island: there are no large estates on that coast. There are thousands of acres of good land waiting for people to go upon. Take the case of the estate purchased the other day near Hawera: Why, it was reproductive, and there are thousands of acres within a short distance of it which are unproductive, and people could be put upon such land at the very outside at £5 an acre. Some honourable members have stated, both in this House and outside, that the prosperity of this colony is owing in a very great measure to the land-for-settlements policy. In my opinion, that is absolutely wrong. The prosperity of the colony is owing to the settlement of our land to the thrift, industry, perseverance, and hard work of our industrious settlers. That is the cause of our prosperity. There is no doubt that the cause of the prosperity of any country must be the settlers on the land. I am not quite certain what is the cost per head of putting people on the land under the land-for-settlements system, but I saw the other day a statement that the cost was about £1,000 per head, and if that is so it is a costly luxury. The Land Purchase Board should be very cautious indeed, because I think that in a great many cases land agents badger the Government to buy the estates of their friends or clients for the purpose of getting their commission out of them. The honourable member for Palmerston said we were on the top of a land boom, and that prices will fall during the next twelve months. I do not believe anything of the sort. I am perfectly certain that we have not reached the top by a good deal yet; but I admit that at the present time money has hardened. When money drops again you will see land going up higher than ever. I think we should first open up our unoccupied lands before buying occupied land for settlements in the North Island. In connection with land there is another thing that has always struck me as being very unfair. City members seem to forget, when they say that these sums of money have been given to help farmers, that an unfair state of things is the exemption. A man with an income of \$300 is exempted, and there is £50 insurance exemption, making £350; yet all that is granted to farmers is a £500 exemption. I venture to say that the man who can make

£100 a year out of land worth \$500 has to be pretty lively. So that in the exemption in that case the town gets the advantage every time. There is another matter in connection with our land-for-settlements policy that the Government ought to take into consideration. In cutting up lands for settlement they forget that they are creating a great deal of extra traffic, which throws an extra burden upon the local bodies in the matter of roads. The people have to keep up these roads, and the Government ought to provide them with assistance to meet this case. Now, Sir, I would like to say a few words with reference to the Advances to Settlers Department. I was surprised when I heard the Minister in charge of this department say that where they have a gilt-edged security-say, a property worth £2,000-with a loan of \$500 upon it, and if the mortgagor bought another property that was not a gilt-edged security on which he wanted a mortgage of £250, the mortgagor was recommended to surrender his first mortgage and get a fresh mortgage over the lot. If this is the system pursued, all I can say is that I am surprised. It is as ancient as Adam, and no man in his senses would dream of doing such a thing nowadays. It does not matter how much property the mortgagor owns, for, so long as he has got anything, he must pay up his mortgage. There is no necessity for a man to surrender a mortgage at all; to do so would simply mean putting so many more pounds in the hands of the lawyers, and fleecing the unfortunate settler. It is all done by a simple clause in the mortgage. Complaints are made from time to time by people who pay their fee to this department for valuations that, where the security is not considered good enough for the full amount of the application, a smaller amount is offered by the department, and if declined the department gives instructions that the owners are to be rated at that value. Although the department has taken a fee to ascertain the value, the unfortunate farmer is rated on a value that he ought not to be rated on, and one that the department would not have known anything about but for the application and valuation. The report of the Lands and Survey Department contains a lot of pictures, maps, and other very useful information. I am pleased to see the late Sir John McKenzie's picture in it, but why we should have a young gentleman in khaki in it I do not know. What has he to do with the report of the Lands Department? We are getting so fond of the military that we cannot get anything unless there is a hero in khaki in it. I do not know what Lieutenant Collins has to do with the Lands Report, but here we have his photograph. Mr. SEDDON.- He was in the Lands Department, and got badly wounded at the war. Mr. SYMES.- Oh, is that it? Now, in connection with the farmers' rebate that we are supposed to have had from the Railway Department, there was something like \$70,000 or £80,000 of reductions. I notice amongst the articles on which a reduction was made we have, in addition to free carriage of lime, butter, These are what eggs, and empty fish-cases. they call the products of the farm. There is also the abolition of the extra charge of 1d.

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manures, bricks, clay, coal, and also the issue of cheap tickets for the workers of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin on the suburban lines, have all been credited to the farmers. According to one member the other night there was also credited to the farmers the carriage of polo-ponies, racehorses, hunters, and hounds returning from polo and other meetings. Mr. SEDDON.- The farmers got concessions to the amount of £107,000 this year. Mr. SYMES.- I am glad to hear it; but that those reductions should be credited to the farmers surpasses my understanding. I admit that substantial reductions have been made to farmers, but these reductions have benefited the towns and working-classes equally as much as the farmers. I have a great many other matters to go over, but my time is up, and no doubt there will be some other opportunity of referring to them. I thank honourable members for the very attentive hearing they have given me whilst giving my views on some of the questions contained in the Budget. Mr. WITHEFORD (Auckland City).- Nearly every country representative who has spoken-and the honourable member who has just sat down is one, and the honourable member for Pahiataua is another-have referred to the city representatives as opposing the

farmers, and I wish to say that the city representatives, so far as I am concerned, have never opposed giving assistance to country settlers. Mr. SYMES .- I was not aware that I had made any such reflection, and if I did so I withdraw it. Mr. BOLLARD (Eden) .- Sir, before making the few remarks I wish to make this evening I would like to congratulate the new member for Patea on the sensible and practical speech he made a day or two ago. I also welcome him to the ranks of the farmers in this House as a great acquisition. It is quite evident to me that the electors of Patea have selected the right man to represent them, to look after their interests in this House, and to see that justice is done to them. He seems to me to be a man who has the ring of true metal about him, and, by way of comparison, altogether different from some of the weak-kneed members who are on the Government side of this House. He, at all events, would have the moral courage to vote as he speaks, and not like some of the members on the other side, who speak one way and vote another. Mr. SEDDON .- So long as they vote straight it is all right. Mr. BOLLARD .- The Right Hon. the Premier said to the member who has just sat down, when he stated that he was going to kick against some of the policy measures of the present Government, that he could kick as much as he liked so long as he got his vote. Mr. SYMES. - He will not always get it. Mr. BOLLARD .- Well, we shall see. At all events, I wish to say this : that the honourable member who has just sat down is evidently wavering in his allegiance to the Government. Mr. Symes has been a great deal said in this debate about the finance of the colony, and we have had opinions from a large number of members. Therefore it is not my intention to weary the House by a repetition of the figures, but I would just like to give a little summary of the position of the colony. I find from the returns published last year that the value of the freeholds of the colony amount to £109,708,003, the mortgages on freeholds amount to £35,032,010, leaving a balance of £74,675,893. Then, Sir, we have the public debt, amounting to \$49,257,787. The debts owing by local bodies amount to £6,963,254. This makes a total indebtedness of £56,231,011, leaving a balance of £18,454,882. This is what the lawyers call the equity of redemption. It is only fair that we should add to this the value of our railways, which I put down at sixteen millions, and Crown lands, nine millions. This makes altogether £25,000,000. It is only fair that we should add to this the securities of local bodies, which I put down at ten millions, making altogether £53,454,882. This shows that the position of the assets and liabilities of the colony is this: that we owe £91,253,121 in public and private debts, and that what is called our equity of redemption is \$53,454,882. Now, supposing a private individual was in that position, would he be said to be a prosperous colonist ? I say he would be considered to be in a very shaky condition. Now, our loans have not been levied on the taxation powers of the people. They have been principally on our assets, in the shape of Crown lands and other securities. Mr. SEDDON .- I did not hear you reckon up the value of the public buildings. Mr. BOLLARD .- That is contained in the value of Crown lands. I did not say the waste lands of the Crown were worth nine millions. At the end of the present year we shall certainly have to pay in interest on public and private loans £2,300,000. Let us take the imports and exports as far as we have got them. A good deal has been said about the non-production of documents necessary to enable members to understand the position. We have seen nothing of the Year-book, nor any other information about the imports and exports ; but I presume when they come out they will be about even, in consequence of the fall in the price of wool. The returns for 1900, in round numbers, are : Exports, £13,000,000; imports, £10,000,000, leaving £3,000,000 difference between imports and exports. Why, Sir, when we take the interest on our loans-I am not dealing now with the taxation on our people -when we take the interest off that, we have only about £700,000 left-about £1 per head for every man, woman, and child in the colony. That surely is not a satisfactory state of affairs. A good deal has also been said during the debate about sheep and wool. We have been told by honourable members, who say they are farmers, in this House that the extra price sheep have brought will compensate for the loss in the price of wool. Why, Sir, they are either wilfully deceiving the House or they know nothing at all

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they have stated, all the sheep in the colony would require to be sold to get the profit. I put the fat sheep of the colony at about 2,500,000, and I think that is about a fair amount for the sheep exported and for home consumption. Well, Sir, if we take that at 5s. per sheep extra price, it only amounts to £625,000. And how is that going to make up for two millions, as we have been told by the so-called farmers of the House that the one would balance the other? I am afraid that this year there will be a falling-off of £2,000,000 sterling; and I believe there are instances where men in the back blocks have offered the wool to anybody who would shear the sheep and take it away. Mr. SEDDON .- You are drawing a long bow now. Mr. BOLLARD .- Well, I do not know that of my own knowledge, but I have been told it. Now, it has been said by the Right Hon. the Treasurer that we on this side of the House, and some critics on his own side, have made out that the colony is in such a condition that we certainly ought not to be clamouring for money for public works ; and the North Island Trunk Railway has been mentioned, and we have been told that we are clamouring to have this railway constructed within the next three years. Personally, I do not think it will be constructed within the next ten years by the present Government. However, what I wish to say is this : that we do not grumble at a moderate amount of money being borrowed for public works. ' What we do grumble about is the extravagant expenditure of the Government. The difference in the cost of carrying on the Civil government of the country now and what it was ten years ago is something alarming. The population has not increased anything like in proportion with the extra expenditure ; if it had done so the population of the country ought now to be a million and a half, instead of 750,000. Now, with reference to the Main Trunk Railway, we Auckland members have been twitted with having asked for large amounts for this railway. We do not want a shilling of the colony's money if we get the assets belonging to the railway. The assets- that is, the land purchased out of the million loan-are quite sufficient for the purpose. The Treasurer, if he wished to do so, could issue short-dated debentures against that land, and it would produce more money than would construct the railway. Mr. SEDDON .- We had better have another loan. Mr. BOLLARD .- There is no use in talking about another loan. It is the assets belonging by Act of Parliament to that railway that are required. It would be inadvisable to sell the land. It would be far better to issue debentures against it, because when the railway goes through it it will be worth double the money, and two years ago it was worth £830,000. But the Treasurer says, If we ask until we are blue in the face we shall not get it. Now I want to say something with regard to what has been stated on the Government side of the House, and by members of the Government especially, that there is not a man on this side of the House who would not be afraid to repeal that Land for Settlements Act. Well, I, for one, am not afraid to repeal it-or, at any rate, to considerably modify its provisions, if I can get the chance. There is also the Advances to Settlers Department. Between those two departments we shall have expended somewhere about five millions of money. I say that the system of acquiring improved lands for settlement, and of lending money to farmers in the way it is done here, is bad in principle. The system adopted by the Government of borrowing money from the foreign money-lender is the very thing that caused all the trouble in Ireland. Up to a few years ago, when they got better land-laws there, the large landed proprietors were taking rack-rents out of their tenants and spending their money, not for the benefit of the country in Ireland, but in England and on the Continent, and thereby impoverishing the country. Is not the Government of this colony doing the same thing ? What is their position in connection with the moneys borrowed for this purpose? They are simply taking the interest out of the people and sending the money out of the country to the money-lenders. Just imagine what will happen if this system goes on. The whole of the lands of the country will belong to the English capitalists, and the interest we shall have to find year after year will go out of the country, just as it did in Ireland, causing any amount of trouble and impoverishing the country. But, assuming for a moment that it is a right thing to borrow money for such purposes, why not take it

out of the Government Savings-Bank and Government Insurance Department ? You could take more money out of those departments than would satisfy all the requirements. An Hon. MEMBER .- We are doing it. Mr. BOLLARD .- And what rate of interest do you take it at ? 3 and 3} per cent. And at what rate of interest did the honourable gentleman take the money ? He paid 3 and 3} per cent., and yet we could have lent that money out to the farmers or used it for the resumption of land and got 4 per cent. for it. I say, Sir, it is a great mistake, even though the money might be obtained cheaper, to go to England for it while there was sufficient money in the colony for our needs. By what they have done the Government have done an injustice to those who put their money in the Post - Office Savings - Bank, and also to those who, expecting to get a reasonable bonus added to their policies, insured their lives in the Government Insurance Department. Then, in regard to the land, I have repeatedly stated, and I say again, that the administration is bad, and that the manner in which the rents are allocated-assuming the lands have been bought at a fair price-the rent placed on some of the allotments cannot be maintained in the future. Let us have a period of depression and you will

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Many of the men who have taken up land do not really realise their position. They do not know whether they have it at a fair rent or a rack-rent ; but they will find out when the pinch comes; and I can assure the Hon. the Treasurer, as the head of the Government, that there are instances which I could point out where the rents have been so badly allocated that large advances may be obtained the moment the ballot is over, while the poorer land is left on the hands of the Government. Sir, why should we take this improved land at all ? Are there not millions of acres of good land both in the North and the South-especially in the North-that could be utilised for settlement without interfering with the improved land ? Sir, there are millions of acres. The pioneers of this colony came sixteen thousand miles to take up unimproved land, and they carved out of it homes for themselves and their families; and why cannot the young men of the North and the South do the same? I am sure they have the true grit to do it. Much of the land they might take up is better than some of the land which the Government have purchased from private owners. Sir, I will tell the House the reason why people are not taking up this land. It is because the Government have educated young men to covet another man's grass paddock, and take it from him after he has spent the best years of a lifetime to bring it to a paying state. It is because the Government have legislated in the direction of claiming a man's improved property. The Government in effect say, " You agitate in the matter and we will take this man's grass paddock "-the property a man took up perhaps forty or fifty years ago, and on which, after years of slavery and perseverance, he has carved out for himself and for his family a home, in which he thought he might comfortably spend the later years of his life, and afterwards leave it to his children. This is taken from him by the Government whether he likes it or not, and is given to some one else. If it were taken for public works one would not grumble, but to take a man's grass paddocks from him and give them to another man I say is not a right or proper thing to do. We are told that the holdings are too large ; but the people who hold them are not responsible. They were offered for sale, and they bought them at auction fairly and squarely. It is time enough to talk about cutting them up when all the rest of the Crown lands are occupied. But before that time comes I say the owners will cut them up themselves. Sir, I hope to see the day when this law will be done away with, and when a man can do what he likes with his land, but that he shall not hold more than a certain reasonable area. Now, Sir, although the Government are spending millions for the purpose of providing lands for farms, what have they done for workmen's homes ? Mr. SEDDON. - Not nearly enough. Mr. BOLLARD .- In my opinion the Government would do far better work if they paid more attention to the working-men and their Mr. Bollard in the four large centres, than they can by providing improved lands for farms. Now, Sir, with regard to these workmen's homes, the question is not a new thing. It has not originated with this Government, but with the Conservative Government in England. Some years ago I made a valuation of a

ward in the City of Auckland, and I was so impressed with what I saw there of the back slums that ever since I thought I would do something to try and alter it. I presume it is the same in each of the large centres. Going down the main street you see an archway, and fancy it is going into a backyard, and you go through and then find six or seven hovels at the back rented to working-men-and, not only to working-men, but some of the worst characters in the city live there too. Take a respectable working-man, and there are many respectable working-men who get married at the age of five-and-twenty. They have little or no money to support them, and they have to go into a cheap house to live, and they go into these back places. Before they know where they are, they have a large family round them; and, while the insani- tary conditions are bad enough, the moral conditions are ten times worse. If the Go- vernment would provide them with small homes in the country, which they could reach by railway, it would be giving a great advantage to the working people of this country. Now, there is another matter I have brought under the notice of this House in connection with the farmers and agriculturists, and that is the establishing of a school of agriculture in the Auckland District. We have one in Can- terbury but, even if it was properly managed, it could not be made available for the whole colony. Take Auckland, which is the centre of a comparatively large population-at any rate, the largest in the colony : there are numbers of professional men, merchants, and well-to-do tradesmen who wish their sons to learn practi- cal scientific farming. There is no place in the Auckland Provincial District to which these young fellows can be sent for that purpose -no large station where agricultural as well as pastoral farming is carried on, and where they can be treated in anything like the way in which they are treated in their own homes. Now, Sir, if we had a school of agriculture within a few miles of a large centre these young fellows could get on their ponies or cycles at home and be at this school of agriculture hy eight o'clock in the morning, do their day's work of seven hours, and leave again at four o'clock in the afternoon, have a little recreation, and be able to attend lectures in the city at night. Now, that sort of thing could be done for about eight or ten guineas a year, and this would bring it within the reach of almost every poor man who wants his son to learn the science and practice of agriculture ; but they cannot afford to send their sons to some distant institution and pay #40 or 450 for board in addition. Even those who can afford it do not like to send their sons so far away from home. . They like to see them at night, and exercise a general supervision over

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them, because it is at that time of life that they require most supervision. Now, with . regard to the experimental farms, I admit that there the Government are doing good work. I am not finding fault with the Government at all in that direction. They have an experi- mental farm at Wairangi, and I was very much pleased indeed to see what was done there. I received an invitation last year to go up and have a look round, and it is really sur- prising to find what has been done there. I believe they have this season about 40 tons of grapes, while they had magnificent grapes there last season ; but the vines are not quite of a sufficient age to show what they can do. And yet, notwithstanding that the season was a very bad one, they had a growth of grapes which shows what can be done in this country with the kind of management that is carried out there. They were perfectly clean and beautiful, showing that even in a bad season grapes can be grown in the open air in the Auck- land District that are fit for any wines. Now, as I say, there is no doubt the Govern- ment are doing good work in teaching the people of the Auckland District how to grow grapes in order to make wine. What has been done in the past in the way of producing wine has been altogether wrong. I have pointed out several times to vine-growers in the Auckland District that they have been making a mistake in using different kinds of grapes to make wine. They have been using all sorts of grapes, and put- ting them indiscriminately into the crusher, ex- pecting to make a good class of wine. They cannot do it. If you want to produce a good class of wine you must use one particular class of grape for each particular variety of wine you want to produce; and the Government, by the manner in which they are conducting the vineyard at Wairangi, will be able to show vine-growers in this country that

they can produce grape wine quite equal to the Australian wine, and the effect of that will be to develop the industry throughout the country to a very great extent. Many people would drink wine when they would not drink beer or spirits. I am surprised that the licensing law in connection with colonial wine has not been altered before this. Why, a man may make 500 gallons of wine and yet he cannot sell a drop to his neighbour ; he can- not sell less than two gallons. Why should not every restaurant-keeper be able to sell a glass of light wine to a man for his dinner ? Now, there are many people who would like to drink a glass of light wine, and yet who would not care to go into a hotel for their dinner. I wish to draw the attention of the Government to this matter, and I hope they will take an early opportunity of pro- posing an amendment of the Licensing Act which will enable wine-growers to sell wines in a reasonable way. I sincerely hope, also, that the Government will take into consideration the question of establishing a school of agri- culture in the Auckland District. In the large centres we have the universities, we have high schools, and provision is made for enabling young men to qualify themselves for the learned professions; but what have we done for the farmers ? A farmer may go on the land, and may spend a lot of money unnecessarily, simply from want of knowledge or experience, before he strikes the right thing. I think the money now expended in connection with the Agricul- tural Department might be better expended in the way I have suggested. Young men, self- trained, would be scattered about the country, and thus much good would result to the colony. It appears to me that our labour laws are going beyond all bounds in the matter of regulating the relations between employer and employé. It appears to me, from what I have read in the papers, that pressure is being brought to bear on the Premier by the labour unions. These people have taken complete control of him, and are simply going to deal with him as they think proper. That seems to be the position, and I think in the end the honourable gentleman will be hoist with his petard. I have no objection to labour unions, or to unions of any sort. I believe they are good things, in moderation. I believe that Conciliation Boards and Arbitration Courts are good things to settle disputes be- tween employer and employé. But in conse- quence of the encouragement given by the Minister of Labour to the different labour unions, and in consequence of the manner in which they are forcing him to alter the labour laws session after session, these unions are run- ning mad. Just fancy for a moment the labour union trying to impress upon the Government of the country that people handling perishable goods can do so within eight hours. Why, it is the act of a lunatic to think that such a thing can be done. We are told by those engaged in handling perishable commodities, such as milk, meat, vegetables, fruit, fish, and things of that kind, that it is impossible to do the work without having a double staff of hands, and that staff of hands means double the cost of handling the goods; and they tell you very plainly that they must take the cost out of the producer. That is a fine state of things ; but labour unions do not care who it is taken out of so long as it does not touch them, and so long as they get higher wages. In the district where I have been living for forty years I have paid the highest wages, and I have never asked a man to work more than eight hours for me, and have never required any law to compel me to do so. I have great sympathy with the working-man ; but I like to see him reasonable, and not trying to impose impossible conditions on employers, and thus render it impossible to carry on business. What is going to be the effect of all this labour legislation ? It will happen that sooner or later this power the Pre- mier has created will rend him, and he will be hoist with his own petard. I ask him now, before it is too late, to go slow, as he says in his Financial Statement. At present we have people coming here from all parts of the colony in a state of excitement and unrest wondering what is going to happen next, and fearing that they will have to close their businesses. Why should people be called upon to rush to Wellington at their own expense to pray

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do not think it is right that men should be placed in that position. We have all classes of labour interested in the handling of perishable goods, and they are in a great state of unrest and excitement as to what will

be the next move. This sort of thing cannot last. I said just now that I had no objection to unions, nor have I, and I am pleased to see that at last we have got a farmers' union. Now, it is 11.30. a well-known fact that the farmer is the most long-suffering man in the community. He bears almost anything ; he is imposed upon right and left, and yet he tries to struggle along and pay his rent. But there is an old proverb that the last straw breaks the camel's back, and it has come to that with the farmer. I assure the Premier, as I told him earlier in the session, that if he does not look out they will, metaphorically speaking, bring him to his knees. In the labour unions in the colony, when there is a question as to the rates of wages and when they want more wages, they say, "Take it out of the farmer." He is a long-suffering individual, and he stands it all. I saw by the paper some time ago that the fellmongers were before the Conciliation Board or Arbitration Court in Canterbury. One worker belonging to the union, when he was asked the question as to how the fellmongers were to pay more wages when they could not afford it, said, "Give the farmers less for their skins and hides"; and another suggested as a means of keeping work in the colony that 3d. a pound export duty should be placed on wool. Why, that means complete confiscation nowadays. That was a suggestion made by a prominent member of one of our trades-unions. So we have it all round. If you want increased wages take it out of the farmer. The middleman will tell you that he cannot afford to pay more on account of the competition between them, which is such that he cannot get it out of the consumer, and the only man to get it out of is the farmer. Well, it is about time that the farmers started a union, and, as far as I am concerned, I will do my level best to encourage it all over the colony. It has been said by the Premier that the Farmers' Union is a ramification of the National Association. It is nothing of the sort. It is a genuine union of farmers, independent of any political movement whatever, determined to see justice done to themselves in a moderate way. Goodness knows it is time they did make a move, when we find they are so badly treated by other members of the community. Now, another instance of how the labour unions run matters in regard to the labour laws and powers given them by the present Government : The steamship - owners in Auckland were cited some time ago before the Arbitration Court. A prominent agitator of the Seamen's Union had gone to Auckland with the express purpose of telling them how badly off they were. The men were not grumbling about the steamship - owners, and were not complaining about their wages not being high enough ; but this agitator went about among them telling them that they were not sufficiently Mr. Bollard brought before the Conciliation Board. Among other companies brought before the Board was the Northern Steamship Company. That, Sir, is a company who for a long time have not been paying more than 3 per cent. in dividends, but lately they had been giving more. This man was asked the question how the companies were to pay the wages he wanted if there were no dividends? His answer was, "The men must have good wages even if there are no dividends." How long, may I ask, will a number of capitalists put their money into a steamship company, when, after they have been working ten years and are only getting 3 per cent., somebody comes along and wants to confiscate their dividend. They would have to close down, and the men would be out of employment. That will be the result if they insist upon making things more stringent year after year. Last year we spent about a month in revising and perfecting a Factories Bill. Instead of bringing it forward again this year, the Minister of Labour has brought a different Bill altogether, of a very drastic character. Perhaps it will be as well before I sit down to give another word of warning to the Government : unless they indicate "Slow" on the dial, as the Premier says, in regard to labour laws they will find themselves hoist by their own petard. Mr. CARNCROSS (Taieri) .- In commencing my few remarks I feel that I must first make one or two references to the speech we have just had the pleasure of listening to. The honourable gentleman who has just resumed his seat indulged, as some of the other speakers have done, in playing with a few figures. I think there is scarcely anything more dangerous to play with than figures. It takes a long study to become acquainted with them and to handle them with anything like confidence, and it appears to me the largest amount of confidence is shown by those who

know least about them. There have been many figures quoted, and I feel satisfied that before the end of the debate those figures will be scattered to the four winds of heaven, and the gentlemen who used them will be sorry that they ever endeavoured to pass in this House as financiers. Mr. BOLLARD .- They are not my figures, they are the Government's. Mr. CARNCROSS .- I hope the honourable gentleman's guilty conscience is not pricking him. Coming to his figures, just by way of specimen, he was reckoning up the assets of the colony and in his reckoning he valued the railways at £15,000,000. Mr. BOLLARD .- £16,000,000. Mr. CARNCROSS .- Well, I will give him the benefit of the odd million, and say he valued them at £16,000,000. Now, our railways cost us £17,000,000, and if they were put in the market to-morrow I believe that Jay Gould would offer £30,000,000 without a wink, and would make millions out of the bargain afterwards. Is it necessary to go any further into the honourable gentleman's figures? That is one specimen, and you may judge of the whole of

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of that portion. bers get up and continually try and depreciate the colony? Where is their patriotism ? bilious attack. Mr. BOLLARD .- That is only an assertion of yours that the railways of the colony are thing was evidently the matter. Then, the worth £30,000,000. honourable gentleman complains about our system of legislation, and says that we teach a Mr. CARNCROSS .- My assertion that they young man to covet his neighbour's grass pad- are worth \$30,000,000 is worth much more than dock. Well, Sir, according to our laws, no the honourable gentleman's assertion that they matter what is coveted, there will be a pretty are only worth £16,000,000. Now, I do not considerable sized paddock left even after we wish to attribute motives to the honourable have taken what we want; and a man must gentleman, but for the moment I began to sus- have not a paddock, but almost half a county, pect he must be the agent of some multi- before we can touch him at all. I have no millionaire, and was trying to depreciate our sympathy with the gentlemen whose grass railways so that some one could come along paddocks he says we covet. But while in one presently and snap them up. I do not, how- breath the honourable gentleman complains ever, really think that he is that sort, and that we covet these paddocks, in the next therefore I do not make the accusation, but, breath he complains that we do not secure land really, his speech was open to that construction. in the vicinity of towns as sites for work- I was saying when interrupted that I cannot men's homes. Sir, how can we do that-how understand why honourable gentlemen in this can we carry out what the honourable gentle- House are continually harping away at state- man desires unless we covet the paddocks of ments and figures that appear to disparage our neighbours ? the country and to discount its prosperity. I believe that we have the finest little country in the world. I think there is not another like the land that is acquired is bought. We do. it. I think that things are bright and pro- not steal it, or take it without paying for it ; sperous, and that we have a gloriously grand and if it belongs to any one connected with the future before us that no pessimistic utterances opposite side of the House about double its. from the other side can prevent us enjoying. But, Sir, they make the same statements year price is given for it. after year until it becomes almost second nature below value ? to them. I do hope they will turn over another page and have a look at the brighter aspects of the colony, and that they will cease making the acquired in New Zealand at £60,000 below its miserable, dismal, disappointing pictures that value. That celebrated supposed offer for they are continually painting in this House for Hatuma was only bluff. I believe there was the whole wide world to read. The honourable a gentleman who offered £60,000 to get out of the bargain, but nobody looked upon it as gentleman is in a very pessimistic vein to-night. He referred to our dealings with the land-to a bona fide offer. Yet, Sir, the honourable the Government having purchased land-and he gentleman complained that we were not secur- drew some comparison between the condition ing homes for the working-men. The honour- of the New Zealand farmers and the tenant able gentleman is out of date; he is a back Now, the honourable farmers of Ireland. number; he is behind the times altogether. In this

evening's paper there is a telegram from gentleman must know that that is an exaggeration—that there is absolutely no comparison Auckland which reads thus :— between them. Do we rack-rent our tenants? Mr. Hoffman a 500-acre farm in the Parish of Do we take from our tenants every improvement they make? Does everything they Waikumete, near the New Lynn Railway— do to improve their property increase their station, the intention being to cut the land rent, as in the case of the Irish tenantry? up in small sections for the purpose of forming workmen's homes." day and night, carrying heavy creels of mould on their shoulders to make land, and making policy the honourable gentleman is clamouring for. He really will have to come over to these land for which the landlord increases their rents. Do we do that? Every improvement benches, where he, with his portly presence and genial smile, will be made welcome. And they make, even if by carrying kail from the he will smile more than ever when he comes sea. goes to increase their rent. And yet the here, because we are carrying out the policy he honourable gentleman, who is a responsible advocates in its entirety. But, Sir, if I devote representative, stands in this House and compare much more time to the honourable gentleman's pares the condition of the tenants of the New remarks I shall have exhausted the sixty Zealand Government with that of the tenants minutes allowed me without having touched of Irish landlords ! I am sure that in his cooler the subjects upon which I intended to speak. moments, when he reflects over what he has This is called, I believe, a debate on the Finan— said, and when he is struggling with his proofs, cial Statement, but a large number of members he will, like a wise man, draw his pen through who have spoken have said nothing whatever the whole assertion comparing our tenants with about the Budget. I cannot, therefore, be the tenantry of Ireland, and that his speech VOL. OXVIII. — 17. An Hon. MEMBER .— He must have had a Mr. CARNCROSS .— Yes, I think so. Some— Mr. BOLLARD .— Buy them. Mr. CARNCROSS .— We do buy them. All An Hon. MEMBER .— What about the £60,000 Mr. CARNCROSS .— No estate was ever "The Government has just acquired from There you are; we are carrying out exactly the

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the same lines. I have no intention to refer to the Budget in any shape or form. I am going to address myself to two or three subjects in which I am more particularly interested. First I shall say a few words about defence, then I shall touch upon labour legislation, and afterwards I shall devote a few minutes in pointing out what the Government has done for the benefit of the farmers in New Zealand. I do not for one moment pose as an authority on defence questions, and I am not going to attempt to line out a scheme of defence ; my reason for speaking on the subject is that, having been for some years connected with Volunteering, I should like to lay before the House one or two ideas which I think may be of some little use in encouraging Volunteers and Volunteering if the Government choose to give effect to those ideas. First of all, I believe in a policy of decentralisation in connection with the management of Volunteering matters. At the present time a great deal too much is done from Wellington. In fact, nothing, even of the most trivial nature, can be done in connection with the management of Volunteers generally unless you appeal to Wellington and go through all the red-tape forms that are so common at Home. If the slightest request is made to the officer commanding a district it has to be referred to Wellington before it can be replied to. I made a statement in the House last session that the officer commanding a district could not even grant a railway-pass to Volunteers attending a shooting-match without the matter being referred to Wellington. Well, the Premier denied that such was the case. Since then I have had personal experience, as I myself applied for railway-passes, and the officer commanding the district told me he had no power to issue them. I had then to telegraph to the Minister of Defence myself. I could not apply through the post, as there was no time to do it in that way. The matter was coming off in a few days. I admit the honourable gentleman sent me a very gracious reply, and I obtained the passes. But, Sir, what I say is that the officer commanding the district is placed in a position almost ludicrous when he cannot

get such a small thing as a railway-pass without applying to Wellington. An Hon. MEMBER .- We protested against it one year. Mr. CARNCROSS. - Yes; I believe knocked £1 off the estimates as a protest against referring everything to Wellington, but it has not had the desired effect. Sir, I think the salaries of the officers commanding districts should be increased. It is a highly responsible position. They have to live a little beyond the ordinary style, and they get only \$300 per annum. I maintain it is a small salary indeed for a gentleman who occupies such a responsible post. I know there are gentlemen in this House who are strongly opposed to any increase of salaries, but I think a moment's consideration will convince any honourable member that £300 per annum is not a fair salary for the officer who has placed upon him all the responsibility of a Mr. Carncross House, myself among the number, who believe our services are worth \$300 per annum ; and, if so, I feel sure the officers who have the responsibility of a whole district are certainly worth more than they are getting at the present time. Mr. HORNSBY .- You could do it easily if you reduced the little War Office in Wellington. Mr. CARNCROSS .- Yes, I believe it is possible that reductions might be made in some way, with the result that benefit would come about in other directions. Then, I contend there should be stores in each centre-stores of Volunteer equipments and ammunition. If a belt is short, or if a cleaning-rod is required, all sorts of pieces of blue paper have to be filled up and sent to Wellington, and, as a consequence, it is a long time before any little necessary of that kind is obtained. Well, this all tends to make friction ; but it could be easily removed by the establishment of stores at the various centres. There are competent men there to manage them, and I am sure it is a thing that might easily be carried out. The result would be that the work of a district would go on much better than it does at present. I am strongly of opinion that matters might be much more easily managed from centres in each district, instead of from the one centre in Wellington. There is also the question of uniforms. It is only a small question to many people, but it is an important one to Volunteers. At the present time we have Volunteers all over the colony wearing different kinds of uniforms. You can scarcely find any two companies who are dressed exactly the same. It has been laid down that there should be uniformity of uniform, and I think that is right. At all events, there should be a uniform clothing for drill purposes. There may be a dress uniform ; in fact, there should be a " swagger " uniform if you please, but for drill purposes all should be dressed alike. To enable this to be carried out I would urge the establishment of work-shops for the manufacture of suitable clothing. Indeed, we should have workshops to make uniforms not only for our Volunteers, but also for our railway - servants, gaol warders, the police, messengers, and, in fact, everybody who wears a Government uniform. By those means we could have our uniforms supplied cheaper than they are at the present moment. They would be turned out on a large scale, and we every facility would be offered to supply the uniforms at a cheaper rate than is now paid for them. We would then have uniformity of cut, of colour, and of material, and there would not be the complaints that when the Volunteers are marching out to battalion parades they are all clad in different kinds of uniforms. This is a matter that has been before the Government for a long time. Some companies have been kept up to their ears in debt for years in attempting to keep pace with the instructions from Wellington as to what the uniform shall be, but the whole thing has been a failure. I have had bitter experience of the matter myself. My company has not been out of debt for the past

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changes of uniform. Sir, it is a matter that should be grappled with at once and settled. We often hear it stated that some more encouragement ought to be given to the Volunteers. Well, here are some small ways in which the Volunteer movement may be encouraged. It has had some little life infused into it lately, but it is not going to continue so. There has merely been a little fillip given to matters by the Transvaal war, and when that dies out Volunteering will sink back to the old groove. Now that the revival is on is the time to make some little change to keep it lively. I will suggest one change, and it is this : I think it would be a fair thing to offer encouragement to the sergeants of Volunteer companies by asking them to drill the

various schools on Saturday afternoons. There are plenty of smart young sergeants who would be only too proud to do this. It would add to their own dignity, and a very small amount of pay would suffice. They would by this means improve themselves by drilling the boys in our schools, and in time to come they would be able to drill adults in the Volunteer corps. This would cost the Government very little, and I am perfectly satisfied it would have a good effect on Volunteers, and there are plenty of sergeants well fitted to carry out these duties. We should thus be rearing our own drill - instructors. Then, in regard to the medals for long service I would like to see a change. There may be military men who differ with me on this question, but still we can agree to differ. I am of opinion that a considerable amount of good will be done by reducing the term of service that is now fixed to enable Volunteers to earn the medal. It is a very small reward-I do not suppose the long-service medal is worth 1s. 6d. - and yet Volunteers have to serve sixteen or twenty years continuously or twenty-five years broken service before they can receive that medal. I do not know what the custom is at Home. I am not going to ask what the custom is at Home, because I think we ought to be able to strike out for ourselves. I say that sixteen years is too long a service to ask of Volunteers to earn these medals. I believe that if that service is reduced to twelve years' consecutive service it would have a very good effect. There are plenty of men in the Volunteers who have been seven or eight years in, and then they are inclined to retire. They cannot be induced to continue in for another eight years; but if the term was reduced by four years you would have a far larger number of Volunteers continuing in the force in order to obtain that little reward for long service. I think it would be a good thing if we were to reduce the time of service to obtain the medal, and it would be some encouragement to the Volunteers; and I think the House must admit that, after a man has gone through all the drudgery connected with Volunteering for, say, twelve years, he has done good service to earn that little bit of a medal to stick upon his breast. Then, there is another feature I also think will be a help to Volunteers. There is nothing better service than to have a good band attached to it. When Volunteers go to Church parades it is no parade at all unless a band takes part. When a company is out marching the marching becomes tiresome and dreary unless there is some music to help the men along. Now, a very small subsidy given to company bands would induce them to attach themselves to Volunteers. In the cities they have Volunteer bands by which a certain number of men can earn capitation ; but I am speaking now of the country. I say, in many country districts where there are no Volunteer corps, if they could get a band formed which would turn out to a certain number of parades in connection with the Volunteer corps, and give them £12 or £15 a year to help them to pay their bandmaster, it would be a great encouragement to Volunteer companies. I also say it would help the moral and social life of the country districts, because there is nothing helps a young man so much as to instil in his heart the love of music, and I always like to see a young man going with his cornet or his trombone to practice. I think if bands could be helped in this way it would encourage the musical talent of the country districts, and would be a great help to Volunteering. These are two small items which a long practical experience leads me to believe would give some little encouragement to the Volunteer movement. Now, I want to say a few words about labour legislation, and my reason for touching labour legislation is that I think it has been fought rather shy of in the course of this debate. I expected to have heard more on this question from the men who are better recognised in this House as the labour representatives. I cannot claim to be distinctly a labour representative myself. I am a supporter of labour legislation, and I consider myself an all-round representative, but I admit that I am not an authority on labour legislation. At the same time I wish to give expression to a few ideas that I have on this subject. A strong, vigorous, and I must add a vicious attempt is at the present moment being made throughout New Zealand to create a contest-town versus country-and it is our duty, as members of this House, to do all we can to combat that cry and to show and prove there is no necessity for it. The agitation against the labour laws is going to be made use of as a lever to split up the forces of the Liberal party at the coming election. The attempt has

been made early, and it is just as well for us that it has, because we shall be all the better prepared to meet it. Now, Sir, I think we should have a rest, so far as labour legislation is concerned. I think it would be in the best and truest interests of the country, and it would be in the best and truest interests of those who consider themselves the labour party that we should have a rest, so far as labour legislation is concerned. I know, and the whole House knows, and the country knows, there is at present a considerable amount of unrest in reference to labour matters, not so much as

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present on the statute-book, but it is the fear of what may possibly follow. Now, I think our duty is to perfect, if necessary, the labour legislation that is already upon our statute-book. But, at the same time, I say there should be not one step made in the direction of fresh labour legislation until that is done. The labour party have achieved during the last three or four years more than they could have expected to achieve in ten years' time. An Hon. MEMBER .- What have they got ? Mr. CARNCROSS .- Here is a labour representative who actually asks me what they have got. All the honourable gentleman has got to do is to read the daily papers, and see all the trade troubles and disputes that are keeping the Conciliation Boards and the Arbitration Court at work, and then he need not ask what they have got. An Hon. MEMBER .- There is continual war. Mr. CARNCROSS .- Yes, " There is continual war," and I wish to see that stopped. Is the Shops and Shop-assistants Act not in the interests of labour? Is not the fixing of the weekly half-holiday labour legislation ? An Hon. MEMBER .- That was not done during the last four years. Mr. CARNCROSS .- That does not matter ; let us say six years if you like. Is the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act not labour legislation ? I say those two Acts alone ought to be sufficient to satisfy the labour party for some little time. There are various points that I say are producing friction in connection with our labour laws, and I think the wisest possible course for the labour leaders to pursue is to counsel their supporters not to agitate for fresh legislation at present, but to exert themselves diligently to get the labour legislation we have now to work smoothly, as I believe it will ultimately, and to perfect that legislation; and if they let the country see that that legislation is not going to injure them, then they may ask for more. Now, Sir, I wish it to be understood that I am not condemning any labour legislation that has been already placed on the statute-book. I do not believe there is any necessity for repealing one word of it ; but a more judicious administration is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, Sir, there are people who are connected with labour organizations and occupying semi-official positions who are doing all they can to create and foster this spirit of unrest and this serious alarm amongst employers. Now, I have good grounds for making this statement. I say that such men are doing an irreparable injury to their own cause; they are doing an injury to the workers. The men who wilfully sow seeds of discontent between employer and employé to further their own selfish ends are pests to society, and ought to be whipped at the cart's tail. That is my opinion of such men. I referred just now to an attempt which is being made to cause a contest between town and country. I believe that the town and country parties are working hand in hand to- Mr. Carncross House between town and country. In the past we have worked hand in hand together. For instance, the labour representatives in this House have loyally supported the country representatives in everything pertaining to legislation for the benefit of the farmers. They have helped us with respect to our land legislation, with respect to the compulsory acquisition of land, and advances to settlers. In fact, I know of no Act which is beneficial to the country that has not been well supported by the city members. We in our turn have supported the city members in regard to their legislation, and I should be sorry if we ever have reason to regret it. I say, let us present a united front to the enemy. Let us keep together in the future as we have done in the past, and do not let any scheme bring about a division between the parties. We should remember the fable of the man with the bundle of sticks; as long as the sticks were kept together they could not be broken, but once they were separated they were easily snapped. An attempt is being made to separate us, but I sincerely trust that

we shall not be separated. There is one more word I would like to say in connection with the labour troubles at present existing, and I think it is a sound reason why we should ease matters, and do away with the friction which at present exists. If we allow this friction to continue, without doubt a conflict will arise, and will be intensified between employers and employés. We know full well that any conflict must have a most serious effect upon the expansion of our industries; and if a feeling of that sort gets abroad, and employers feel that their undertakings are not safe, the result will cause a shrinkage of our industries, and if we prevent the expansion of our industries then the time must inevitably come when there will be three men looking for one man's billet; and, once you have that, all the unions in the world will not be able to maintain any particular rate of wages. A man may belong to a union, and that union may say that he shall not work for less than \$3 a week; but if that man has a wife and children looking to him for bread he will say, "To Jericho with your union, I will accept #2 if I cannot get \$3." That is a state of affairs that we must jealously guard against, and, if possible, prevent being brought about, and we can prevent it; and, in order to do that, I think we should simply perfect the labour legislation we have on the statute-book. Now, Sir, at the present moment, throughout the country districts a good deal of alarm has been created amongst the farmers on account of the Workers' Compensation Act. I say that alarm is totally unfounded, but it is very hard to convince the farmers that such is the case. I desire to say a word or two in connection with this. It has been said that it is a doubtful question as to whether farmers come under the operation of the Act or not. Some maintain that they are affected by it; others that they are not. I say, Sir, without the slightest hesitation, that I believe farmers should come

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Sir, I consider that this is one of the best and under that Act, for it is absolutely the only most humane Acts that have ever been placed labour law that this House has passed that is of any benefit to the farm labourers of the on the statute-book, and no country representa- colony. From my place in this House I fought tive need be afraid to go to his farming con- to have the farmers included, for I thought it stituency and say, "I supported that Bill"; right that they should be. In fact, I think and every farmer who has his heart in the myself that every class in the community right place will approve of such support. If should come under that Act. It is, I think, his heart is not in the right place, if he has no love for his fellow-men, then he is not worth the best Act in the shape of labour legis- considering. All sorts of people will get the lation that we have placed on the statute- book. There is no necessity whatever for the farmers to be afraid of the operation of this Act, and when it is more fully explained to them, and when they find its true bearings, you will find them as much in favour of it as any one belonging to the labour organizations of this city. I shall not have the slightest hesitation in going on to the platform in my electorate in refuting the denunciations of this Act. and upholding the inclusion of the farm labourers. I know that a strong effort is being made to set the farmers against it, but I think it will prove futile. I believe that it is a libel on the humanity of farmers to hold the idea I that they should be excluded from the Act. would ask, What will be the effect of the opera- tion of the Act, so far as the farmers are con- cerned; and how do the farmers stand at present? Take the case of a farmer who has a man engaged in harrowing: the horses run away, the man is knocked down, and the harrow is drawn over him, with the result that he is killed. Accidents like that frequently happen, and I will guarantee that there is no farmer in my district who in such circumstances would not put his hand into his pocket to the extent of £10, and, in addition to this, get subscriptions for the widow and children of the man so killed. Mr. HASELDEN.- Under the Act he would have to pay out £400. Mr. CARNCROSS.- I wish the honourable gentleman would let me finish my remarks. I say that under the existing state of things no farmer would hesitate for a moment to put his hands into his pockets to the extent of £10, and get subscriptions to assist the widow and children of the man so killed. But what will the position be if this Act was made to apply to them? It will work in this way: it will cost for insurance of farm hands 10s. per cent. per If the farmer has a wages bill amount- annum.

ing to £300 per annum-and very few small farmers pay out to that extent-he will have to pay only 30s. to insure every man in his employ all the year round, and he will know there will be no necessity to go round with a charity list and beg for the widow and orphans. " He says to himself, "I have insured my men. If any one of them is killed, his widow and family will get £400 or \$500 from the insurance office, and the responsibility is removed from my mind." Is that not better than the present system ? And honourable members must not forget that I have quoted the present rate of 10s. per cent. per annum ? I am not the son of a prophet, nor a prophet after a very short time the farmers will be able ! show you that the farmer has nothing at all to myself, but I am going to predict this : that benefit of this Act, and what has been said is a mere bogey to frighten people. The member for Patea is one of those frightened with the bogeys. I can tell by the interjection he made just now that his heart is in his boots in connection with this Act. He is not doing his farming constituency justice if he thinks there is one man amongst them who will grudge to pay a few shillings to see his men insured. I do not believe there is one farmer in the whole of Patea who will not say, "I shall be pleased to avail myself of this Act, and in the case of accident or death I shall not be responsible for any further demands." An Hon. MEMBER .- Do you know that on bush farms the cost is £3 per cent. ? Mr. CARNCROSS .- The rates are higher in some industries. They are higher in coal-mines, where the risk is great, of course ; but these rates are lower already by competition with the Ocean Company, and no doubt in a short time they will be levelled to such an extent that they will not be objected to by any one at all. Mr. HASELDEN .- They are still liable to actions at common law. Mr. CARNCROSS .- This protects them against actions at common law. Mr. HASELDEN .- No. Mr. CARNCROSS .- You tempt me to waste time to make a quotation from the Act, but I will not do it. The Act does cover actions at common law. However, I refer the honourable member to the Act, and if he finds he is wrong he should openly apologize to this House. I find the rate quoted for bakers is only 6s. per £100. So, if a man has a wages-sheet of £300 it will cost him 18s. a year to insure his men. Mr. MASSEY .- What is that you are quoting from ? Mr. CARNCROSS .- The Government rates ; and I believe in some instances you can get them lower from the Ocean. Mr. HASELDEN .- I paid £1 10s. to the Ocean last month. Mr. CARNCROSS .- Then you paid too much. You should be patriotic and stick to the Government. Hairdressers, 4s. per \$100-that is not a dangerous trade. There is a good deal of risk attached to blacksmithing, but the fixed rate for that trade is only 15s. per €100, so that if a blacksmith has a wages-sheet of \$300 he will only have to pay £2 5s. per annum to insure all his men. Then we have bootmakers 5s. per £100, drapers 3s. per £100, and grocers 6s. per 100. I could go on multiplying this list, but I will only make these few quotations to

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fear from this Act, and, when it is properly explained will approve it ; and I say honourable gentlemen like the member for Patea, who has held this bogey before the farmers, are not doing justice to those farmers. He is not crediting them with the possession of humane and generous feelings. He has not read the Act, and knows nothing whatever about it. Mr. HASELDEN .- I have got a legal opinion about it. Mr. CARNCROSS .- I would not give two-pence for a legal opinion that led me to believe what the honourable member believes. It is a very poor legal opinion; I could give the honourable gentleman a better one than that myself. I once more repeat that every farmers' representative in the House can with confidence go on the platform and speak in favour of the Act I am discussing. Now, I want to say a few words about the incessant attempts made by the Opposition to make the country people believe that the Liberal Government is their natural enemy. They have done this for the last ten years. I thought they had been bowled out by the last general election, but they are never tired; they stand before the wicket again, and we have got to do a little more bowling-out. There was a meeting of the Farmers' Union in my district recently, and I read a list of those who were there, and I recognised that some of the old hide-bound Tories in the district were there to help to form the union. I only recognised the name of one man who had

ever been on the Liberal side ; they were all the old extinct volcanoes who used to be great in the Tory party, and one man said : "Let it be a political organization." He did not go behind the bush ; he said in effect : "We are prepared to start it as a political organization." Notwithstanding what the honourable member for Franklin may tell us about the writing on the wall, he will find that when the elections come round again he will still have the pleasure of sitting on that side of the House and gazing across here. Now, this is the most senseless action I can conceive on the part of the Opposition to set the farmers against the Liberal Government. I ask the leaders of the party over there, What has the Conservative party ever done for the farmers ? You may search the statute-book through, and you will find they did absolutely nothing. Yes, they did one thing; they increased the railway-rates at one time for the benefit and encouragement of the farmers; that is the only thing they have done. But let us get away from those dark days, from those dismal days when those honourable gentlemen or those they represent sat on these benches, and come to later days and see what has been done for the farmers. It would take me more time than I have at my disposal to go through all the legislation that has been done by this party for the assistance and encouragement of the farmers. I am sure honourable members therefore will forgive me if I have not time to go through the whole list, but I will go through a little bit of it. When the live Government came into power, who endeavoured to assist not only the farmers but Mr. Carncross every portion of the community in New Zealand, they were particularly liberal to the farmers. What was the Agricultural Department before we took office ? I believe there was such a thing in name, but in name only. So far as the department itself was concerned, in theatrical parlance I should say it was "a terrible frost." It never did anything. If it did, perhaps honourable gentlemen who follow me on the other side will tell us what it was; but I never heard of it doing anything that was ever any good. Now, let us see what we have done. Look at the successful efforts we have made by the administration of the Lands Department to place people upon the land. There are hundreds of farmers' sons at the present moment who are gradually working their way to independence who would never have had a chance to get an acre to live upon if the honourable gentlemen opposite had remained in office. Their policy is the policy of freehold, and I say that a freehold policy is entirely for the benefit of the capitalist. Under it the capitalist is the only one who has any opportunity of getting land. He can still get land ; land is to be bought, but we have afforded opportunity to men who have no money to take up land. When the farm has grown too small for the family, we have given opportunities to the sons to leave it to the old people, and to make new homes for themselves. The other day I was up North, and I saw hundred-acre blocks, and dairy factories everywhere, and the land a picture of content. That is the outcome of the land policy of the Government. Have honourable gentlemen opposite any such record to show? I am sure they have not. Just look at the list of departments we are administering for them. Look at the assistance we have given the farmers by the appointment of experts. We have a Produce Commissioner at Home who keeps a watchful eye upon the produce of this colony and sees where it is to be distributed, and that the produce of the New Zealand farmers is fairly and squarely dealt with. When the honourable gentlemen opposite were in office did they ever do anything of that kind? And yet they want to pose as the friends of the farmer. Then, we have appointed a Biologist and a Pomologist. Did not we hear the honourable member for Eden speak about the beautiful grape cultivations ? Did not he tell us about the lovely grapes that were grown. They would not have grown a single grape if we had not looked after the industry. All their vines would have been eaten by phylloxera ; and yet the honourable gentleman comes and tells us about the beautiful grapes, and quite forgets to thank us for having helped the industry along. Then, we have a fruit Inspector, and a vine Inspector, and veterinary Inspectors, some forty of them. Possibly, some gentlemen on the other side will say we have too many Inspectors. An Hon MEMBER .- Hear, hear. Mr. CARNCROSS .- I knew they would say that. The fact remains, however, that whenever an Inspector is appointed every district wants him. I know ; they telegraph to me, and

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they say " There is to be new veterinary surgeon, cannot you get him to live here?" That is the practical reply to gentlemen who tell us that we have too many Inspectors in the country. Where would the North Island be without its dairy industry, and will any honourable gentleman opposite say there are too many dairy Inspectors. We could do with more. Any one with a grain of fairness in his composition will admit the work they have done to advance the dairying industry ; and the North Island lives by that. Then, whoever thought of getting cool-storage, and grading for farmers, until the present Government came into office? The fact is, we have educated the other side to such an extent that if they came into office they might possibly pursue this policy. An Hon. MEMBER .- What about the kauri- gum ? Mr. CARNCROSS .- Our legislation helped to keep the kauri-gum. If it had not been for our legislation the Austrians would have run away with all your kauri-gum by this time. What about poultry experts? Sir, that 12.30. is a splendid department. I remember when it was first proposed to establish that department one gentleman on the other side of the House denounced it, lock, stock, and barrel. We do not want to depend entirely on our wheat, and oats, and wool, and on nothing else. It is the small industries that require to be encouraged, and in time they will be the means of bringing millions of money to this country. That poultry industry is growing rapidly. Our exports are increasing every month, and it is going to be taken advantage of by the small farmers of New Zealand. Then, take another of our recent departures, the importation of stud horses and cattle. Is that not an enormous advantage to farmers ? An Hon. MEMBER .- Not a bit. Mr. CARNCROSS. - Sir, the farmers are clamouring all over the country to have these horses sent to their districts; and yet the honourable gentleman says it does no good at all : and he is a man who poses as an authority on agriculture! One of the great drawbacks to the success of the dairy industry has been that you were not improving the breed of your cattle sufficiently. A miserable and bad cow costs as much to feed as a good cow, and our policy is to get the best milking-strains into the country, in order that the farmers may get the benefit. Consequently, we have imported stud cattle. Then, there is the advances to settlers. Has that been of no benefit to the farmers? Was anything of the kind done before we reached office ? There is the carriage of lime, the great reduction in railway-fares, the free carriage of manures. Did the honourable gentlemen on the opposite side do or attempt to do anything of that kind ? Then, there is the exemption of improvements from taxation, which is of enormous benefit to the farmers. And all this has been done since we came into office. Search the statute-books through, and will you find that the Opposition has done anything of that kind ? Here is a list of the reductions in railway freights for one year :- £ Reduction of rate for butter and cheese under 10 cwt., bacon, eggs, poultry, factory butter, and factory cheese .. 4,000 Reduction of rate for artificial manures from Class E to Q, and reduction of minimum from 30 cwt. to 5 cwt. .. 5,400 Free carriage of lime, and butter, eggs, 4,500 and fish empties Agricultural produce 45,000 .. Butter and cheese 5,000 .. Artificial manures 1,000 Wool rates 10,000 Live-stock rates 25,000 Firewood, chaff, and lime 8,000 .. £107,900 Then, take our Customs tariff, and search right through it : you will find that we have been continually making reductions for the benefit of the farmers ; and yet, Sir, those gentlemen on the opposite side of the House and some of their supporters have the great impudence, if I may use the term, to go through the country and endeavour to set the farmers against us by making them believe we are their natural enemies. Sir, the farmer now knows that what we have done has been of benefit to him, and he knows that we have been legislating and administering the laws in his interest. There never was a Government on the benches in New Zealand that ever did as much for the farmers as the present Government; and that, in the face of all this. those honourable gentlemen on the other side should endeavour to set the farmers against us is preposterous. I say there is not a man on either side of the House who can go on the public platform and honestly assert that what we have done has not conferred more benefit upon the farmer than any other Government that ever sat upon these benches. Mr. COLVIN (Buller). - Sir, in rising to speak at such a late

hour, and after so many members have already addressed the House on the Financial Statement, I feel it is a difficult thing to say anything new or anything interesting. I did not intend to speak at all ; but, out of fairness to the Right Hon. the Premier, I wish to explain to the House what my impression was of what that honourable gentleman said to the famous deputation that waited on him from the West Coast prior to the Financial Statement coming down. Sir, I was one of that deputation. There were also at it three or four other members of the House, three members of the Upper House, and several gentlemen from the West Coast. The deputation urged very strongly that certain public works should be proceeded with on the Coast; and, in reply, the Right Hon. the Premier told the deputation that the Public Works Fund would not stand the strain. He said, "If I have to go in for so many public works I shall have to borrow three millions and a half of money in London; and I would sooner leave the Treasury benches than do anything of the kind." He did not refer to the Consolidated Fund at all. On the following morning the

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member for Dunedin City (Mr. Millar) told me that the member for Nelson City, Mr. Graham, had informed him that there was likely to be a deficit, and that the Right Hon. the Premier had said he could hardly make two ends meet in his finance. I said to the member for Dunedin City that was not a correct statement of what had been said by the Premier, and I went on to say to him that my impression was that it was the Public Works Fund the honourable gentleman had referred to. Now, as regards the question of courtesy, I wish to say that whoever gave the Nelson Colonist the report of the proceedings did not give a true and correct report. I desire to state most emphatically that the Right Hon. the Premier received us in the most courteous manner, and listened to every member of the deputation very patiently, after which he replied to us to the effect that he could not undertake any big works without borrowed money, and that he would sooner leave the Treasury benches than go in for a loan of three millions and a half. That, Sir, is a correct statement of what took place at the deputation. The report to which I take exception has since gone round the colony, and some members of the Opposition, as well as some members on the Government side of the House, have said that it was the Premier himself who gave the Lyttelton Times the report which that journal published of the proceedings on the occasion. Sir, I am in a position to refute that statement. I know who gave the information to the Lyttelton Times. He is a gentleman who has been for a number of years the Westland correspondent of the Lyttelton Times and the Canterbury Times. He has long been connected with the Press, and he happened to be in Wellington at the time when the deputation waited on the Premier, and he was asked by some of the gentlemen from the Coast to accompany the deputation. He did so, and hence the Lyttelton Times got the information we have since heard so much about. That is all, Sir, that caused me to rise in my place, and make the statement I have made. Now, as I have remarked, after so many speeches have been made it is really hard to say anything new. However, as regards the mineral resources of the colony, I wish to say that I am a strong believer in their great value. I believe that in the mineral resources of this colony we have an asset that is sufficient in itself to pay off the national debt, if only properly managed. But these gold-mines and coal-mines have been badly treated in the past, and those concerned in their development have not received that encouragement from the country which they had a right to expect. Now, all that we require is a few thousand pounds to open up roads and tracks in the mining districts of the colony. It is well known that on the West Coast particularly the goldfields are situated for the most part in rough bush country, and it will not be possible to fully develop them unless we get roads and bridges to help in opening them up. The miners are a free and independent lot of men ; they ask for no protection and want no Mr. Colvin favours. All they ask is that facilities should be given them to penetrate the bush country and thus allow them to get in there. If this is done, they will find the gold and develop that industry. The gold industry of the colony is only in its infancy. We have been hitherto, as it were, only scratching the surface, and I know and feel that if proper facilities were given, a great population could be kept on the

goldfields. Now the people on the goldfields have to bear much heavier burdens than any other class of people. We have heard to-day, and I think the honourable member for Pahiatua referred to it, that heavy wethers are bringing 22s. to 23s. : those were the prices yesterday at the Addington market, and ewes brought from 16s. to 21s. Now, Sir, I want to point this out, if we on the West Coast buy this stock at Addington or at Wanganui, it costs 3s. per sheep and 30s. per head of cattle to land them on the West Coast, and this is in addition to the waste that takes place. A sheep that will weigh 70 lb. in the Addington market will only weigh about 60 lb. when it arrives on the West Coast. Now, I also want to point out that the people in the district from which I come receive no benefit whatever from the Land for Settlements Act or the Advances to Settlers Act. Honourable members can see in the Land Report that under the Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Act the rebate to the Crown tenants in Westland was nil, and in Nelson, among two or three hundred settlers, they received £5 rebate. Now the Government are willing to spend money in subsidising steamers to open up markets for the settlers of the back blocks, and are giving shipping facilities to them. What I want to point out is that if the Government would spend money in the district from which I come, on the gold-mines and on the coal-mines, there would be a considerable increase in the population at these places, and this would mean that the settlers would have no need to send their produce to foreign markets. We would have a population in the districts I refer to who would get their supplies from the settled districts. If facilities were given for opening up the country, and the land-laws were more liberally administered, I feel sure we should have a large population on the West Coast. Owing to the dispute with the Midland Railway Company, people on the West Coast were unable to get land unless under the Mining Districts Land Occupation Act. Under that law lessees could only get land for twenty-one years, and it was open to anybody to come in on the lessees after they had improved their land and take it up for mining. They could not acquire the freehold, neither would they get sufficient compensation to properly repay them for their labour if the land was afterwards taken away from them under the Mining Act. For bush land these people had to pay the Nelson Land Board from 6d. to 1s. an acre per annum as rent. Under the Occupation Act they had to live on the land ; they were not compelled to make any improvements. Therefore, I say, if the Minister of Lands would look into these land - laws and give facilities for

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people to take up land in suitable areas, so that they could do a little gold-mining in the winter time, they would be able to live on their farms in the spring and summer. It would be a great benefit to the whole community if the Government would look into this matter and enact a new land-law in the direction I have indicated. While dealing with this subject, I might just take the opportunity to point out that there are the Matakita and Maruia Valleys in which there are from twenty to thirty thousand acres of good arable land. There are hot springs there, and this land ought to be a good asset of the colony. It would take about \$5,000 to open up each of these valleys, and a thousand people or more could then be settled in them, and a vast amount of gold-mining and dredging could be carried on. It would be profitable for the colony to have that land opened up. I trust this matter will receive the attention of the Government. Now, Sir, I have always felt that the rents and charges imposed upon poor people when they go upon the land are too high, and I agree with the Colonial Treasurer when he states in his Budget that, - " The settlement of the people on the land is of paramount importance. What we have done, are doing, and must do is to extend our operations and increase the number of our settlers ; and to those going on to the back blocks and the bush lands easy terms must be given by way of relieving the tenants from payment of rent for the first few years, and also by way of insisting on improvement conditions being complied with ; at the same time affording relief from rent until the tenant is enabled to get his head above water and to pay his way from the produce of the land itself." The man who takes up land on the West Coast is put to a good deal of expense in order to bring his holding into cultivation. I have known as much as £4 10s. an acre

paid to get bush felled, and it costs now to any person taking up land there from £1 10s. to £2 an acre to fell the bush and burn it off. I say that the man who does that ought to get the land for nothing. An Hon. MEMBER .- It is dear even then. Mr. COLVIN .- Yes, it is dear even then. I think that our liberal land-laws ought to be made even more liberal, so as to suit the varying circumstances of different places in New Zea- land. I thoroughly agree with the Government in their proposal to establish a State coal-mine. I believe the coal industry is the soundest and best in this country, and I shall gladly support any movement to the end foreshadowed by the Premier. Some people do not think it is right for the State to compete with private enter- prise. Now, so far as coal-mining is concerned, I do not agree with that opinion. I believe the State has a right to interfere; and as to coal- mining and coal-carrying, both by land and sea, I may say that the Government are now carriers by land, and why not, therefore, also make arrangements to carry it by sea. The establishment of a State coal-mine will really be an act of economy on the part of the Government. The Railway Department require about 100,000 tons of coal a year, and I can point out to the Government a place where, within eight months, by spending from £15,000 to £20,000, they can get from 70,000 to 100,000 tons of coal a year; in fact, where they can get that amount within eight months. Suppose they make a profit of 1s. per ton on 100,000 tons. That means £5,000; but I think they can make a profit of 3s. or 4s. a ton. Therefore, I say, it would be a good in- vestment for the colony, and it will largely assist in the development of our mineral resources. The coal area I speak of is known in the Cardiff Mine as the "cave " area. There is supposed to be from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 tons of coal in that area, and 100,000 tons per annum could be taken out of it for fifteen or sixteen years. Therefore, I say that would be a good invest- ment for the Government. The coalfields in the Westport district are all in the hands of the Government, with the exception of 4,000 or 5,000 acres held by the Westport Coal Company. That company have done much for the advance- ment and benefit of the Buller district, and I was glad to see that they had paid a dividend of 7^a per cent. last year, and I anticipate that they will pay this year from 10 to 15 per cent. It is a . very good company, and nobody is more pleased than I am to see the shareholders receiving good returns for their outlay. The company have spent, in the work of opening up and developing their mine, about a quarter of a million of money, and they well deserve to get good returns. They have spent in wages £869,328, and in royalties and freights and taxes to the Government #455,015, to local carriers £628,635, new works £221,015, repairs ■23,214, stores, et cetera, \$75,335. I say that that com- pany has proved of benefit to the people at large and deserves to get good returns. I would like to ask, If the company is improving its position, what are the miners doing ? The Arbi- tration Court fixed the rate of pay two years ago on the selling-rate of coal at that time. Coal has gone up during the last twelve months 4s. a ton, but the wages of the miners have not gone up. I say the Arbitration Court ought to be in a position, as soon as the price of coal goes up, to give the miners a fair share of the increased profits. An Hon. MEMBER .- What about when it goes down in price ? Mr. COLVIN. - That can also be regulated, because the employer has always the right, if the mine is not paying, to close the mine. An Hon. MEMBER .- What do they get now ? Mr. COLVIN .- They get from 1s. 9d. to 2s. a ton, and that means \$3 or £3 10s. per week. Hon. MEMBERS .- It is not enough for such work. Mr. COLVIN .- I think it would be only fair that, as the profits of the company increase, some system such as they have in England should be adopted. There they have a system of co-operative work, under which companies,

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ployés a certain portion of the profits earned during the year. I think that is a just and fair principle. It is only fair to the miners that they should receive some benefit when the employers make very large profits. Now, Sir, I do not intend to take up the time of the House much longer, as it is getting late, but I will say that a great many charges have been brought against the Government, not only on the Opposition side of the House, but also on this side. I do not blame honour- able members on the other side for the charges

they have made; but I say that if ever I made a statement such as others have made, I would be prepared to follow my voice by going into the lobby against the Government when the time came for voting. If I had got up and charged the Government with squandering thousands of pounds of the people's money-and some honourable members have made such charges-I would not care to remain longer on the Ministerial side of the House. But, after all, I do not give some honourable gentlemen on this side of the House much credit for sincerity in the way they have spoken about the Government. A great many things have been said about the Civil Service. I believe that we have a good Civil Service, and that it is equal to any in the colonies; and I know that we pay our officers less than is paid in any of the other colonies. Some of the heads of our departments are not receiving sufficient in salaries. I have heard remarks by some honourable gentlemen in this House about co-operative labourers. Now, let me say I have had a great deal to do with the labouring classes; I have mixed with men who are the real workers, and I can honestly say that I have always found the working-man does an honest day's work if he is paid honestly. There are no co-operative labourers in my district, and therefore it cannot be said that I am seeking for votes when I say that there is as good work done under the co-operative system as under any other. The honourable member for Hawera said the co-operative labourers did not do their work properly. Well, all I can say is that the Westport Harbour Board had wharves to build, some of which were done under contract, but some of the contracts were changed to day labour, and the work was given into the charge of a man who employed day labour, and in that way the Harbour Board saved on one piece of work over £5,000. That was the difference in that instance between day-labour and contract work. I am therefore sorry to find honourable gentlemen getting up in their places in this House and running down the working classes of this colony, because, although we may find one or two of the working-men not shaping as they ought to do, their fellow-workers are on the whole doing their work faithfully and well, and carrying out their duty as honestly as any honourable member in this House. An Hon. MEMBER .- There are black sheep in every flock. Mr. Colvin have now only to thank honourable gentlemen for the way they have listened to me. Debate adjourned. The House adjourned at one o'clock a.m. #