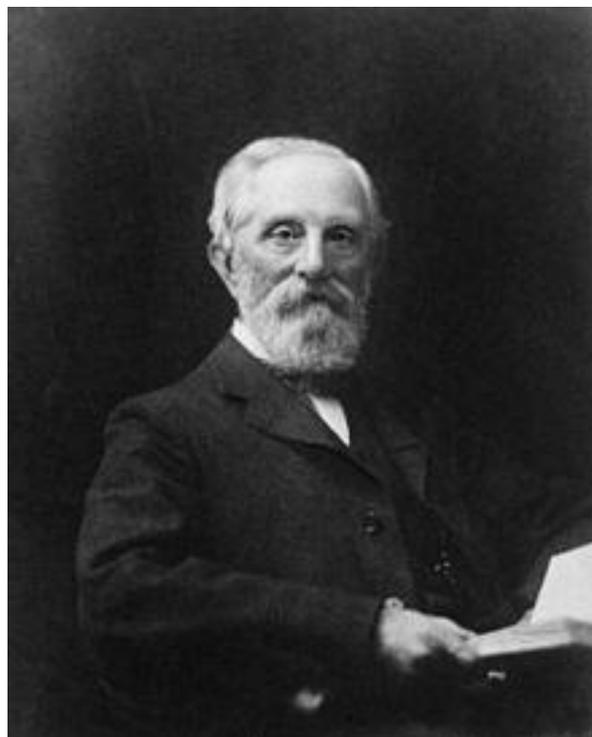


# SPEECHES

BY

SIR JOHN HALL, K. C. M. G.



## ***Introduction 2015***

*A note from the publisher of this book into the digital form: Firstly the purposes. I have had the privilege of it as a reference book for five years as I wrote my own point of view on Parihaka in 1881 – The Lady's Apostle, and Two Rangatira. If this is to be taken seriously it is practical for reviewers to have easy access to this volume. I certainly have had easy access online to one of my ancestor's most stinging critics, George Rusden 1819-1903. It is only right John Hall gets his opinion posted in the same digital media.*

*SPEECHES has been copied with OCR software then proof read. Where sentences have been broken up by page numbers they have been put on either the page above or below, then in other places where the original book's page number, which relates to the index, is too close to the bottom of the digital page whole sentences are moved to make reading more pleasing. The original spelling, paragraph length, and format is retained. The only other alteration made are the inclusion of my Tupuna's photo on the cover and his personal coat of arms on the title page – which living Hall family members inherited a derivative coat of arms from. If there are mistakes in proof reading please accept my apology in advance.*

*Peter John Hall 1959 - , September 2015.*

# SPEECHES

DELIVERED OUT OF PARLIAMENT

BY

THE HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN HALL, K.C.M.G.,

PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

FROM OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup> 1879 TO APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>, 1882.

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EDITED BY HIS LITERARY EXECUTORS AND PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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Among the papers left by Sir John Hall was a portfolio of newspaper reports of some of the speeches that he had delivered out of Parliament. In the instructions to his Literary Executors he expressed a desire that a selection from these should be made and edited, and that a small edition should be printed strictly for private circulation among his friends. The present volume has been prepared in accordance with the wish thus expressed.

From his arrival in New Zealand in 1852 until his retirement in 1894, John Hall was almost continuously engaged in the administration of public affairs. Periodical visits to England were necessitated partly on account of his health, and partly by the educational requirements of his children, but even allowing for this, far more of his time was devoted to the public service than to his own business as a sheep farmer, which, fortunately for him, was in the hands of a manager who, by his faithful and efficient service, endeared himself to his employer, and to others residing in the Hororata district. Upon many occasions, John Hall's assistance was sought on Boards of Directors of various companies and institutions, but this work does not appear to have attracted him, or if it did, the attraction was not sufficient to reconcile to the unsatisfactory position in which he would have found himself placed had he tried to serve the public at the same time as he was engaged in and responsible for the management of the affairs of business companies.

As to the speeches they must, we think, speak for themselves. It need only to concern us to refer briefly to the circumstances under which they were delivered.

John Hall, who was Private Secretary to the Secretary of the General Post Office in England, and had all the excellent prospects of promotion, was 28 years of age when, partly for the sake of his health, he decided to come to New Zealand to start sheep farming, his thoughts being turned in that direction by a pamphlet written by Mr (afterwards Sir Frederick) Weld. He spent some time inspecting land in the North Island, but finally decided to take up a run south of the Rakaia. Finding that unsuitable, he bought Mr Stoddart's run, and his sheep, at Hororata. He remained in possession of the same estate during the whole of his happy and useful life.

The record of the various public positions filled by John Hall makes quite a formidable list. He commenced his public career by being elected to the Canterbury Provincial Council, as member for the Christchurch Country District, in 1853, within a few months after his arrival in the Colony. In 1855, he was appointed Provincial Secretary and, later in the same year, was given a seat on the Provincial Executive. In 1856 he was appointed Resident Magistrate for Lyttelton, also Sheriff and Commissioner of Police. In 1858 he was appointed Resident Magistrate for the Christchurch District, which office he resigned from in 1863. In 1865 he succeeded Mr (later Sir William) Rolleston as Commissioner of the Canterbury Waste Lands Board. After bringing into operation the Westland County system he was appointed, in 1869, first Chairman of the Westland County Council.

John Hall was elected Chairman of the first Municipal Council in Christchurch in 1862 and when, in 1906, the New Zealand Exhibition was held in Christchurch, Sir John Hall, as he had become by then, was unanimously elected Mayor, it being felt that no one else could so fittingly represent the City as Mayor during such an important year of its history.

John Hall's long connection with the General Assembly had commenced in 1855 when he was elected to represent the Christchurch Country District in the House of Representatives. He held office as Colonial Secretary in the Fox Ministry from May 20<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1856. In 1859 he resigned his seat and paid his first visit to England. After his return he was, in 1862, summoned to the Legislative Council. In 1866 he resigned his seat in the Chamber and was elected as member for Heathcote in the House of Representatives. In August of that year he joined the Stafford Ministry as Postmaster-General. In 1868 he acted as Colonial Treasurer during the absence, in England, of Mr William Fitzherbert. In that capacity he had to make the Financial Statement for the Colony for that year. John Hall returned to the Legislative Council in 1872 to represent the Fox-Vogel Government in that Chamber. It was a time of rapid changes in the Ministry and he found himself, once again and for a short space, Colonial Treasurer in the Waterhouse Government.

Ill health compelled him to make another journey to the Mother Country in 1873 and he returned to New Zealand at the end of 1875 to find that the political and financial fortunes of the Colony had sunk to a low ebb. It was felt that the occasion had arisen when an able administrator and strong leader, whom the public could trust, was needed to lift the country out of its difficulties and dangers. By common consent, the eyes of its well-wishers were turned to John Hall who was still occupying a seat in the Legislative Council. On a dissolution taking place in 1879, John Hall resigned his seat in the Council and offered himself to the electors of Selwyn for the House of Representatives as a strenuous opponent of the Grey Government. He was duly elected and, when the new Parliament met, he succeeded in carrying a vote of Want of Confidence in the Government. Being sent for by the Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, he formed a Ministry of which he was Premier and Colonial Secretary. His colleagues were Mr F Whitaker, Attorney General; Major Atkinson, Colonial Treasurer; Mr R Oliver, Minister for Public Works; Mr William Rolleston, Minister for Lands, Immigration and Education and Mr Tomoana, Maori Member of the Executive without Portfolio. (The first speech in the selection deals with the circumstances under which he took office).

John Hall became Premier of the Colony on October 8<sup>th</sup> 1879 and continued in that office until April 21<sup>st</sup> 1882 when he retired owing to ill health. Mr Frederick Whitaker (later to become Sir Frederick) succeeded him. The following month his services to the Colony received recognition from the Crown with the honour of K.C.M.G being conferred upon him by Queen Victoria. The heartiest congratulations were tendered to him from both sides of the House on the occasion. Sir John Hall finally retired from public life in 1894. During his forty years' service he never lost an election –

probably an unique distinction for a colonial politician, seeing that public opinion in the overseas Dominions changes quickly with the rapid growth of the population and the eagerness of progressive people for new ideas.

It may be added that Sir John Hall was in the habit of meeting his constituents in the Town Hall, Leeston, but his speeches, although primarily delivered to the local electors present, were really intended for a wider audience, and were eagerly read and commented on throughout New Zealand. Three of these speeches, made whilst Sir John was Premier, will be found in the present volume. They show into what an unsatisfactory condition the public affairs of the Colony, especially the finances, had been allowed to drift when the Hall Ministry was called in to put them right. They enable the present generation to realise how much of the liberal legislation that they enjoy was due to Sir John Hall and his able colleagues in his Ministry. They bring again to our memories the fact that, thanks mainly to the determination and courage of one of his colleagues (the Hon. J. Bryce) the shadow and menace of a grave Native trouble was removed from the Colony once and for all. His other colleagues were men of high character and great ability to whom, as Sir John was ever ready to testify, the Colony and Dominion will always owe a deep debt of gratitude. Sir Harry Atkinson, who first distinguished himself as a courageous leader in the Maori War proved an equally gallant fighter in the political arena, and was the ablest Colonial Treasurer the Colony had ever known. Sir Frederick Whitaker was a great lawyer, a wary and skilful tactician in politics and an able man of affairs. Sir William Rolleston was the originator of what is best in our land laws, an enlightened and far-seeing statesman and a man of culture and noble character. Mr Oliver, as Minister of Public Works, was an able administrator, equally painstaking, upright and conscientious.

In addition to the speeches which Sir John Hall delivered to his constituents while he was Premier, which are naturally the most important, we have included others that he addressed to the same constituency in the same unpretentious building while he was in Opposition, and these, by the keenness of their criticism, and their broad and statesmanlike grasp of the great questions agitating the public mind, attracted as much attention as those delivered while he was head of the Government. It is interesting to note the logical intellect and well balanced judgement that Sir John brought to bear on questions of taxation, representation and social reform that are still in the crucible of public opinion.

We have also included two or three non-political speeches that seem well worthy of preservation. Among them are the remarks made by Sir John when presenting to Mr Seddon the National Testimonial in recognition of his Imperial services in despatching New Zealand Contingents during the South African War, an address to the Yorkshire Society, and Sir John's tribute to the memory of his life-long friend Sir William Rolleston whose statue he unveiled only a little more than a year before his own name was added to the head-roll of those who have departed this life after a distinguished and honourable career, largely spent in the service of mankind.

Sir John Hall, K.C.M.G. died at Christchurch in his 83<sup>rd</sup> year on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1907.

**J. D. HALL**  
**W. H. TRIGGS**

**POLICY OF THE HALL MINISTRY.**

(LEESTON, MAY 20TH, 1880).

*[The following speech, delivered to the electors of Selwyn at the Town Hall, Leeston, on May 20th, 1880, was the first address given by Sir John Hall to his constituents after he had displaced Sir George Grey as Prime Minister of the Colony, in 1879. It throws an interesting light on the principles which guided Sir John Hall in his political life. He refused to hold his seat by means of local log-rolling. In his references to his great protagonist, Sir George Grey he wields a keen-edged weapon with a light hand and dexterous skill, but never uses anything approaching, a foul stroke. The address is instructive regarding the condition in which the Hall Government, on taking office, found the administration and the finances of the country, and details the steps they proposed with the object of adjusting the finances. It also sketches their policy in regard to Taxation, the Native Question, the Land Law, Electoral Reform, Licensing, Hospital and Charitable Aid, and other important questions, some of which are still occupying the attention of politicians in New Zealand.]*

**LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.**

BEFORE, I go into general questions, there are one or two matters of local interest to which I should be glad to refer. I am deeply indebted to my constituents for the small extent to which they have asked me to advocate the local claims of the district I represent. I believe there is no constituency in New Zealand which has been so considerate, or at least more considerate, in that respect than this one. I am sorry, therefore, that in the one or two matters which I shall now refer to I cannot give what you may consider a satisfactory answer. My attention has often been called to the necessity of a bridge across the Rakaia, at what is called Dobbie's Ford. It is an exceedingly desirable work, and one which would be found of great benefit to a large part of this district. I know also that it has a claim upon the colonial exchequer as great as many other public works already carried out. But, in the existing financial condition of the colony, the Government are compelled to defer many works which are admittedly desirable, and therefore I cannot ask my colleagues to appropriate money for this work. But it is possible the undertaking may be provided for if the Councils of the two counties between which the bridge is required obtain authority to lease bridge tolls for a given number of years. In that case, some enterprising individual might be found to build the bridge. If that should be desired, my best efforts will be devoted to obtaining the necessary authority for the Councils.

The next question, gentlemen, is one which very seriously affects the occupiers and cultivators of land in the southern parts of the district, namely, the question of the extent to which the present embankments at the south side of the Rakaia bridge are said to be endangering the protective works put up on the north bank of that river. A strong opinion is entertained that the partial embankment across the River does great mischief to the works you have erected to protect the district from encroachment. I have examined the place, and as far as I can judge, being a layman, that opinion is a correct one; but the railway engineers, having been asked to consider the matter, give it as their opinion that this work does not interfere with the protective works on this side. I think the best that could be done for your interests was this, to induce the Government to agree that they shall appoint one engineer, that the North Rakaia Board of Conservators appointed another engineer, and that these two appoint a third to report together upon the question, and say whether any wrong is being done to the district or not. I am glad to be able to say that the Minister of Public Works has agreed to the course proposed, and proceedings to that end will be taken with the least possible delay. We shall then ascertain, from an independent and impartial tribunal, whether some alteration of the present work is necessary, or whether it is not. And I hope, gentlemen, you will admit that under all the circumstance, I have done my best for you in that respect.

Another matter I wish to speak on is the application that has been made to me more than once to obtain the erection of a post and telegraph office in, Leeston. Well, gentlemen, as I am Post-master-General, you may think your wants in this respect should not be neglected, and I admit they should not be neglected. But again I must tell you the existing financial condition of the colony compels us to postpone the work. I am afraid that while Ministers are preaching economy all over the country, it would hardly be considered satisfactory if they were to commence a work which may, for the present, at any rate, very well be postponed, and I hope you will acknowledge it is through a reasonable consideration for the shortness of the public funds that I am not able to promise that the work shall be undertaken.

**SIR GEORGE GREY.**

Now, before going into the question of general politics, I must refer to one or two matters of a somewhat personal character. You will recollect that when I addressed you on a former occasion I endeavoured to refer as little as possible to Sir George Grey. I wished to treat that gentleman with the greatest possible consideration, for reasons which I then stated, and I would not have referred to him to-night if he had not thought it right to pay some attention to me. I will allude, in the first instance, to a speech by Sir George Grey at the Thames. He does not seem to have yet got over the fact of my having left the Legislative Council and entered the House of Representatives.

You will remember he asserted in Christchurch that that act of mine was an unjustifiable proceeding, and that the Governor ought not to have accepted my resignation. I then gave you good reasons why Sir George Grey was mistaken in what he said. But he returns to the charge, and he says:- "One of the peers who thinks he can make a party in the Assembly, resigns his peerage, and he sits for some rotten borough in the other House." And in order that there should be no mistake as to whom this

applied to, he further said, "The gentleman who left the Legislative Council was the present Premier, Mr. Hall. This was not the first time he had done that thing." Perfectly true, because he helped me to do it on a former occasion. I do not think I should have referred to this if Sir George had contented himself with a reference to me personally, but he called my constituency a rotten borough. Now, what is a rotten borough? So far as I recollect of what a rotten borough was considered in England, I believe it is a small constituency, comprising a very small number of electors, who are almost entirely dependent upon some powerful individual, and are compelled to vote as he wishes them to vote, and who generally get certain benefits in return. And he says the electors of Selwyn constitute a rotten borough. But that is not all. You seem to have occupied his thoughts to a considerable extent. He makes a speech in Auckland, in which he says, "These gentlemen sit for some small places that ought not to return a member at all." Mr. Miles - "Too strong a district for his Reform League to send a man in." Mr. Hall - Then he comes nearer, and speaks at Christchurch; and there he is kind enough to refer to me again. He says - "The time has come when men who are to rule their fellow men should speak to great communities of their fellow men. It is no time when the Minister of a great and rising community like this should sneak away to some obscure country village." Therefore, gentlemen, you are a rotten borough, you ought not to elect a member, and you are a few small farmers in an obscure country village. Now, Sir George Grey represents the Thames district. Comparisons, they say, are odious; but they are very useful sometimes, nevertheless. It became my duty once in the House of Representatives to throw some little light upon the electoral roll for the Thames. I then stated the facts which I shall state now, which have never been contradicted, and cannot be contradicted. The electoral roll of the Thames at the time I speak of comprised 4,446 electors, being more than the whole of the male population of the district. But, of the people who were on that roll, 52 were dead, 262 were twice on the roll, 118 were three times on the roll, 699 were absent, 400 could not be found out by the gentleman who sent me this, and who knows the place thoroughly; 850 were not thoroughly qualified, 56 had no qualification at all, 16 Natives were twice on the roll, 6 Native women

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were on the roll, and 13 Natives, whose names appeared on the roll, were dead. Now, gentlemen, I think if one of us represents a rotten borough it is not myself. Then, I said the constituents composing a rotten borough expects benefits from their patron. If you look at the address to the electors of the Thames, you will find a column and a-half devoted to a statement of what he had obtained for the district-such as harbour works, high school, railway, and other things. That is how Sir George Grey speaks to the electors of the Thames. I have not found it necessary to speak to you in this way. I have told you candidly that some of your wants, under more favourable circumstances, should be considered, but under existing circumstances they cannot be entertained. I do not think it was wise to provoke a comparison between the two constituencies. But I have not done with the Christchurch speech yet. It is there said that you are a few farmers in an obscure country village. The truth is this, that is a way he has of dealing with anybody who crosses his path at all, and you have so far done this as to have elected a man to represent you who has been instrumental in turning him out of office. That is why he speaks of you in that contemptuous manner. His tune would have been widely different had you elected a supporter of his own. This would then have been the finest district in the whole of New Zealand-you, gentlemen, would have been the most enlightened and intelligent body of electors he had ever met with-and Leeston, instead of being an obscure country village, would have been a great centre of political intelligence, from which benefits without number would have flowed throughout the rest of New Zealand. He would not even stop there, gentlemen. The interest which he would have taken in your children would have been perfectly marvellous. He would state that he never had observed such interesting children before; that your sons would be elected Governors of the colony in the future, and that your daughters were the most perfect ladies he had ever met with. That is what Sir George Grey would have said if you had elected-well, Mr. Gammack, for instance.

Now, I have another point to touch upon before proceeding further. The speech further says that the time has come when men who are to rule men must speak to great communities of their fellowmen, and not to a few farmers in a country district. Now, gentlemen, I say this is rubbish-transparent rubbish-which may go down with a crowded meeting at the Oddfellows' Hall, where a man is liable to be ejected who does not agree with the speaker, but I don't think you will accept it as reasonable. I think I may say, without egotism, that I speak to larger audiences than are actually here. The number of my immediate hearers is a matter of comparatively little importance. The gentlemen who are here in the capacity of reporters give publicity to my utterances, and convey what I and men in my position say to far wider audiences.

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Did you over hear that Mr Disraeli was bound to address large meetings in London instead of addressing his constituency of Bucks, in the town of Aylesbury, or that Lord Palmerston should not address his constituents at Tiverton, or Sir Robert Peel at Tamworth? The autocratic cloven hoof may be seen sticking out of the heap of rubbish I have mentioned. The speaker tells us that to be rulers of men we must address large audiences. Sir George Grey's ambition appears to be a ruler of men. My ambition is of a different kind. I am ambitious to be a useful servant to my fellow countrymen. And I thank my fellow colonists that during the nearly thirty years I have spent in this part of the world, they have given me many opportunities of serving them in many offices, from the highest to the humblest. I am content to work for them still in a modest sphere when it has fallen to my lot to descend from a higher position; and you, gentlemen, know whether or not I have been able to place a few stones in the edifice of national prosperity and greatness, which we hope will, some day, cover these islands. I hope I have not harboured such an ambition in vain, and that through the confidence of my fellow citizens I shall continue to be allowed to serve them in that way, let Sir George Grey say or do what he likes.

Now I have a few things more to say before I leave this subject. I have not alluded to Sir George Grey so long as he let me alone, but I am at present compelled to speak in my own defence. I am afraid I shall have to say some unpleasant words. In his speech the other evening he said:-" The Premier of the country sent and required the authorities of that office to give up telegrams for his perusal, some of which were undoubtedly private, that he might search and find out whether any telegrams had been sent by his predecessors which might give some ground of complaint against them, and excite feelings against them

in the country." That is to say, gentlemen that I sent to the authorities of the Telegraph Office, asking them to send me private telegrams of his, with the object of seeing if it were possible to raise up a feeling against him in the country. Now, gentlemen, I have to say, with regard to this assertion, and I say it deliberately, that it is nothing more nor less than a deliberate falsehood. I repeat the words, a deliberate falsehood. I will explain, to you the position of this matter. Public officers are allowed the privilege of franking letters and telegrams for transmission on public business, but not, of course, for private purposes. Telegrams, which are thus franked by them are public property to all intents and purposes, and are, consequently, the property of the Government of the day. If they frank a telegram which is on their private business, they defraud the public chest to the amount of the fee which they should have paid. Now, the member for Cheviot, in consequence of certain suspicions which had been expressed that the late Government had been using the telegraph for electioneering purposes, which had been distinctly declared by Parliament to be "private purposes"-asked whether the present Government would ascertain if this was so, and would lay such telegrams before Parliament. After consideration we agreed to do this, and sent to the authorities directing that inquiry should be made.

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A report was sent that there were a considerable number of such telegrams, and they were accordingly brought to me as Commissioner. I took the precaution to look through them, for the purpose of seeing that none had been, as far as I could see, improperly included, and finding one or two such, I put them aside, and laid the rest on the table of the House. The question was then raised whether this was a proper proceeding, and it was referred to a select committee of the House to report upon. That select committee took evidence, and reported that these telegrams were public telegrams, and could, therefore, be properly produced. Now, I ask whether these being the facts, which I defy anyone to deny, is not the mis-statement made by Sir George Grey in Christchurch one entirely discreditable to any public man to have made.

We are further told that the Premier "sneaks to an obscure country village." I could not, for the life of me, for a considerable time understand what was meant by this word, that is, what difference there was between the manner in which I travelled, and that in which my predecessor travelled, to account for such a term. But it occurred to me at last. When my predecessor travelled as Premier, he did so in a Government steamer, and by special train, and made the country pay for the train. When I travel by sea, I do so as an ordinary Government passenger. When I use a special train I pay for it myself. Gentlemen, I shall continue, when I come to see you, to sneak down here in that way, and I hope Parliament will never allow Ministers to do anything else, if to pay one's own expenses for travelling when special trains are used can be called sneaking. In the course of his speech Sir George Grey further insinuated I cannot say less- that an address which has recently been published by the member for Riverton, in which he makes certain suggestions regarding education, was a feeler put forth by the Government. There is no particle of foundation for that insinuation. The first I knew of the address was when I read it in a newspaper. I wish that to be distinctly understood. There is no foundation whatever for the statement I have referred to, which I have no doubt, however, will be repeated over and over again; nor is there the slightest foundation for the insinuation that the Government intends to interfere with the Education Act as it now exists.

Having now referred to what was in that speech, I wish to draw your attention to one or two remarkable omissions from it. Firstly, we have a statesman of high position addressing a large assembly on the most important political questions of the day, and yet making no allusion whatever to what should seriously occupy the attention of any man in his position - namely, the very serious financial position of the colony at the present time.

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He said nothing on this most important question, nor on the steps which should be taken to extricate ourselves from existing difficulties. I think you will agree with me that this was a very remarkable omission. I will call your attention to another omission in that speech. The speaker did not think it worthwhile to explain to his so-called constituents, why he, about fifteen months ago, sent a telegraphic despatch to the Secretary of State asking him to send out 6,000 paupers to this country. When addressing an audience of the working classes, the reason why that despatch was sent would have been an interesting piece of information. I have the despatch. It is as follows--" New Zealand Government regrets greatly distress in Mother country. It respectfully informs Imperial Government that six thousand able-bodied emigrants could at once find permanent and profitable employment in New Zealand in addition to large numbers whose passages are being paid by the colony." That was in February last year, at the conclusion of the second bad harvest we had had, when any man of ordinary sagacity must have known that depression was near at hand, and that the labour market would be overstocked. Nor did the speaker explain why, in the first session of 1879-when the unemployed difficulty had become a serious one, and when papers relating to immigration were laid before Parliament, including papers of a later date than that I have just quoted, that particular paper was left out. It remained a secret until the present Government came into office, and laid it before Parliament. I ask you, is that dealing frankly and fairly with the public?

### **ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE.**

I now turn to more pleasant topics. I propose to review as briefly as I can some of the proceedings of the last session of Parliament, and of the recess, and then to refer to the proposals so far as I can do so, and the prospects of the coming session. Shortly after arriving in Wellington I was asked to undertake the honourable and arduous position of leader of the Opposition. I acceded to that request, and in due course moved a vote of "Want of Confidence in the Government." After considerable debate, in which the objection taken by the supporters of the resolution was to the inefficient administration of the then Government, and in which the defence was not a defence of their administration, but a plea that they intended to introduce Liberal measures-the motion was carried by a majority of two. The Government, after some hesitation, tendered their resignation, and I was asked to form a new Ministry. I was able to submit to the Governor the names of gentlemen who, although several of them had not previously been members of a Colonial Ministry, were, nevertheless, favourably known, and men who are respected and trusted by all who know them.

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It is a rule consistent with all precedent, common fairness, and common-sense, that when a new Government comes into office it shall be allowed a fair opportunity of placing before the country the policy which it proposes to act upon. If the country does not approve of it, or does not approve the manner in which such Government conducts its business, it displaces it in the ordinary way, but, in our case, that rule was entirely departed from. Before we had time to take our seats, and while the late Ministers still occupied the Ministerial benches, they were so anxious to prevent us from being heard at all, that Mr. Macandrew- newly elected leader of the Opposition-gave notice of a motion of want of confidence in us. This was done before we had opened our mouths as Ministers. He not only gave that notice, but persisted in it subsequently. This extraordinary proceeding drove us to the unusual expedient of taking advantage of the forms of the House to prevent the no confidence motion coming on until we had a fair opportunity of putting our policy before the country. I grant that is an unusual, and, under ordinary circumstances, undesirable, course to pursue, but I assert that it was entirely justified by the unprecedented manner in which we were treated. We were determined that you should know what policy we had to propose, and we were also determined that we would find out for you what the financial position of the country really was, and what the position of Native affairs was. All we asked was a reasonable time to do these things, and we named a time after which we would entertain their vote of no confidence at once. They were infatuated enough to reject this offer, and they bungled so much that we had no difficulty in preventing their motion from coming on. In this manner a good deal of time was wasted, until some of their supporters became thoroughly sickened, and gave us to understand that they would be willing to support us. This brings me to another part of the speech at Christchurch, namely, the so-called compact you have heard so much about. From the very first Sir George Grey insisted upon seeing a piece of paper to which my initials were attached. The more he insisted that this paper should be produced the more the paper did not come. Possibly it might have been produced had he not insisted so much. The contents of that celebrated piece of paper have now been made public in one or two speeches. The gentlemen I have mentioned desired to have clearly before them our views regarding the redistribution of representation, regarding the measures of Electoral Reform, and regarding the Education Act, and also to understand whether we were willing that an enquiry should be made as to how Auckland had fared in the distribution of funds for public works in comparison to the rest of the colony, so that if such enquiry showed that injustice had been done to Auckland, it should be redressed. That is satisfactory assurance upon these subjects, the members referred to agreed to support the Government, and their support gave us a majority of two. The Opposition then withdrew their want of confidence motion, and the business of the country proceeded.

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### **ELECTORAL REFORM.**

We then lost no time in bringing forward and laying on the table of the House those important measures of Electoral Reform, about which so much talk has taken place during the last two years. What our predecessors had been speaking about for two years, we laid upon the table in one week. We proposed them in six Bills, and proceeded to work with them at once during the two months remaining of the Session. We carried a Bill for securing triennial Parliaments-a Bill from which was omitted a remarkable feature, contained in the Bill for that purpose prepared by the late Government. That Bill provided that the system of triennial Parliaments should not commence until after the expiration of the present Parliament-that Parliaments should be quinquennial until that time, after which members should be elected for three years only. But we applied the same rule to the present Parliament as had been proposed for the future. We also passed a Bill for the extension of the franchise, giving to every man resident for a reasonable time in the colony a right to vote, and giving also a vote to any man possessing freehold property to the amount of £25-not two votes in the same district, but in the case of a man who had property in a district in which he did not reside, to the value of £25, he should, in virtue of that property, be entitled to exercise the franchise. That was a more liberal measure than had ever been proposed by our predecessors. But, nevertheless, they said it was not liberal enough. We contend, however, that it is right that to some extent property should be represented. We got another Bill passed for the registration of electors. I have always contended that the reason why many of our settlers were not on the electoral rolls was, not because they had no qualification under the old law, but because no effectual provision was made for their being registered. This Bill provides that a man may be registered at any time of the year. Hence, if any man has got a claim to be registered, he can go to the offices at which the electoral rolls are open for inspection, and if he does not find his name upon the roll he can have it placed there at, once. I think that this will be found a greater advantage to the people than anything of the kind proposed hitherto. We introduced three other measures, namely, a Bill for the Regulation of Elections, a Bill for the Prevention of Bribery and Corruption at Elections, and a Bill for dealing with Election Petitions. There was no time to pass these measures, nor for a Bill for the Re-distribution of Seats, which has become necessary owing to the growth of population of the colony, in consequence of which some localities are not now fairly represented: That I will deal with later on.

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### **STATE OF THE FINANCES.**

So much with regard to measures for electoral reform. The Treasurer at once made a searching investigation into the financial condition of the colony. We had not been told that its financial position was a serious one, but in point of fact we found it was so. Speaking of the ordinary revenue and expenditure, we found a deficiency on the 1st of July last of over £100,000; but for the subsequent financial period in which we then were the revenue of New Zealand, fairly estimated, fell short of the necessary expenditure by a sum of not less than £800,000; that is to say nearly at the rate of £2 per head for every man, woman, and child in New Zealand. Now I venture to say that such a state of things has not often been revealed to the people of any country. It has been attempted by members of the late Government to deny that the deficiency was so great. They said that the present Treasurer took an unnecessarily gloomy view of our position, and that in point of fact the revenue would be much larger than estimated, and the expenditure much less. But what is the fact? We are now at the end of the nine months for which the accounts are made up, signed, and printed, and it appears that instead of the Treasurer having taken too

gloomy a view of the position it was just the reverse. The deficiency is greater by £280,000 than was originally estimated by Major Atkinson. Sir George Grey, in Auckland, the other day, said the deficiency was only £80,000 or £90,000. I do not know whether he was correctly reported or not, for at the Thames he said the deficiency would be £500,000. It is a fact, however, that before he went out of office deficiency bills to the extent of £400,000 had been issued, and one of the first measures we had to undertake was a Bill which had to be passed through all its stages at once for a further issue of £200,000 deficiency bills, without which the payments for the public services could not have gone on. So much with regard to the ordinary revenue and expenditure. Now with regard to the loan. You are aware that a loan of £5,000,000 was authorised to be raised in the first session of last year. The loan had not been raised, but we found that it had been very largely anticipated by drafts drawn upon our agents in London. By every mail money had been raised in this way, to provide funds for carrying out public works. It was found that the expenditure and liabilities to be met before Christmas out of that loan amounted to over £1,000,000, and a further liability had been incurred of about another million, to be paid before the end of June. In point of fact we had spent, or practically spent, in anticipation of that loan being raised, money to the amount of £2,000,000. We found also that liabilities had been incurred for the purchase of Native lands to the extent of £1,000,000 or £1,200,000, and all this before sixpence of the loan had been raised. We were told that we were magnifying the difficulty. You will see when the papers are published that we did not magnify the difficulty at all-indeed, that it would have been difficult for us to do so.

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You understand that we could not get on without drawing, in anticipation of the loan being raised, upon our agents in London, and we learnt that the Bank of England had refused to advance those agents another shilling. If that was not a position of danger and difficulty, I should like to know what is. I can hardly conceive any Government taking over the finances of a country in a greater mess, or taking office under more discouraging circumstances.

## RETRENCHMENT AND TAXATION.

As to the steps which we took to deal with the position, we might, if we had only consulted our own ease and temporary popularity, have attempted to smooth the matter over by assuming that, we should have a large land revenue and a larger consolidated revenue; and we might put this or that item of expenditure on loan. That would have been an easy but unworthy mode of dealing with the difficulties. It was not the way in which we read our duty to the colony. Having ascertained what the requirements of the colony were, we determined to attempt to place the finances of the colony on a sound and honest footing. We believed that this could best be done, firstly, by endeavouring to reduce our expenditure, as I shall presently show you we have done. The next step was to raise such additional revenue as would fairly meet the deficiency. How did we propose to do that? Partly by an increase in the Customs duties. This revision of the Tariff exempted from duty raw materials used in colonial manufactures, with a view to encourage those manufactures, and thereby add to the sources of employment in the colony. Secondly, by imposing additional duties on spirits, wine and tobacco, and by increasing what are called the *ad valorem* duties. These are not duties which press mainly on the working classes, unless where they happen to be considerable consumers of tobacco and spirits, and I do not mind pressing upon people who do that.

We are told that we ought not to have proceeded in the manner I have indicated, but ought first of all to have increased the Land Tax, and thus got at the "unearned increment;" that we should have raised a tax on large properties. Now I have got a return of all the properties in New Zealand, as they were valued at the latest assessment, and, as you are aware, an excessive value was put upon many properties in this part of the country. Out of the 87,105 properties in New Zealand how many do you think reached in value £20,000? There are only 446 such, and I will venture to say that under any assessment made at the present time that number would be very largely diminished. Now, assuming that these properties are not mortgaged, and return 5 per cent on their assessed value, if you tax the whole income from them to the extent of 10 per cent, it will only give you £100,000; but we know that properties in this country are generally mortgaged, and we shall not be far wrong if we assume these to be so encumbered up to half their value.

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Then, to raise £100,000 it would take 20 per cent on the net income. Is it not a delusion, therefore, to talk about meeting the deficiency I have mentioned by such an increase in the Land Tax merely? I will notice one or two other arguments advanced in favour of retaining the Land Tax. A member from Westland objected in the House to the Property Tax, and advocated a continuation of the Land Tax-for what reason do you think? Westland is an important part of the colony, produces a large amount of gold, and receives a very fair share of the public expenditure. Mr. Seddon, speaking on this subject of the proposed Property Tax, said that "at present only four individuals were taxed, but in the Bill now before us the struggling settlers will be taxed." From this it would appear that to him it seemed quite fair that the struggling farmers in Canterbury and Otago should be taxed, but that the same rule should not apply to Westland. This seems to me rather an argument against the Land Tax. There are other good reasons against the Land Tax, for example, that in Nelson last year it cost more to collect than the whole tax produced. In point of fact, the Land Tax is paid chiefly by Otago and Canterbury, and to a lesser extent by Wellington. Therefore it presses unequally on the colony at large.

There was another proposal made to meet the deficiency which is worthy of your consideration. Sir George Grey, in the debate on the Property Amendment Bill, said-"Supposing an Income Tax was put on of 3d. in the £'-imposed upon the same principle as in England. Why those creditors to whom we owe some twenty seven millions of money, or to whom we shall soon owe that amount, would contribute the sum of £337,500 a year to that Income Tax, and it would fall so lightly on them that they would not feel it at all." That is to say, gentlemen, that having borrowed money upon the faith that we were to pay a certain amount of interest on it, we are suddenly to reduce that by 20 per cent. If one of you had lent money upon mortgage to another, would you think it proper, reasonable, or honourable for the debtor, if he had it in his power, to say to the creditor, I shall in future not pay you the amount of your interest by 20 per cent." Do you think a man who did that would have a chance of borrowing another shilling from the same creditor? And is it not likely that such an expression of

opinion from one who is said to represent the opinions of a large portion of the people of this colony, will damage the credit of the colony in the money market at Home?

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Sir George Grey appears to have remarkable views on finance. He says that if the interest receivable by our bondholders were reduced by 20 per cent, they "would not feel it at all." The proposal is really a measure of repudiation, and it is, in my opinion, a very great calamity that any gentleman, occupying the position held by the late Premier in this colony, should, in his place in Parliament, make a positive proposal for even the partial repudiation of our public debt. It is a serious objection to such a gentleman being again intrusted with political power in this colony that he should, in his place in Parliament, have proposed even partially to repudiate our debt.

As I contended when I last addressed you in this hall, I believe taxation should rest not only upon land but upon all property, inasmuch as all property enjoys protection from the State, and for this it should be made to pay. Land is not more protected than other property. The man who holds mortgages pays for that. It is, I contend, a fair and right principle that where realised property exists it should be made to pay reasonably for this protection. I am aware that this Property Tax is not popular; very few taxes are, and, possibly, a considerable amount of dissatisfaction is felt in reference to this tax in particular. But I submit this, that the dissatisfaction and unpopularity ought not to attach to those who have introduced the tax for the purpose of making good the alarming deficiency in our finances, but to those who bequeathed to us that deficiency, and made the tax necessary. Now, Sir George Grey, at Christchurch the other day, said that this tax was one which would press hardly upon the masses of the people. If that is true. I must be glad, because no person will be taxed whose property does not exceed £500. If he has less than this amount he does not pay any tax at all, and therefore it follows that if it presses heavily on the masses of the people, those people have each more than £500 worth of property. I hope it is so in this obscure village of Leeston. But, gentlemen, the fact is that the mass of the people will not pay the tax at all. Another advantage of the Property Tax is, that many who escaped altogether, or nearly so under the land tax, now have to contribute to the revenue, such as persons who are money lenders. An illustration of this was given to me some time ago. It is that of a gentleman who has large sums of money out at mortgage who escaped almost scot free under the old Act. He is one who does not use his money in trade or farming. He now has, under this Property Tax, to pay £100 a year, whereas under the Land Tax he had only £5. The consequence is that gentlemen like these are sure to object to the Property Tax.

We had hoped to bridge over the gap between our revenue and our expenditure by the means described. But owing to the subsequent falling off in the revenue there is a very serious gap still existing between revenue and expenditure. I am not going to anticipate the financial statement, which, in a few days' time the colony will hear from the Colonial Treasurer. The depression under which we have so long laboured is gradually, I believe, passing away, the colony is recovering, and I hope soon for better times.

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It is true there is not yet a large amount of improvement, but I believe we are on the eve of better times. One thing is necessary both in public and private affairs in this colony, that we should observe strict economy. It is the duty of the Government in dealing with the finances of the colony to do this so far as they can. If we all do so, and devote ourselves to the development of the resources of this colony, I believe that, in a short time, the depression will have passed away, leaving as traces behind the lessons of thrift and economy, which will help us for the future. I have told you that it is the duty of the Government to practise economy in administering the finances of the colony. We did not come into office telling the colony, as others did, that reductions would be made of £100,000 or £150,000. We knew something about Government, and that to make such promises would be nonsense. We said we would go carefully into the question, and make what reduction could be effected without impairing the efficiency of the public service. Our promises have been kept. The Minister for Public Works during the Session reduced the estimates for railways by £30,000, and, during the present year, has made a saving on train mileage of £21,000, and on reductions in the staff of £7,000. By the use of native coal he has been enabled to effect a saving of £8,500. This, gentlemen, I think is a satisfactory item. This means a total saving of £36,500, which is equal to 17 per cent on the net revenue. Further reductions are in progress, and in the course of a few months still further alterations, by which we hope to save more, without in any way interfering with the efficiency of the service. I hope you will agree with me in thinking that the Minister for Public Works has kept his promise. In those departments which are immediately under my charge, viz., the Postal and Telegraph, I have been able to make some reductions by the abolition of some mail services which were not really necessary, and I hope to do more next Session if the Parliament will assist with its authority. The necessity for saving in these departments does not take the shape of reductions in salaries paid, because they are already very modest. Such savings must be effected in the facilities afforded to the public themselves, because here we have become rather too luxurious. Two-thirds of the Telegraph Offices do not even pay working expenses, and yet to abolish those which are so situated would almost raise a revolution. We look forward to the conversion of our loans under the arrangement made in 1875 by Sir Julius Vogel as a means of effecting considerable saving to the colony. It will, if successful, obviate the payment of considerable sums as Sinking Fund, and release large sums already accumulated. I think it only right to say that in my opinion, the colony is largely indebted to that gentleman for the arrangement effected by him in 1875.

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I have, up to now, been dealing with ordinary expenditure. I now come to loan expenditure. With regard to this we are bound to spread it over a period of three years, that being the time which must elapse before we can go into the London market again. It is very difficult for any Government to check expenditure when there is money available in the chest. The public are apt, when this is the case, to insist upon it being spent, and consequently this portion of our duty is an arduous one. We find no difficulty in obtaining approval of our policy of economy-in the abstract. Everyone admits that we must be economical, but the moment we begin knocking off any particular work the persons affected by the economy protest, against it. They are very

ready to be economical at their brethren's expense, but not at their own. Mr. Montgomery has recently been speaking at Akaroa. This gentleman, if we are to believe his professions, is a politician, of almost immaculate purity, indeed politically of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. But for all that, in any question affecting Akaroa, he can roll a log as neatly as any gentleman of my acquaintance. In his speech he dwelt at great length on the misdeeds of his opponents, but was considerably and judiciously silent as to the deeds of his own party. He spoke strongly of the necessity for economy and thrift, and thrift and economy. This being so, it might be fairly expected that he would be willing to begin at Akaroa. Quite the contrary. I had an application made to me for a new Post Office at Akaroa. I thought that the present office, considering the present state of our finance, with a little alteration, would furnish sufficient accommodation for a long time. This, however, he strongly objected to, and complains that I have not given an entirely new office. He also speaks in a somewhat injured tone because we did not come down with the money to put a tunnel through the hill on the proposed railway line to Akaroa. In this I am bound to say that Mr. Montgomery is not a greater sinner than other sinners. If the tower of Siloam was to fall on all who act like him the benches of the House of Representatives would soon be rather empty. I mention this as an instance of the difficulties which the Government have to deal with in carrying out economy in public expenditure.

## THE NATIVE QUESTION.

I now come to a very important subject, and one of the deepest interest to the colony—the Native Question. We had been led to believe that under the late Government Native questions would be dealt with by men who had especial qualifications for the purpose, who could do in this matter what others could not. The system of personal government was carried out to the fullest extent. The Natives came to our meetings, listened to our speeches, ate our food, but gave nothing whatever in return. Their plan for dealing with Natives seemed to have been founded upon an idea that they must ever be treated in an exceptional manner, and not anything like Europeans.

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The Native expenditure during the past three years has been rapidly increasing, while the number of Natives, as we understand, has been diminishing. The increase, too, has been less in salaries than in contingencies, expenditure over which Parliament has comparatively no direct control, but which is distributed entirely by the authority of the Minister of the day. Not only has money been thus wasted, raised by taxation from the people of this colony, but it has had the effect of training the Natives to spend their time in loafing, to depend upon the Government for assistance, contracting habits of idleness. In short, it has been petting, pampering, and pauperising the Natives, and incurring extravagant expenditure for the purpose. The policy of the present Government can be put in a few words, namely, as much as possible to let the Natives alone. Not that we should not keep a watchful eye upon their proceedings, but to teach them not to look constantly to Government for money; also that they must be content to be governed by the same laws as their European fellow citizens are. There is no need, gentlemen, for long keeping up the distinctions in the treatment between the two races. They are so kept in a great measure by those who, thanks to their familiarity with the Native language, are able to turn this distinctive treatment of the Natives to their own profit. Our object is to teach the Natives, as speedily as possible, that they must submit to be governed by the same laws and rules as their European fellow subjects. So far as it has yet been able to be carried out, this policy has been successful; we believe that the Natives respect a Government so acting more than they did before. In pursuance of this policy, Native schools which hitherto have been under the control of the Native Minister have been transferred to the Education Department, and are now regulated and inspected as far as possible in the same manner as European schools. So with regard to the Native Lands Court formerly in the department of the Native Minister. This has been transferred to the Minister of Justice. No one is more in earnest in this work than the Native Minister himself. In the expenditure of the Native Department large reductions have been effected. The number of officers and pensioners dispensed with is 117; besides vacancies not filled up; number of officers and pensioners whose salaries have been reduced, 67. Amount of Native vote for salaries 1879-80 was £15,164; amount by which reduced, £6,527, or 43 per cent. Savings on civil list, £1,272. Besides this, large reductions have been made in the contingent expenditure. This, as I have said, is money over which the Parliament has comparatively little control, but is disbursed by the Minister as he thinks proper. For fifteen months Parliament voted £2,600 for Native contingencies, but the Native Department spent £18,000. If the contingencies of the Native Land Purchase Department are added, which is also at the disposal of the Minister, the expenditure of this kind would be not less than £30,000.

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Moreover, accounts are still coming in incurred by our predecessors. Some of the Native expenditure has been of an objectionable nature. You have no doubt heard of the jewellery for Natives which is included. Only a few days ago the Native Minister showed me an account from an Auckland jeweller for £40 for polishing two greenstone mere for a Native chief. This account was endorsed by the late Native Minister. I consider such expenditure of public money scandalous, and that if we cannot govern the Natives without such proceedings as these it is a disgrace to us. The Native Minister considers that for the future £3,000 would be a fair expenditure for contingencies for the Department. [A voice: "What about Te Whiti's swamp?"] I will come to the question of Te Whiti's swamp presently. I submit that great credit is due to Mr. Bryce, the present Native Minister, for the courage and determination with which he has carried out his promises to reduce the expenditure of his Department; bearing in mind the protests and objections with which a Minister is beset on every occasion of this kind, I say, therefore, that he should have every credit for the reform and economy he has laboured to effect in the Native Department. I have now to refer to the subject of affairs on the West Coast of the North Island; and I regret that I shall not have time to go into it as fully as I should have liked to do. I should wish to refer to a speech made recently by Mr. Ballance, in which he attempted to ridicule the manner in which Native affairs in that part of the country are being dealt with by the present Government. It is, I think, unfortunate that Mr. Ballance should have done this; because it is calculated to provoke comparisons, and if I had time to make them, I think I could satisfy you that Mr. Ballance was very imprudent in his

provocation. But let that pass. When we came into office, we found this position of matters:- The part of the country between the Waingongoro River and Stoney River had been confiscated many years before, but possession of it had not been taken. Native claims to parts of that country had grown up in a variety of ways-some based on promises made by different Governments that certain lands should be returned to those who had owned them; others arising out of the fact that Natives had been allowed to settle down at particular points and to cultivate the ground; others again, arising out of promises of different kinds, made directly by the Government or their officers. We found that our predecessors in office had attempted to occupy, by survey, a part of the country I have specified, but that they had done this without making inquiry as to what lands might, under the circumstances I have stated, be regarded as belonging to Maoris, and what to the Government. The result was, that the surveyors had been turned off the land, and the then Government had not ventured to re-occupy it. We found that there was a body of Armed Constabulary, very well organised, it is true, but in barracks, and costing there about as much as they are now costing out of barracks.

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We decided that the first thing we had to do was to make a proper enquiry as to what the Native claims really were; to find out, in fact, what justice required should be done for the Natives, before we attempted to take possession of the land. Parliament passed an Act authorising the appointment of a Commission for this purpose. We were able to secure the services, as Commissioners, of two of the most distinguished men in New Zealand-Sir William Fox and Sir Francis Dillon Bell. We also secured the services of a Maori member of the House- a chief of high rank, who was one of our steady political opponents, but who agreed to act on the Commission Subsequently, however-acting under what influence I do not care to inquire-that gentleman wrote to say that he found he should be between the two European Commissioners in the position of a horse between the shafts of a cart; that he should not be able to have his own way. He decided to withdraw from the Commission. I am sorry for it; and I may say in passing that there was not in this fact much encouragement to the Government to go into the ranks of their political opponents to get members of Royal Commissions. The two gentlemen I have named have devoted themselves most assiduously to making a full enquiry into all the facts of the case as to these West Coast lands. They have found that a considerable proportion of the lands have been promised to be returned or given to the Natives. As to others, to whom no such promises have been made, the Commissioners find that they must be allowed some place upon which to live. The Commissioners have made recommendations accordingly. Of these recommendations the Government have approved. They have been printed in the public papers, and they will be laid before Parliament in a few days.

I ask you, gentlemen, to dismiss from your minds a great portion of the newspaper accounts respecting these transactions which have been sent from that part of the country. Canterbury has been favoured with newspaper accounts of what has been passing there, which I state, upon the best authority, are utterly incorrect and misleading. While we offered to the Natives to do them full justice in the matter of land, we thought it our duty to show them that we had the power to enforce our authority, and to let them know we had the will to use that power if necessary. We knew that it was of little use to ask those Natives to consent to a diminution of what they claimed, unless we could show them that we were powerful enough to enforce what we might decide to be just. For that reason we did not organise, as you have been told, a force costing £600 a day; but we took the men that were organised out of their camps and barracks, where they were employed in the no doubt very useful work of furbishing up their accoutrements, and we put them upon the plains and showed them to the Maoris. We did more. We said, "Here is a very fine tract of country.

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I have seen it, I may say, and it is a very fine tract of country for certain purposes. "But," we said, "A road will be required. The land cannot be occupied without a road through it and bridges across the streams that intersect it. We will employ the constabulary in making this road. That will be the best sign we can give to the Maoris, that while we are perfectly willing to do what is just towards them, we mean to assert our authority over the land, and not to give up any portion which we do not find to fairly belong to them." It has been said that while the Commissioners have given up all the land, that we are spending £600 a day in making a road through it for the Natives. But the Commissioners have not done that. They found that a great deal of it had been practically given back or; promised; but it is by no means the case that nothing remains. Of the Waimate Plains themselves, a finer piece of land than which I won't say for wheat-growing, but for many purposes- I have never seen, the greater part of the open land will remain for Europeans. And beside that there will be in what may be called the same block, no less than 100,000 acres of rich, level forest land, fit for immediate occupation. If by the means we have adopted, we should secure, as I hope we shall, peaceable occupation of this part of the country-if, by I do not say the active concurrence, but the passive concurrence of the Natives, we should be able to occupy that land-I say that we shall have done a very great work indeed. No doubt by hostilities, by bloodshed, we might have conquered those Natives-at the cost of much blood we might have achieved the same result, perhaps, in a shorter time; but I think you will agree that we did right not to incur the responsibility of shedding blood amongst our fellow-subjects, if by any means that result could be obtained peaceably.

I heard someone ask just now about "Te Whiti's swamp." I am happy to tell him that Te Whiti has found out that when he said the two roads (as they have been called) would never meet, he didn't mean quite that. He is an exceedingly clever man. You always find that he did not mean by his prophecies what does not come to pass. He says things that appear to have a certain meaning but when one of his prophecies does not come true, he has a perfectly marvellous way of getting out of the difficulty. So far as we can gather, there is not the slightest intention to interfere with the making of the road, or preventing the parts of it being made to meet. The Natives are giving the best evidence of not intending to provoke hostilities by the extent to which they are cultivating at Parihaka, which will be near to the road. They never do cultivate to any great extent in accessible positions if they have hostilities in view. It has been said that we have boasted of our success on the West Coast. In my view of the case, neither the Government nor anybody connected with them, has ever done anything of the kind. We have, after grave consideration, gone to an expense which may appear great as compared with the immediate object in view.

But we have had the conviction that we could not afford to allow ourselves to be thwarted in this matter. If we had done so, the effect would have been seen and felt throughout the North Island. The Natives there know what is going on. If they supposed that by bouncing they could prevent our occupying this important piece of territory, and if we had allowed them to do so, we should speedily have had precisely the same kind of difficulty in other parts. We have not been contending for the settlement of the Waimate Plains only, but for the mastery-by peaceful means if possible, but still for the mastery-over the Natives. I believe, firmly, that we shall be successful. It is not in mortals to command success, but we have done more, in persistently adhering to the best means of obtaining it.

### **LAND SETTLEMENT.**

I desire now to refer to another feature of the last session-the law regulating the disposal of Crown Lands. The Act of 1877 was found to be in many respects restrictive. Prices were too high conditions were too stringent. Mr. Rolleston devoted himself with all that energy and zeal which you know he possesses, to introducing amendments of the law, and the result is a much more liberal measure than we had before. Greater facilities are offered for the occupation of land upon deferred payments in those parts of the country best suited for the purpose. Mr. Rolleston has, since the prorogation, travelled over the whole of the colony, to ascertain where land could be advantageously thrown open for settlement, and the result has been the throwing open of a total area under the deferred payment system, which will compare very favourably with anything done in years gone by. I will not trouble you with details. It will be enough to say that since the 8th April last, over 71,000 acres have been opened for occupation under the deferred payment regulations, upon very easy terms. [A voice; " Where about is it, please? "] Well, we have often been met by inquiries from people who wanted to know where Crown Lands could be got, and what the Government have done is this-they have published a little book called "The Crown Lands Guide," which can be obtained for 6d. at any Land Office, and which tells exactly what lands are open, and upon what terms, in every part of the colony. That, I think, you will admit, is a very useful work.

### **DISTRICT RAILWAYS.**

One most fertile theme for censure by the Opposition has been the policy of the Government as to certain district railways. (A voice: "Aye, the Oxford and Temuka.") No, that was not a district railway. Misrepresentation and abuse have been showered on us on account of these district railways, and I therefore wish to be allowed to say a few words on the subject. Those railways are lines undertaken in virtue of certain Acts of Parliament passed to enable companies to construct works considered to be of a useful public character. They had to be sanctioned by the Government, because when authorised they entailed upon districts through which they ran liability to rating sufficient to guarantee interest to an amount equal to 5 per cent on their cost; and they further entailed upon the Government itself an obligation to pay 2 per cent on that cost, making 7 per cent in all. This was an admission clearly, that those railways had a certain public character. Several companies were formed, and they commenced railways under those Acts. A time of great depression came. The companies endeavoured to raise money upon debentures, when it was found that the Acts which purported to give them power to raise money in that way were so drawn, or contained such clauses, that the companies could not raise the money. In these circumstances, we had before us the choice of allowing these railways, some of which had been commenced, to be discontinued, and the undertakings to collapse, or to step in and give such assistance as it was in the power of the colony to give, without the cost to it eventually of a single penny. You have been told-it has been stated in various places that we proposed to spend £400,000 on these lines. It might as well have been said that we proposed so to apply £4,000,000. The utmost amount which anyone knowing the circumstances will tell you that we could have been called upon to spend is £150,000, but it is not in the least degree likely we should have been ever called upon for more than £60,000, or, at the outside, some £100,000. There was great objection raised to the granting of this assistance; but eventually Parliament authorised, upon our receiving security from the companies, the guaranteeing of their debentures, which could not be floated as the law stood, and so enabling the companies to raise money to complete lines begun. That authority has been acted open to the extent of £40,000 at the present time; and I am sure that when the facts are laid before Parliament, and are considered by a fair, candid, and dispassionate tribunal, it will be admitted that what has been done will not eventually cost the country a penny. Quite the contrary, for it will lead to the completion, at an early date, of public works of very great value to the colony-will enable railways to be opened that will pay better than many of those that have been constructed out of public money. What I have now said, will, I hope, give satisfaction. It is, at any rate, a true and correct account of what the Government have done in the matter.

### **ROYAL COMMISSIONS**

We have been twitted about the number of Royal Commissions we have appointed for various purposes. One of those Commissions - that for investigating the subject of colonial industries-we were requested by a Committee of the House of Representatives to appoint; and if by any step of this kind we can further the development of industries in New Zealand, which will afford employment to large classes of the population, as I believe we can-if we can do this by the collection and sifting of information by gentlemen most of whom give their services gratuitously- I say that we shall have done a very valuable thing for the colony. It is a work that Ministers, who have a large amount of departmental duty to look after could not themselves possibly accomplish. Then as to the Civil Service Commission. We are frequently told "You could reduce, the cost of the service by £100,000" and some people make it £150,000. But nobody tells us how this is to be done. We believed that the best

mode of beginning to deal with the matter was to have enquiries made in all parts of the colony, by gentlemen who could and would devote time to them; and I am of opinion that when the results are laid before Parliament, it will be admitted that the appointment of the Commission was a wise and prudent step. Then, again, as to the Railway Commission. If you are to believe what is said by gentlemen who are anxious to get railways made over this or that mountain, there is not a yard of New Zealand that would not well support a railway. But it is desirable there should be on all such matters really authentic information. The intention to appoint this particular Commission was announced by the Minister of Public Works in his Statement, and I believe the information obtained by it will be most useful. But it is said we have appointed our political supporters on these Commissions, and we are blamed for that. Speaking very candidly, when we looked round for the gentlemen best qualified for the work, we found that the greater number of them did happen to be our own friends. I do not say there were none who were qualified on the other side, but the best qualified men were amongst those who had given us their support. We did ask some members of the Opposition. But suppose we had appointed a number of them; what would have been the cry from one end of the colony to the other? Would it not have been "Oh! what a disgraceful attempt to buy political opponents." [Much laughter, and "Well, that is a good get out! "]

## PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE.

I have now, I think, only to refer to the prospects of the coming session, and the proposals to be made to Parliament. As to our prospects, I am happy to tell you they appear to be very good. We have no reason to suppose we have forfeited the confidence or shall lose the support of former friends; and we have reason to believe that some who did differ from us have seen the error of their ways. The most important subject we shall have to deal with will be that of finance. I have already referred to that to some extent, and I will not anticipate the statement of the Colonial Treasurer. But there is one point upon which I may touch without inconvenience. It has been found necessary to discontinue, in their present shape, the subsidies granted to local bodies. The colony is not in a position to afford so large a sum as has hitherto been paid in that way-and paid, as we believe, in a great many instances, where it could be fairly spared. That remark applies especially to the large cities throughout the colony, where heavy rates are levied, and where, consequently, heavy subsidies are drawn from the Colonial Exchequer. But we promised that the subsidies should not be stopped without our endeavouring to provide some efficient substitute for parts of the colony where road making has to be carried on under very disadvantageous circumstances. Many parts of the colony are less fortunately situated than we are here. In road districts or counties where there exists a large area of Crown lands, and a comparatively small area of freehold, but where roads have to be made, the charge falls very hardly upon the freeholders who are there. Many districts, again, owing to being covered, or largely so, by forests, could not possibly make their roads without assistance from the Government. Assistance, therefore, will be provided in a way which, while entailing less pressure upon the Colonial Treasury, will, I trust, provide efficient assistance for those districts where such help is really required.

We shall introduce the measures of Electoral Reform that were not passed last session-a Bill for the Regulation of Elections, a Bill for the Prevention of Bribery and Corruption, and a Bill as to the Trial of Election Petitions. The last-named measure will provide that petitions of the kind shall, in future, be tried, not by the House of Representatives, but by Judges of the Supreme Court-an absolutely impartial tribunal, in which politics have no influence, and whose decisions are not likely to be questioned, as those of Parliamentary Committees always are. We hope to introduce, at an early period of the session, a Bill for the Re-distribution of Seats. The existing distribution has become unfair, through the growth of population being greater in some parts of the colony than in others. This unfairness is especially felt in the Canterbury district and in Otago. The first consideration in the allotment of representatives will be population, but it will not be by any means the only consideration. We think that other things should be taken into consideration also; for instance, the permanency of the population whether it is of a really settled character or not. The question of contribution to the revenue should have something to do with the matter, and the facilities any particular district may have for making its influence felt in Parliament and by the Government, should be also be taken into consideration. After carefully weighing all these points, we shall lay before Parliament proposals for re-distributing the representation in a manner which, while doing justice to those districts that are now insufficiently represented, will, I trust, not do injustice to any part of the colony.

With regard to the Native Question, we find that the laws bearing upon the subject have, in the course of years, become very complicated. Amending Acts have been passed until there exists great confusion. We propose to sweep away entirely the existing legislation on the subject; and we have prepared a series of Bills for dealing with it. One Bill will deal with the Native Lands Court; and it will, I hope, be found to introduce considerable amendments in the working of the Court, and to simplify its procedure. Another Bill will deal with that most difficult question, the Alienation or purchase of Native Lands. The policy of New Zealand on this question may be called a zigzag policy. When I first became acquainted with New Zealand politics, the sole right of the Crown to purchase Native Lands-a right given by the Treaty of Waitangi -was in full force. But it was very much complained of; and, after a great deal of agitation, private purchase was allowed. After that had been in operation some time, the Government again came into the market, and they spent a large amount of money, not very satisfactorily, in the purchase of Native Lands. When the late Ministry came into office they declared that this system must be put an end to-that the Government must cease from such purchases. However, that Government altered their opinion upon the subject; and, although there is no actual prohibition of private purchases they have been, to a large extent, stopped by the use of a power of proclaiming areas of land as under negotiation by the Government. The whole question is, as I have said, a very difficult one. It is, in my opinion, not possible to propose any course against which serious difficulties may not be raised. What we propose is to adopt a course, which you may remember, has been advocated by the Native Minister, of which I expressed myself favourably when I last spoke in this hall, and which was, in fact, proposed many years ago by a late Chief Justice-Sir

William Martin. The proposal is that the Government shall when the Natives wish it, survey their lands, and shall enable them to get the title decided in the Native Lands Court; that when Natives wish to dispose of their lands, the Government will sell for them, in such blocks, and subject to such conditions, as will conduce to settlement, and as will be most beneficial to the Natives themselves; that, from the proceeds there shall be deducted - by the Government, before handing them over to the Natives, the costs of survey, of taking the land through the Court, and also a reasonable contribution towards the making of roads in the district. We have been told that others before us have been very anxious to push forward a Bill of this kind. I can only say I have never seen the least evidence of such a thing. But it is not our practice to talk very long about things; in the present case, we have a Bill prepared for the purposes I have indicated, and it will be introduced as soon as Parliament meets.

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I should like, if you will bear with me, to give you briefly some illustration of the way in which Government purchase of Native lands has worked. Between 1874 and 1879 a large area of these lands was purchased; a large amount of public money was spent; and the injudiciousness of the purchases, as well as the character of the land bought, may be gathered from the figures I am about to give you. In the Auckland district, during the period named, there was handed over to the Government 1,153,000 acres. How much of that do you think has been sold? 691 acres. In Taranaki the result has been better, out of 182,000 acres purchased from the Natives, 52,000 acres have been sold to Europeans: In Hawke's Bay, of 133,000 acres purchased, only 26,000 acres have been sold; and in Wellington, out of 383,000 acres purchased, the sales have amounted to no more than 42,000 acres. This proves that a large amount of the public money has been thrown away, and I could give you further illustrations of the fact if time admitted of it.

We have carefully considered the important question of the licensing of public houses. Our laws upon the subject are in great state of confusion. I believe there are not less than twenty-six Acts or Ordinances by which the matter is regulated in the various parts of the colony. We have a Bill prepared, which, while dealing very strictly with everything of the nature of abuse, will not treat respectable licensed publicans as if they were necessarily criminals. As to local option, what we believe, is a fair proposal is this-that with respect to all new licenses, residents or ratepayers in the district shall be at liberty to give a veto; but we do not think it reasonable that such a principle should apply to licenses that have been continued for any amount of time, and with respect to houses well managed, and in the hands of respectable persons. At any rate, we do not think the application of this principle would be reasonable unless there was compensation, which we do not see our way to provide.

Then there is the very important and difficult question of the Maintenance of Hospitals, and the providing for Charitable Aid. We propose to deal with it, by fixing by law the responsibility in ascertained quarters. At present, that responsibility is very undefined. We propose to divide the colony into districts, having community of interest in these matters, and likely to avail themselves of the same charitable institutions. We propose that in each district a Board shall be elected by the local bodies; to leave such Board to say how the institutions shall be managed and how supported; and to give to the Board the right-if the institutions are not provided for by voluntary contributions or in some other way- to call upon the local bodies to make provision amongst them, in proportion to population, for one-half the cost of the institutions; the other half to be provided out of the Colonial Exchequer.

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We believe that a measure framed upon this basis will, while it encourages private benevolence, not absolutely leave the sick and indigent to what might, after all, be an uncertain and precarious source of support. Very great progress has been made in the Consolidation of the Statutes. A Commission, you may remember, was appointed for that purpose. We shall be able to present to Parliament fourteen Acts, which will consolidate no less than sixty statutes upon a number of important subjects. This is a work which I am sure will prove to be of very great utility.

There are several other social questions with which we propose to deal next session, but I must not detain you by referring to them. From what I have said you will see that we hope the coming session will be one of work rather than of talk. We think there have been many sessions in which there has been a great deal of mere talk, and we hope for a change. No doubt there is what has been called the "burning question" of the Legislative Council and its constitution; as well as the question whether the Queen shall confer titles of honour here without the concurrence of the Ministry of New Zealand. But all that kind of thing, we think, may very fairly stand over until a more convenient season. I have told you what is our bill of fare for the coming session. How it will be dealt with must depend in some measure on the gentlemen composing the body known as Her Majesty's Opposition. We have been told that we are to have a compact and organised Opposition during the coming session. I trust we may. An Opposition properly constituted is exceedingly valuable. It is valuable as a check on the Government; it is valuable by sometimes enabling an understanding to be come to between members holding different opinions, and so expediting considerably the despatch of public business. I am, however, bound to say that I do not see many evidences at present of such an organised and compact Opposition as I desire. I trust that we shall not have a desultory kind of Opposition without any organisation, as this generally delays the business of the country, and in many cases brings the session to a close without much practical result.

We were told, gentlemen, that the keynote of the policy of, the Opposition was to be sounded by Sir George Grey in speeches at Auckland and Christchurch, and we have not been disappointed. In these speeches, he sounded a very important keynote, pointing to considerable alteration of the Constitution of the Colony. He proposed that the Governor of this colony shall not in future be appointed by the Queen, but that he shall be elected by ourselves. Now that is a proposition which I shall feel it my duty to resist to the uttermost. A Governor owing his appointment to the Queen, owing no duty to any party, owing no allegiance to any party, can and does hold the balance of power with an even hand between parties in the colony. But is it likely that this would be the case if he were elected in the colony?

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Would he not be likely to use his power for the support of the party with which he is identified, and by whom he was elected? I hold that our system of parliamentary government which gives to the people real control over the administration of the

Government, is incompatible altogether with the proposed scheme of an elected Governor. It is indispensable, in my opinion, to the carrying out of that system, that we should have a gentleman as Governor who has to ask no favours from any party, nor any to give. We have had an example of the working of the system of elected Governors in the provinces with the Superintendents who were elected by the people. Did they work smoothly with responsible Ministers? No, they did not. Were not the Superintendents much too often at war with their responsible advisers? The introduction of a system of elected Governor~ would soon lead to the same state of things as exists in the United States, where the President is elected. The Governor, once elected, would be Governor for the full term of his office, and you would have him and his hangers-on for that term over you, and the people of the colony would for that period sacrifice their control over the Government of the colony. Another reason why I object to the election of the Governor is that, in my opinion, it strikes at the root of the union of the colonies with Great Britain. Practically it means taking the first step towards constituting this colony into a petty Republic instead of remaining a colony of the British Crown. I trust I shall never see this. I hope to live and die under the flag under which I was born. I am proud to be a citizen of the British Empire; proud of its power and its history, and never, while I have breath in my body will I agree, if I can help it, to a step which shall sever this colony from the Mother country.

With regard to the immediate political future, much depends on the decisions of the people as expressed in meetings such as this. If you believe it desirable to have a Government which shall go vamping about the colony at public meetings, exciting the passions and flattering the prejudices of large audiences, by setting forth a number of imaginary grievances and visionary remedies, at the same time neglecting the practical work of the Government of the colony, and allowing its finance to drift into confusion, then you had better get rid of us at once. But if, on the other hand, you desire to have a Government which discards such proceedings as those, but which is willing to devote itself honestly to the task of introducing economy and efficiency into the administration, to neglect no opportunity of developing the great resources of New Zealand; above all, to watch carefully over its credit, and by a sound and honest system of finance, place that credit on a firm basis-if the people of New Zealand wish to have such a Government, then I claim, without hesitation, the support of the people for the gentlemen who are associated with me in the work of the Government of the colony.

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### III.

#### REVIEW OF SESSION OF 1881.

(LEESTON, MAY 26TH, 1881).

*[On 27th May, 1881, Mr. Hall met his constituents at the Town Hall, Leeston, and gave an account of his stewardship during the first complete session of Parliament, in which he occupied the position of Prime Minister. He was able to point to considerable reform in the administration especially in retrenchment of the expenditure and the settlement of the Native difficulties. He also refers to the loss the Ministry had sustained by the resignation of Messrs. J. Bryce and R. Oliver, and records his keen appreciation of the assistance that he has received and the benefit that the Colony has derived, from the services that had been rendered by those gentlemen. The speech is interesting as showing Sir John Hall's views on the Land Laws, a Second Chamber, Licensing, and other important questions.]*

#### REPLY TO SIR GEORGE GREY.

I AM not at all anxious for anything like a platform controversy with other members who have recently spoken, but if I were not to notice a speech lately delivered at the Thames by the gentleman who is now said to be the leader of the Opposition, I might perhaps be accused of discourtesy, I should also, I think, allow to remain on the public mind a wrong impression as to the part taken by one of my colleagues, the Hon. Major Atkinson, in the matter of an advance of public money to Patea, which is part of the district that he represents. I must, therefore, refer to the speech of Sir George Grey on that subject. Upon that occasion, Sir George Grey quoted from the report of a meeting held by Major Atkinson at Patea, from which it appeared that the Chairman of the Harbour Board, who contested the Egmont seat in the Greyite interest against Major Atkinson, had visited Wellington to obtain a loan of money for his Board; and it also appeared that the gentleman in question applied to Major Atkinson, as member for the district for assistance, and Major Atkinson told him in a jocular way: "Go to Sir G. Grey, tell him you are contesting the seat against me, and you will no doubt get the money." Upon this Sir George Grey expresses great indignation, declares the whole proceeding to be a diabolical plot, and although the report of the speech is not very clear, leaves an impression that, practically, the sum of £10,000 had actually been improperly given to the Patea Harbour Board by Major Atkinson. These are the words which Sir George Grey uses: "I firmly believe that those sums of money have been applied to promote the views of the members of the Ministry and their friends, and I cannot bring myself to think that this is the first transaction of the kind that has taken place."

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This was of course, leading the audience to understand that the Ministry which was guilty of this improper transaction was the Ministry of; Major Atkinson. After dilating at some length upon this question, Sir George Grey declares it is a most disgraceful affair, and states. "Now let us drop the curtain upon this disgraceful transaction."

Now, I do not think it quite fair to drop the curtain at that particular moment. It should be kept raised rather longer, in order to enable us to see what the transaction in question really was. The facts are these :- In the month of July, 1879, the Grey Ministry was in its death struggle. A vote of want of confidence was pending, which it was pretty well known would be carried, and that a general election would then be at hand. At this time Mr. Sherwood, the chairman of the Harbour Board, who contested the election for Egmont as a Greyite candidate against Major Atkinson, comes to Wellington to obtain money for his Harbour Board. On the 28th of July he applies to Sir George Grey in writing for an advance of £2,500 from the annuities department. You know, many of you, no doubt, what time it generally takes to receive an answer to an application to the Government in Wellington, especially when it is an application for money. But upon this occasion an unusual result followed.

Mr. Sherwood applies on the 28th of July, and on the very same day this fortunate opponent of Major Atkinson gets a reply to say he can have the money, provided the law officers consider the debentures he has to offer are a legal security. The law officers, however, declare that these are not a proper security; that they cannot recommend the money being advanced upon them, and he is notified to that effect. On the 29th July, the vote of no confidence in the Grey Ministry was passed. On the next day, the 30th July, this opponent of Major Atkinson applies this time to the Postmaster-General, and his previous communications with the Government appear to have been of so encouraging a character that, instead of £2,500, he now applies for £10,000. You will, I am sure, agree that those communications must have been very encouraging-in fact, he says in his letter to the Postmaster-General" that Sir George Grey received his proposition most favourably. And he boldly asks for £10,000. Again, remembering the pace at which Government departments usually answer letters, is it not remarkable that on the next day this gentleman should get a reply from the Government, saying he can have the whole of the £10,000? If Sir George Grey denies any of these facts, I will prove to you every one of them.

Now, then, can we believe that the remarkable success of Major Atkinson's opponent in obtaining this money was entirely unconnected with the fact that he was to be a candidate for the district in support of the Grey Government? Knowing, as we do, the time it usually takes to receive an answer from a Government department; remembering that Mr. Sherwood was opposing did Major Atkinson as a supporter of Sir George Grey; remembering, as we do, that it was of great importance to his success to be able to go back with a promise of £10,000, and that quickly, in order that he might begin his canvass; and seeing, as we cannot fail to see, that the £10,000 was granted to him with unusual rapidity; I ask, can we believe that all these circumstances were a mere innocent coincidence? I say that if so, the coincidence must be considered miraculous. To my mind, the transaction is not creditable to the Government of the day.

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The speaker at the Thames goes on to denounce in very strong language the system under which such transactions are possible, and therefore we might fairly expect that during the two years Sir George Grey held office he had done something to abolish the system which he declares to be so improper-he could have done it with a stroke of his pen. But he did nothing whatever; he left that system which he so much condemns in full vigor during the whole of the time during which he held office, and when we came into office we found it so. What took place then? Soon after we took office Mr. Stevens moved in the House that the question of the investment of the Trust Funds be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. The proposition was supported by myself as Premier, and carried, and during the last session of Parliament the Public Accounts Committee passed a resolution recommending that the Trust Funds should be invested in Government securities only. This would obviate any possibility of giving them away to Town Boards or Harbour Boards. [A voice: "River Boards."] Yes, or River Boards. Although this resolution was not binding on the present Government, we have strictly conformed to it ever since. Therefore the system so strongly denounced by Sir George Grey, and which he condemned as such an improper use of the hard earnings of the poor man-the poor man, it will have been observed, is always brought out on these occasions-this system so energetically denounced, was left in full vigor by the immaculate Government of Sir George Grey, and was put an end to by the wicked Government of Mr. Hall. Now, gentlemen that you are in possession of these facts, I am quite willing that the curtain should drop. I think it was ill-advised of Sir George Grey, for his own sake, that he raised it at all.

I ought to notice before I leave these speeches, a remarkable statement made in that at Coromandel, in which Sir George enunciated a political doctrine, against which I beg emphatically to protest. In answer to a question on that occasion he spoke as follows:-" No Government could rise superior to the temptation of according that patronage to friends. The best way of effecting a cure would be to adopt the American system, which gave each Government a right of turning out presumably hostile officials, and filling their places with men more friendly disposed when in office."

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That is to say, that it would be a right and proper thing in New Zealand that civil servants should be kept in office-not because they were useful and valuable servants, but because they were the political friends of the Ministry of the day. I sincerely hope that this proposal will have no chance of being adopted in this colony. A more demoralising political practice, and one which is more deplored by all wise Americans, does not exist. There are many other statements in these speeches which would be as easily disposed of as those I have alluded to, but it is not necessary for me to refer to them. I cannot, however, help deploring the tendency which Sir George Grey displays to constantly depreciate the future of this colony, and to breed ill-feeling between one class of the community and another. It is exceedingly unfortunate, and can only be the outcome of a diseased imagination, or a love for reckless platform oratory.

### **MR. MACANDREW'S PROPOSALS.**

I will now turn to the speech made by Mr. Macandrew, the leader of the Opposition last session, at Port Chalmers, which I ought to notice, considering that gentleman's position. I am sorry to find that speech breathing the same spirit which has helped to bring this colony into its financial difficulties. Summarised, the propositions of Mr. Macandrew are as follows:- Go ahead with the vast railway scheme of 1878; at once resume immigration; repeal the property tax, and put nothing in its place; and provide for everything by the issue of Government paper money. Now, it is excessively unfortunate that men in Mr. Macandrew's position should propound doctrines like these. I quite believe he desires the advancement of the colony, but I am equally certain that if his proposals were given effect to, the advancement would be by giant strides to an inevitable catastrophe.

### **REVIEW OF THE SESSION.**

I would not refer to the proceedings of the last session, as they have frequently been discussed by honourable members on occasions like the present, were it not that there appears to prevail a very important popular delusion respecting it. It has been generally asserted-in the first instance by members of the Opposition- that the session was a very barren one, and was made so by the large flood of Bills which the Government introduced. If the Government had attempted a large amount of legislation I

should certainly not be ashamed of the fact, for there is really much legislation to do; and it appears to me that the chief business of the Legislature is legislation. I deplore the excessive amount of time the Legislature chose to give, as I think,

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to other and less important subjects. But it is a fact that the Government did introduce an extraordinary number of measures last session? I have a return, which I asked from the officers of the House, in order to clear up the matter. Setting aside Bills sent down by the Legislative Council, as to which I have no particulars, I find that the number of Bills introduced into the House by the Government during the session of 1877, was 67; in 1878, 50; in 1879, when the work was divided between two sessions, 72; and in 1880, when, as you are told, the number was excessive, how many do you think there were?— 100, at least, you will no doubt suppose— but in fact there were only 61. So that the Government introduced to the House last session a smaller number of Bills than the average for four sessions.

I have also obtained an analysis of the manner in which the time of the House really was occupied, and it shows exactly what I expected— that much of that time was not given to the consideration of Bills, but to a multitude of miscellaneous motions of comparatively trifling interest or value. The motion for going into Committee of Supply, when any amendment may be moved, was intercepted no less than sixteen times. The time occupied on those occasions varied of course; but in one instance, at least, it occupied two days and a-half. In addition to this, one whole fourth of the session was occupied in discussing a vote of want of confidence in the Government, which from the very beginning everybody knew could not lead to any practical result. I quite admit that a large portion of the time of the last session was wasted, but it was so, not by a flood of Bills, but by a flood of talk.

I entirely deny, however, that the session was a barren one. Amongst its minor results was the passing of Acts which consolidated and swept off the statute book no fewer than 92 old acts. In respect of electoral reform, a measure was passed providing for the trial of election petitions by the Supreme Court, instead of as hitherto by Committees of the House, and thus removing, very properly I think, disputed elections of members of the House to a tribunal not influenced in its decision by anything like party feeling. The tariff was amended chiefly by relieving from duty many raw materials which are required for colonial manufactures, and various measures of social reform were passed.

There was an Act which though short, was very important, for enabling effect to be given to the recommendations of the West Coast Commission—a Commission appointed, as you will remember, to inquire into Native grievances on the West Coast. The Act enabled the Government to take steps, which are now being taken, to carry out long-standing promises to Natives in that part of the colony—to make ample reserves for the use of the Natives there—and to throw the rest of the land open for sale. In consequence of these steps, a large portion of the land has been thrown open and been sold, bringing a considerable sum into the Treasury, and the land is now being settled by industrious settlers. A further consequence of the working of this Act is that the Armed Constabulary—about which, and the cost of which, you hear so much—is being gradually reduced.

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We have also been able to liberate more than one-half of those Maoris who had been detained in prison, and I hope it will not be long before the remainder of them are sent to their homes.

While speaking on this subject, I cannot omit to express my great regret at the loss to the colony through the resignation of the late Native Minister. Mr Bryce has himself told the story of his resignation, and I need not repeat it. Mr. Bryce and his colleagues differed, as honest men will differ: we parted as friends, and with the greatest regret. I am sure that the colony will not soon forget the good work Mr. Bryce did. He let light into the abuses of the Native Department, and of the Land Purchase system, which I hope will render impossible the recurrence of such abuses.

You may remember that in addressing you last year, I said, that the work of the Commissions we had appointed, and which were then being sneered at, would, as I believed, justify the action of the Government, I say now, that that action has been amply justified. The outspoken Report of the Civil Service Commission evoked a feeling in the House and the country which rendered possible the large retrenchment that has been effected. The report of the Railways Commission showed that the expenditure on some of the works proposed in the railway scheme of 1878 was unjustifiable, and it has been stopped. The Local Industries Commission collected, and thoroughly digested, a vast mass of information which has materially assisted the Government and the people of the colony in establishing and developing local industries, which has recently been effected to a much larger extent than is generally known. I repeat, therefore, that the appointment of the several Commissions was justified, and the result has amply proved this.

## **THE FINANCES OF THE COUNTRY.**

During the session of 1880, very full consideration was given to the financial condition of the colony, which consideration and its results would alone have been sufficient to save the session from any charge of barrenness. The most careful examination, and the fullest discussion, proved that the Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer, Major Atkinson, on taking office, as to the alarming financial position of the country was not only not an exaggeration but was within the truth. Printed, audited and certified accounts have been laid before Parliament, which place that fact beyond a doubt. The Colonial Treasurer has been charged with having, for merely party purposes, made the position of the colony appear worse than it really was; and it has been alleged that he thus depreciated the credit of the colony in the English market. In the first place, I do not believe that any truth should be withheld even if the giving it forth should temporarily depreciate the credit of the colony. I believe that when speaking the truth is followed up as it was in this case, it cannot permanently injure the credit of any country.

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It is perfectly true that when our position was first made known—when the alarming gap between income and expenditure was first pointed out— there was a depreciation of our securities; but when it became known how the Government and the colonists had faced the difficulty and grappled with it when it was recognised that we had practically bridged the great gap—then the value of our securities began again rise, and now they are quoted in the London market higher than they were before. But what would injure the credit of the colony is such disparagement of its prospects and misstatements as to its present condition, and

such wild proposals for expenditure and paper money, as we have recently had in speeches from the Thames and Port Chalmers.

The session of 1880 was also notable for the progress made in the retrenchment of public expenditure. The estimates were introduced at an unusually early period of the session; this gave the House time for a full consideration of them, and the House took advantage of it. It has been said that retrenchment was forced upon the present Government. But that was scarcely doing justice to the Government. We brought down certain proposals for reduction of expenditure, stating that we believed considerable further reductions could be made during the recess, and if the House passed those estimates we would devote ourselves to effect that farther retrenchment after it had risen. The House desired however, to see the estimates further reduced before they were passed, and the Government fell in with this view. But the Government has not confined itself to the reductions effected then. We have been working at further reductions ever since, and a painful, unpalatable task it has been. We have succeeded in effecting retrenchments which will enable us, as stated by Major Atkinson, to present estimates to the next session of Parliament smaller by nearly £250,000 than were the estimates presented last year. Now, as I have said, the task of retrenchment is an unpopular one. At first sight, it may appear that it is not so, but, although in the abstract the public highly approves of it, every particular case of reduction is strenuously resisted by the locality affected. I will give you an amusing instance of this. I mentioned one in this province last year, and I will now refer to another in another part of this island. There is a town- I need not name it- situated on a railway line. Its total postal revenue is rather over £50 a year, and its telegraphic revenue something over £10. This town possesses at the Railway Station a Post and Telegraph Office. When, however, I became Postmaster-General, I found that a new building for Post Office purposes was nearly completed, at a cost of £600, about a-quarter of a mile from the other Office, and that a second staff was to be appointed, at a cost of about £170 a year. That was considered to be quite the correct way of spending public money.

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I objected to it altogether. The district was represented in Parliament by an energetic member, who brought strong pressure to bear on the Government to have the arrangement carried out. I was also assailed by petitions and remonstrances from the district. I persisted in objecting to such a waste of public money, and to provide against its being done hereafter I had the building removed to a place nearly 100 miles away, where it was really wanted. Whereupon the townsfolk were so indignant at my economy that they burned me in effigy.

### **THE PROPERTY TAX.**

On the subject of the Property Tax I would not now have said anything, had it not been for some remarks which have fallen from Mr. Ormond and Sir George Grey, and which are calculated to leave a wrong impression. Mr. Ormond, in a speech at Waipawa, is reported to have stated that the tax had been imposed on the people of the colony without their having had an opportunity of being consulted. I entirely dissent from that statement. At the last general election there was hardly any question more freely discussed than the relative merits of the Property Tax and Land Tax. I entirely deny that the Property Tax was imposed without the people having had a chance of saying whether or not they approved of it. Sir George Grey stated at the Thames that he has been compelled by the Property Tax to dismiss some men- he did not state how many- and that is made to appear as a good reason why the Property Tax must be considered a bad tax. But if Sir George Grey's property is so large, that a penny in the pound upon it is equal to the wages of say two or three men, I can see no reason why he should not pay his share of the general taxation. I pay twice as much under the Property Tax as I did under the Land Tax; but I do so cheerfully, because I know that now my wealthy neighbours are also bearing their fair share of the burden of taxation, which they did not do under the Land Tax.

The most serious statement in this Thames speech is that in which Sir G. Grey contends that the English holders of New Zealand bonds should be charged with the Property Tax. He did not say how much, but on a previous occasion he proposed to raise £370,000 a year in this way. He states that when he mentioned this in the House I looked at him with horror. That is perfectly true. Let us see what are our obligations to the English bondholders. The case stands thus: The colony of New Zealand, on condition of a certain amount of money being lent to it by London capitalists, agreed to pay to those lenders every half-year a certain sum by way of interest. That was the bargain that was entered into, and a bargain is a bargain all the world over. Now, it is proposed, because our necessities are large, that we should say to these creditors, who are receiving their interest in London, "Gentlemen, you must receive so much less than we agreed to give you."

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That appears to me to be absolutely dishonest- a breach of a bargain; it appears to me to be repudiation. We have a right to tax people upon their incomes in New Zealand, but if we bargain with people in London to pay them a specific rate as interest every year, that bargain we are bound, as honest men, to keep. I say further, that to tax the English bondholders would be worse than a crime- it would be a blunder, because those bondholders and capitalists generally would ask- "If this New Zealand Government can to-day stop or refuse to pay any portion of agreed interest- 5 per cent or 10 per cent., as may be- what is to prevent it stopping 20 or 30 per cent tomorrow? How are we to know, no matter what the colony undertakes to pay, how much it will really pay? Such a state of things would, I say, effectually damn our credit in London, and would cost us a hundred times more through loss of credit than any amount we might contrive to filch from our creditors. I say, also, that it is nothing less than a colonial misfortune that such doctrines should be propagated by men holding positions such as that of the late Prime Minister of New Zealand.

### **NATIVE LANDS.**

When last addressing you in this hall I stated the principles which the Government thought should prevail with regard to purchasing Native Land. I showed the scandalous manner in which sums appropriated for this purpose were squandered; the demoralising effect which the previously existing system had upon the Natives, and the quantity of worthless, unsaleable land it threw into the hands of the Government. I stated that the Government proposed, as quickly as possible, to withdraw from that

system, and that policy of withdrawal has, for some time, been steadily pursued. In cases where we found that purchases had been nearly completed, we have completed several transactions, and we are endeavouring to complete others. In other cases, where considerable sums had been advanced, but the negotiations were far from complete, we have, with the consent of the Natives concerned, obtained, or we are obtaining, concessions of land equivalent in value to the amount of advances, and we are releasing the remainder of the blocks from the Government embargo. Where very small sums only have been advanced, we are, with the consent of the Natives, abandoning negotiations altogether. I hope that in six or nine months all negotiations of this kind in which the Government are involved will be wound-up, and an end put for ever to the system of Government purchase of Native lands. With regard to the future, we believe that it is a great misfortune for the North Island, and, indeed, for the whole of the colony, that large tracts of land, the property of Native owners, should be left unoccupied and unused.

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We believe that the amplest, reserves should be made for the use of the Natives, and be effectually secured to them, and that then there should be no such interference as to prevent Native Lands coming into the possession of Europeans being beneficially occupied, and thus adding to the wealth of the country, while bearing a fair share of the country's burdens, which at present it does not do. I had intended to say something respecting what is called Patetere, of which you have no doubt heard a great deal, and particularly as to the iniquitous way in which, as it is said, the Government have dealt with that block. Time will not, however, allow me to enter upon the question; but I will say this- If Sir George Grey will, next session, move for the re-appointment of the Committee he obtained last session, but did not make use of, to inquire into the whole question, I will second the motion. I am most anxious that this should be done; and I will propose also that the circumstances under which an adjoining block has been negotiated for by Messrs. Howard and Dilworth shall also be included in the inquiry which the Committee are to make.

### **NATIVE DIFFICULTY.**

I will now pass to a different subject. A Mr. Bradlaugh, a member of the House of Commons, has, in his place in the House, been putting questions and making charges against the Government of New Zealand, with regard to their treatment of the Maori prisoners. He complained of their illegal detention, unjust treatment, cruel and harsh usage. He has done this, as we know, at the instigation of men who are opponents of this Government, and whose characters he does not know. He was not encouraged by the Colonial Office, which pointed out that the management of Native affairs rested with the colonists. The Colonial Office promised, however, to ask for information, and it has been cheerfully given. It is now some years since the management of Native affairs, with all its responsibilities and burdens, was transferred to- I might almost say was imposed upon- the colonists of New Zealand. We have since then striven to discharge those responsibilities, and we have borne those burdens without a murmur. That those burdens have not been light, the public debt and your knowledge of the colon will amply testify. But, as the responsibilities are ours, so also must be the power and the control. It is my duty, as the head of the Colonial Government, to declare that, while possibly our management of the Natives may not have been without faults, we assert that it has been neither unjust nor ungenerous. The Natives are exempted from such taxation to which all our European settlers are subject. Our laws have, in many cases, been adapted to their special circumstances. While we bear these burdens, and endeavour to show that we rightly appreciate the responsibilities, the Government will not allow any interference with the management of the Natives on the part of any outside authority.

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It would be unjust to the Europeans who are settled here, and a misfortune to the Natives themselves, if any such interference were admitted. It is most desirable, in every respect, that nothing should be done, or be permitted, that might lead the Natives to imagine that they have any other authority to look to for the redress of possible grievances than the Government of New Zealand. I have now to make a remark which I shall do with some hesitation, because it will be trenching upon delicate ground. As a rule, the name of the Governor of the colony should never be brought into a discussion of this kind, because his actions are the actions of his Ministers; they are responsible, and if anything wrong is done, they should be blamed. But the name of the Governor has been introduced into discussions on this Native question; and, therefore, it is not only the right, but it is, I think, the duty of Ministers to notice statements which they know to be unjust to the Governor. You may remember that, upon a recent occasion in Christchurch, His Excellency distinctly declared his acceptance of the principles of responsible government, as practised in this colony. Notwithstanding this, newspapers, both in this colony and the Mother Country, have stated that his Excellency has interfered unconstitutionally in the matters of the mission to Te Whiti, and the release of the Maori prisoners; that he has brought unconstitutional pressure to bear upon his Ministers in connection with each of those matters. I state distinctly that that assertion is entirely untrue- it is wholly unfounded, and it is unjust to the Governor. There has been no departure from constitutional practice. The mission to Te Whiti was sent- the prisoners have been released or detained- on the spontaneous advice of Ministers themselves, and they are responsible for those proceedings.

### **LANDS AND RAILWAYS.**

I notice that in the Otago district an agitation has been commenced by Mr. Vincent Pyke, a member of Parliament, on the assumption that the Government do not intend to do what they ought to do, or what he supposes they ought to do, with regard to the disposal of a large area of Crown lands, the pastoral leases over which will expire in about two years. Such an assumption is entirely unfounded. What the Government propose to do is to classify those lands, before they are released from the existing tenures. Dividing them first into agricultural and pastoral, the agricultural portions will be surveyed into blocks for village settlement, for sale upon deferred payment, and for sale for cash. It is hoped that by bringing different classes of holders together they will assist each other. It was thought desirable not to have a community composed only of deferred payment holders, and another composed of those who had purchased for cash and would require labour, but to give facilities for mutually beneficial assistance.

With regard to the land not suited for agricultural purposes, it will be divided into two classes—the better and the less good. The former will be surveyed into blocks of not exceeding 5,000 acres, to be sold on what is known as the pastoral deferred payment system; while the latter will be surveyed into smaller runs than at present, to be leased by auction in the ordinary way. I hope that this explanation will remove any impression that the Government do not intend fully and fairly to carry out the provisions of the law with regard to the land which has been referred to.

I had intended to refer to the question of railway freights, but I find I must pass it over. I must, however, in justice to myself, express my great regret that circumstances have deprived the colony of the services of the late Minister for Public Works, Mr. Oliver. It fell to his lot to take office at a time when expenditure on public works had to be largely reduced. He had the unpopular task of reducing it, and he had the additional, and also unpopular task of raising more revenue than had been raised from existing public works. It should be said to his credit that while he found the railways of New Zealand paying only 2,1/4 per cent on their cost, he, by economy in management and prudent administration, left them paying 3,1/2 per cent on that cost. I add for myself that I know that in losing Mr. Oliver the colony has lost an able, painstaking, and conscientious administrator.

### **ELECTORAL REFORM.**

Now, with regard to the business of the next session. In the first place, the measures that were left incomplete last session will furnish a very considerable amount of work. There are, primarily, the measures of Electoral Reform. The Bill for Regulating the Conduct of Elections will have to be re-introduced, and, I trust, will pass without difficulty. The chief alterations which, as far as I recollect, that Bill will make in the existing law are an extension of the hours of polling, and the making of such provision as will satisfy voters of the absolute secrecy of the ballot. I myself believe that it is now secret, but the impression prevails in some quarters that it is not so, and therefore any further precautions that can be taken to remove such prejudices will be taken. It will also probably be provided that the elections shall all take place upon one day. My friend Mr. Gammack cheers that remark. Will he help us over this difficulty? As the members of the Government represent constituencies in different parts of the colony, and as it will be very inconvenient for them to be all away from Wellington at the same time, how are we, as Ministers, to get elected? [Mr. Gammack: "Oh, the Lords."] I do not think my friend would be satisfied to be governed by the Lords. However, perhaps this difficulty is one which further experience may enable us to get over. Another Bill which failed to be passed last session was that for the Prevention of Bribery and Corruption at Elections. I wish to

say frankly that I think this is the least pressing Bill of the series. So far as my own observation goes there is very little bribery and corruption at elections. [A Voice: "No, not here."] No; in this district I must say elections have been of a most satisfactory character, and as far as my information extends the charge of bribery and corruption cannot fairly be made against New Zealand generally. Still, prevention is better than cure, and therefore an endeavour will be made to render the law as perfect as possible. One provision of the Bill will probably be the closing of public houses during the hours of polling. I very much wish it were possible to introduce some provision to punish the circulation of false statements and misrepresentations, evil speaking, lying, and slandering at our elections, which are now, I am afraid, considered somewhat excusable; but I cannot hold out any hope that we have found a cure for that sort of thing.

The most important Bill of this series—in fact, the Bill of the session—will be that for the Re-distribution of the Representation. The principles upon which it will be based I stated last year. They are, that the primary consideration in allotting members should be population; but that there are other circumstances that should not be left out of consideration, such as the settled or the migratory character of the population. Then, as far as possible, we should avoid creating fresh boundaries, and avail ourselves of existing districts. We should endeavour also not to leave any important district of the colony entirely unrepresented; and inasmuch as country districts do not possess the same facilities for bringing political influence to bear as is possessed by towns or town districts, I think it would be but right that, in proportion to population, a somewhat larger representation should be given to the former than to the latter. Precise or rigid equality in representation is not obtainable, and if it were, would I think really cause greater disadvantages than arise from a slight departure from such precise equality. I believe it is of the utmost importance that considerable minorities should not be unrepresented. This may be avoided or attempted to be avoided in a variety of ways. The manner in which we proposed last year to solve that difficulty to a certain extent, was to have no constituency returning more than one member, so that certain sets of opinions not preponderating in one district, but which might preponderate in another, would get some representation. Smaller constituencies than we have had are, I think, desirable for this reason also, that the cost of contesting them is less. The cost of contesting elections in Christchurch or Wellington, or Dunedin, or any other of our large towns, is now becoming a considerable evil and should be, as far as possible, diminished. I think that would be done by the single-member constituencies. You will, perhaps, desire to know how these proposals will affect this particular district. So far as was shown by the returns available before the late census, the population of that part of the district south of the Selwyn would have been sufficient to entitle it to one member.

What will be the result when the census is completed I cannot, of course, say, but I hope the position will be still the same, because I recognise that the district has unity of interest, and if the population is sufficient under the provisions of the new Bill, it would be satisfactorily represented by one member. Sir George Grey has distinctly stated that this Bill will not pass; I suppose that means, not if he can help it; but the Government will do their utmost to pass this Bill, and, in my opinion, Parliament will fail in its duty if it does not, in what will be its last session, pass a Bill for the re-adjustment of the representation.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

But this re-adjustment does not appear to me to be the only reform in the Legislature which is desirable. It has been alleged recently-in fact it was stated by Sir George Grey last session that we ought to sweep away the nominated Governor with £5,000 a year, and sweep away also the Legislative Council. (A voice: "Hear, hear" I am glad to find that he has a representative here. Perhaps we shall hear some reasons for the proposal. This doctrine has been again enunciated at the Thames- that it is desirable to abolish the Legislative Council, and to rely upon a single Legislative Chamber. The question of an elected Governor was, I think dealt with last year, and pretty well disposed of. I do not believe it is likely to be adopted by the people of this colony. With regard to a second Chamber, it is my belief that in any country in which representative institutions exist a second Chamber discharges very useful-aye, necessary functions. It is desirable that there should be a check upon the hasty action of the popular branch of the Legislature. In times of excitement, which will occur in a popular Chamber, its members might be hurried, under the influence of an eloquent and unscrupulous leader, into action which, on more deliberate consideration, they would regret, and which the country, if it had an opportunity of expressing its opinion, would certainly not approve of. On those occasions a second Chamber exercises a most useful and moderating influence. It does not, and ought not, to permanently oppose the matured opinion of the country, but it does postpone, very often, the decision of important questions until the House and the country have had time for reflection, and so to come to a careful and deliberate decision. I object also to the abolition of a second Chamber, because the consciousness of the possession of absolute power by any man, or by any set of men, is injurious and dangerous. It is apt to bring about an overbearing and tyrannical mode of thinking and acting. As a great writer, Stuart Mill, well puts it, "The same reason which induced the Romans to have two Consuls makes it desirable that there should be two Chambers, namely, that neither should be exposed to the corrupting influence of undivided power."

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The Legislative Council of New Zealand, I believe, has shown a due appreciation of its legitimate functions. It has time after time vastly improved our legislation. It has resisted no measures upon which the deliberate approval of the country has been expressed. It has, on more than one occasion, saved the colony from dangerous proposals. I may instance the proposal made some years ago to sanction unlimited Provincial borrowing, and the proposal, of a comparatively recent date, to give the Maoris much larger electoral privileges than the Europeans. Those proposals were rejected by the Legislative Council, and the wisdom of their action is proved by the fact that those proposals have never been renewed. But while I say this, I admit that the present constitution of the Legislative Council is not satisfactory. Members are chosen practically by the party leader of the day, and there may-there probably will be a tendency to give greater weight to the exigencies of party than to the personal qualifications of the members appointed. Also, as the number of the members is not limited, it is possible that a headstrong Minister, with a pliant Governor, might remove the restraining influence of the Council at the very time when its use to the country would be most valuable. For those reasons I believe that an alteration in the mode of appointment to the Legislative Council is desirable. The question is, however, a very difficult one. It should not be entered upon rashly, nor, if possible, be dealt with in a time of excitement. The plan which I am most inclined to favour is one which was discussed in the House of Representatives on the motion of Mr. Curtis two years ago. It is that the number of members of the Legislative Council should be half the number of the House of Representatives; that as vacancies occur they should be filled up by election by the House of Representatives, and that the election should be by ballot, in order to deprive it as far as possible of anything like a party character; that as the Legislative Council would then be limited, in the event of a prolonged difference of opinion between the two Chambers, to prevent anything like a deadlock, the two Chambers should sit together, and so sitting should decide the difference in question by a majority of votes. Some such system as that would, I think, preserve for us the moderating influence of an Upper Chamber, and secure that Chamber being brought into harmony with the public opinion of the country. It would also, I think, have this advantage, that men who had made a name for themselves in the colony by distinguished ability and high character, or by their services in Parliament, on the Bench, or in any other judicial capacity, would have a better chance of being elected than they have now. No doubt to this, as to every proposal, objections can be taken. I am not at all stating that any resolution has been come to on the subject, but I am anxious that the question should be considered, and considered at a time when there is no excitement in consequence of a conflict between the two branches of the Legislature, and when, therefore, there is probably the best prospect of our solving with success that most difficult problem which meets Colonial statesmen, namely, how best to constitute a second Chamber in a new and progressive country.

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## LAND LAWS.

Gentlemen, it is, as you know, very often asserted for political purposes, that the land of this country is going to pass into a very few hands- that our great grandchildren will all be serfs for the benefit of a few landowners- they will eke out a miserable existence, and so on- you know the old story. I believe that is pure moonshine. As a matter of fact, figures show and have shown, that in New Zealand the ownership of land is more distributed than in almost any country of which we have an account; and in my opinion, the circumstances of the colony rather tend towards the disintegration of large properties than towards their accumulation. I do not think therefore, that is an evil which we have to fear. But the law on the subject of land which we have brought with us to this colony from England is, no doubt, in one respect very mischievous. It is possible under that law for a person to tie up property by what is called entail for a considerable number of years- to prevent its being sold or dealt with in a variety of ways. He may so tie it up in some cases for as long as a hundred years to come, and leave it so that it cannot be sold or dealt with, and therefore cannot be improved or beneficially occupied, as it ought to be. That is an evil. It is an evil to the land of the country, and it does no good whatever to the owner. Now, when this Government find a practical evil, they do not go about the country weeping and wailing about it, but they set to work to find a practical remedy; and having

arrived at the conclusion that the law of entail is an evil, we intend to propose to Parliament the abolition of the law of entail, and to ensure that no land shall be unsaleable except, perhaps, during the minority of the then owner, and that all lands shall be capable of being freely dealt with and used for the best purposes. I think that will be an improvement worth all the declamation we have heard on the subject of land for a considerable time past.

## **OWNERSHIP OF THE RAILWAYS.**

I wish to warn you, gentlemen, against a proposal which may possibly be submitted to the colony before long- something which will be called a comprehensive financial scheme, baited with offers to spend large sums in public works, and involving the sale of our railways. I have reason to believe a proposal of that kind may be made. I hope you will turn a deaf ear to it, for depend upon it such proposals will be framed in the interests, not of the colony, but of the capitalists from whom they will proceed. Our railways, at the present time, are not so valuable as they will be before many years are over.

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It is most unlikely that any capitalist would give us anything like their prospective value. It is most unlikely that they would be worked by them as anything but a commercial speculation; whereas, if they remain in the hands of the colony, they will always be worked, it is true, to return interest on the expenditure, but mainly in the interests of the development of the resources of the colony. That is most likely to be done so long as the railways remain in the hands and under the control of the colonists themselves. I trust, therefore, that if any proposals of the kind I have indicated are made, they will not be entertained.

But there are other proposals with regard to construction of railways which are not open to the same objection. You are, no doubt, aware that the proportion of the loan available for public works has now become exceedingly small. The expenditure, even during the last year, has necessarily been very large- to a very great extent in discharging liabilities which we inherited from the previous Government, let Mr. Macandrew say what he may. The amount left is insufficient to go on with many works which would be of considerable public utility- lines which have been authorised, and, in some cases, commenced. Under these circumstances, it is believed that companies would very probably undertake the completion of certain railways on their own account, if they were assisted by the Government with grants of land to the extent of a certain proportion of the cost of these works. Now, where we find that the proposed lines run through tracts of land which would not be available for settlement unless made accessible by railways, and where companies, if assisted to a moderate extent with grants of land, would make them so available for settlement-where we see little prospect of their being completed out of the present pecuniary resources of the colony-there I think we may consider favourably any proposals which may be made to us for completing railways upon that system. I believe that the land we would have left after the completion of these lines would probably exceed in value that of the whole which we possess there at the present time. It would, of course, be necessary that any scheme of that kind should be surrounded with very careful conditions, framed to secure the active settlement of the land given.

## **HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.**

Of the Bills not passed last year which will be introduced this year, is one for the management of Hospitals and Charitable Aid. This, gentlemen, is a most pressing question at present. It is more pressing now even than it was this time last year; for now in many parts of the colony the Colonial Government is paying the whole cost of maintaining Hospitals, and providing Charitable Aid, while the actual management is in the hands of the local bodies. In other parts of the colony voluntary associations are providing part of the cost.

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It is obvious that such a system as that cannot continue. You may remember that last year I stated that the Government proposed to divide the colony into districts which have a community of interest in this particular subject; that the local governing bodies in those districts- County Councils, Road Boards, or Municipalities - were to provide half the cost of maintaining these institutions; that the Government were to provide the other half; that the local bodies were to elect a board which should manage the expenditure on these objects. Substantially that will be the Bill which will be introduced this year. We shall, by it, have a local body responsible in the district. In every part of the colony there will be, as there is not at the present time, some body responsible for the maintenance of Hospitals, and for providing Charitable Aid in the district. Some alterations will be made in the Bill in the way of giving greater recognition, and assistance to existing voluntary associations which are found in many parts of the colony. And it will also be proposed that, as we contribute half of the expense, the Government should appoint a certain number of the members of the Board.

## **LICENSING REFORM.**

A very important Bill, which last year, I am sorry to say, made little progress, will be introduced without delay; that for regulating the licensing of public houses. I explained last year the principle upon which this measure would be framed, namely, to make the law strict but not unjust to existing license holders; to give local option with regard to new licenses- in other words, not to allow new licenses to be granted in a district unless with the consent of the inhabitants of that district; but not to apply that principle to existing houses; because we do not think it just to deprive holders of licenses who conduct their business well and respectably, and who, by a long course of legislation, have received an implied promise that they will not be disturbed unless for misconduct. I say we do not think it fair to deprive such holders of their licenses without giving them compensation, and we do not see our way to provide that compensation. I received a letter just before coming into the hall, which I have hardly had time to read, in which the writer asks me to state to this meeting what the main points of the Licensing Bill are likely to be. I do not think I can explain those points any further than I have done. The gentleman writing the letter wants to know how we propose to deal with the Local Option Question, and he asks also what probability is there of the Bill being dealt with in Parliament this session, or of any new Licensing Bill being passed. I should be very glad if he could tell me that. It is what I am anxious to know. I cannot give him any more information than I have done.

There is one question which has become an important one since last year, and which will have to be dealt with in this Bill. It is the increase of drinking establishments in some parts of the colony under the guise of Working Men's Clubs. Now, a bona fide Working Men's Club is an institution which I shall do my very best to support. But in some towns in the colony these so-called Working Men's Clubs are started not by working men, but very often by men who have actually been refused or have lost their license. They start what they call a Working Men's Club, provide the most easy and trifling terms of admission, in fact, entirely evade the licensing law, and so carry on a liquor traffic without any control, without any regulations, and without any license whatever. That appears to me, gentlemen, from what I have seen in other parts of the colony, to be one of the most threatening evils at the present moment, and we propose to deal with it. After much consideration, it appears to us that the best way of meeting the difficulty is to provide that all establishments for the sale of liquors, whether they are working men's clubs or gentlemen's clubs, or public-houses, shall take out a license and shall all be placed under police supervision.

### OTHER PROPOSALS.

In the year 1879 the Government introduced a Bill for restricting the influx of Chinese into this colony. The Bill did not pass; and since then, as the number of Chinese in the colony has been diminishing and not increasing, the question did not appear to be a pressing one. The small number of Chinese who are in the colony now I do not think an evil; in fact, they have been found a convenience. But I strongly object to any large infusion of the Chinese element into the population of this colony. I believe they bring with them habits and diseases which, if possible, should be kept out of the colony. We propose, therefore, to reintroduce on an early day of the session, the Bill of 1879, which, I may explain, is almost the same as the existing law in the colony of Queensland, and at the late conference of delegates from the several Australian colonies, held in Sydney, was approved of as a suitable measure, and will be proposed to Parliament in the other colonies. We shall introduce that Bill at an early period of the session, and hope soon to see it passed into law.

Amongst other business for next session, I may mention that the work of consolidating the statutes has been going steadily on, and that Bills will be laid before Parliament for sweeping eighty of the present Acts off the Statute Book. If time permits, other questions of social importance will be dealt with after the disposal of the more urgent ones to which I have referred. There are many questions that call for legislation—the regulation of fisheries, fencing, and a variety of subjects of that kind. I should have liked to speak to you to-night upon other questions, but time will not permit, and I must draw to a conclusion.

### POLITICAL ISSUES.

I have indicated the principal measures which the Government will bring before Parliament. What their fate will be must depend in some measure upon the mode in which members on the Opposition benches think it right to conduct Parliamentary business. We are told now, gentlemen, that there are two distinct political parties in the colony. I hope that is not as great a myth as, last year, the existence of the compact Opposition proved to be, of which we heard so much before the session and saw so little during the session. It is true that on one side of the House a body of gentlemen were seated who, laying aside minor differences of opinion, supported the Government in the work of constitutional reform and in maintaining an economical and efficient administration. To those gentlemen the Government owes a debt of gratitude for their loyal and generous support, and not least for the patience with which they refused to be drawn into wasting the time of the session by replying to long and numerous Opposition speeches. On the other side of the House we saw, a body of gentlemen united, as far as I can see, in nothing but opposition to the Government, having no common political principles, no unity of purpose and action, none of the qualifications which would enable them to discharge the useful constitutional functions of an Opposition party, to render good service to the country, and to earn the respect of the people. I hope for better things during the session now to come. We are told that a gentleman of great influence is forthcoming as the leader of the Opposition. We have recently heard from him a partly new political programme. The planks of the platform on which this Opposition is to stand appear to be— first, the abolition of the Legislative Council and the substitution of a single chamber; second, the abolition of the Queen-appointed Governor and the substitution of an elective Governor; third, the taxation of the English bondholders to supply the necessities of the New Zealand Treasury; and, fourth, the dismissal of all Civil servants whose political opinions do not coincide with those of the Government of the day. And this, gentlemen, forsooth is called Liberalism! I say that it is but a thinly veiled Despotism of a most oppressive and dangerous kind. To this platform the late leader of the Opposition, Mr. Macandrew, proposes to add a couple of planks. They are— reverting to a lavish expenditure on public works, and the issue of Government paper money. I call this national bankruptcy. The Government of Russia has been called a Despotism tempered by assassination. If this political programme is carried out, the Government of New Zealand will be a Despotism tempered by national bankruptcy. The party with which I am associated have not, and do not, intend to put forward any new platform promises. We ask the people of New Zealand to judge us by our actions. We say that during the eighteen months we have held

office we have amended the Constitution of the colony by broadening and deepening the foundations of political power. We have passed some measures and framed others for distributing that power on the fairest practicable basis, and for preventing abuse in its exercise. We have faced a condition of finances than which nothing could be more alarming, and seen a careful reduction of expenditure, and by increasing the public revenue, we have restored the colonial credit. We have stopped the squandering of public money in the Native Department, by which the Europeans were being robbed and the Natives were being demoralised. We have extended to the best of our ability the facilities for settlement upon the land. We have settled, and peaceably settled, many threatening Native difficulties. We have done our best to encourage by all legitimate means the

development of such local industries as afford employment to the labouring population. We leave to others the task of talking Liberalism upon public platforms. We contend that we have fairly earned for ourselves the name of working Liberals and as such we ask the House and the country to continue to us the confidence which we have hither to enjoyed.

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#### IV.

### POLITICAL RETROSPECT AND PROGRAMME FOR GENERAL ELECTION, 1881.

(LEESTON, NOVEMBER 19TH, 1881.)

*[On November 19th, 1881, Mr. Hall delivered the following address to his constituents at the Town Hall, Leeston, prior to going to the country at the General Election of that year. It contains a remarkable record of work accomplished in Parliament, including the passing of measures of Electoral Reform, Licensing, Railway Construction, &c. The speaker stated at some length his views on Taxation, a Second Chamber, Local Government, Land Tenure, Land Settlement, Public Works, and other important questions of policy. He gave what is probably his first public utterance in favour of Women's Franchise. It is worthy of note that, according to the newspaper report, his remarks were received with "laughter and applause." A valuable and interesting feature of the speech is the clear account of the Government's dealing with Te Whiti, and the occupation of Parihaka. The General Election took place on December 9th, 1881, and the Government was returned with a working majority. Finding, however, his health unequal to the strain of the Premiership, Mr. Hall retired on April 21st, 1882, and was succeeded by Sir Frederick Whitaker. In the following month intimation was received that the Queen had been pleased to confer upon him the honour of K.C.M.G.]*

#### PERSONAL.

I REGRET that I have not been able to come to address you sooner. I should have done so, but that urgent public business rendered it impracticable for me to leave Wellington. It might have been to my personal advantage that I should have come sooner, but I prefer the execution of my public duty to a consideration of my own political interests. I am told that during my absence, some of those gentlemen who do not agree with me in my political opinions, have been endeavouring to get up an opposition candidature, which of course they had every right to do. They were simply endeavouring to make hay while the sun shone, while I could not take any part in their proceedings. I am very much obliged to you for the very little encouragement which they received, the result being that that little agricultural operation of making hay has not succeeded.

#### ELECTORAL REFORM.

I will now, gentlemen, glance briefly- it must be but very briefly-at the proceedings of the General Assembly during the last session of Parliament. It was a session remarkable, I think, for two things; for the great amount of time which was taken up by useless speechmaking- for the length and number of the speeches which individual members of the House of Representatives thought themselves justified in inflicting upon the House - and it was remarkable also for the fact that, notwithstanding the great waste of time, some very important measures have received the sanction of the Parliament.

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The first among these measures to which I will allude, are the Bills which were introduced for the purpose of completing the scheme of electoral reform, which scheme has now been carried to completion by the present Government. The Bills connected with this, which were passed during the last session of Parliament, were three in number. The first of these was the Bill for the Regulation of Elections. That Bill does not make any very important changes in the law as it had previously stood, but secures more effectually, probably, than was previously the case, the absolute secrecy of the ballot. I did not myself believe that there was any ground for the apprehension that existed in some quarters that the way in which a man gave his vote could leak out; but at any rate that apprehension, as I say, did exist in many quarters, and therefore it was perfectly right to remove that apprehension. That has been done, and done, I think, effectually. Another alteration made by that Bill is the extension of the hours of polling until 6 o'clock in the evening, which is an alteration perhaps of greater value to electors in towns, than to those who live in the country. But, at any rate, it gives greater facilities to the electors to record their votes than they previously enjoyed. And the third improvement made by the Bill is that all the elections are to take place, all over the colony, on the same day. The object of that was to prevent the exercise of too many votes by one individual, to check the plurality of voting. I think that, from these improvements, the Bill is one that must improve our system of electing members of the House of Representatives.

#### CORRUPT PRACTICES ACT.

The next Bill to which I will allude is that called the Corrupt Practices Act. This is an exceedingly stringent measure, to my mind rather intended to prevent than to clear away corrupt practices; because as far as my experience goes I don't believe that corrupt practices have existed in New Zealand to any appreciable extent. But I venture to think that some persons who are now standing as candidates for the present election will find that Bill to be of an exceedingly stringent character. Any person who is found treating, or committing illegal practices-and it is illegal to provide means for conveying voters to the poll, as well as to give a glass of beer for the purpose of influencing a vote-any person who does that, thoughtlessly perhaps, is liable to a severe penalty. He will be incapable of voting at elections for three years, and will have his name printed on the electoral roll as a person who has been guilty of illegal practices. If we are to have a contest in the Selwyn District we had better look out.

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I cannot help thinking, from what I have seen in other electoral districts, that some gentlemen have already committed

themselves to a very considerable extent, perhaps without their knowing it. One advantage of this measure, and a very important one, as I think, is that it will greatly reduce the cost of elections. The election expenses of candidates, especially in the towns-I mean the legitimate expenses-have grown already so large as to be practically a disqualification for some candidates. But I am bound to say that there is one feature of the Bill of which I don't approve, and that is the prohibition of the use of vehicles for the purpose of bringing electors to the poll, for-at any rate in the country districts-there are many electors who, unless they are thus assisted, will be practically disfranchised. It is a mistake, I think, to stop any of the facilities for voting which had previously existed. However, it is not a feature of the Bill introduced by the Government. I accept it, of course, but I cannot say that I honestly approve of it.

## **REPRESENTATION ACT**

The next Bill I will refer to is that for the re-adjustment of the representation. You will recollect that you were told by some persons that the present Government might talk about this, but that they would never do it. Well, gentlemen, we have done it, and we have done it at a very considerable sacrifice. We have carried a measure for the re-adjustment of the representation, in what we believe to be a sound and proper basis. But we have carried it at the sacrifice of the support of many old friends, who have gone into opposition to us, because the representation of their districts has, by that measure, been diminished. The principle of this Bill is, that the representation should be adjusted to population. We could see no reason why Auckland should not have the same number of members, in proportion to its population, as Otago, and why Canterbury should not have the same number of members, in proportion to its population, as Wellington. That was to apply to Provincial districts; but as between different parts of the same district, we said those people who are living in towns have greater facilities for using their political power; they can meet their members more easily, and therefore we should give to the country districts a larger number of members in proportion to their population. That would put them on an equal footing with the towns. Therefore the principle of this Bill is, to give the country an allowance of 30 per cent as compared with the towns. Another feature of the Bill is, that throughout New Zealand now, every electorate is what is called a single electorate. That is to say, there are not two or three members for every district, but only one member. The object of that is to bring the candidate and those whom he represents, into closer contact.

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If you have several members, sometimes the influence of one will secure the election of another. Where there is only one member, every candidate will rely on his own merits; and by them will stand or fall. I believe that this will bring about a fairer representation of the people than had previously existed.

We did not carry this Bill without very considerable difficulty. We were met by an organised opposition on the part of those members of the House whose districts were injuriously affected by it. They thought themselves justified in starting an organised obstruction which was intended to, and which they thought would, render it impossible for us to press through the Bill. They talked and talked, from four o'clock in the afternoon till twelve o'clock at night, till at last, if the Speaker had not put a stop to it, they would have gone on talking till now, and we should have been sitting there still. Now, there is some excuse for the Nelson members, because they were being deprived of a share of the representation which they had enjoyed for many years; but, though I don't wish to throw stones, I must say that I think that there was no excuse for some of the members from other districts who joined them. Sir George Grey, who had always been preaching the doctrine of representation on the basis of population, could not resist the opportunity for opposing the Government, and joined the Nelson members. I must say that I think that was a most extraordinary and a most unjustifiable proceeding. Gentlemen, the Bill is now passed. We persevered through all difficulties, as I have said, and the Government was determined to be as firm as the Opposition was obstinate. The outcome is that justice is done to Otago and Canterbury, and one or two other districts which have increased in population. I said in the House, as I say now, that when the Northern districts have increased their population relatively in the same proportion as other districts have, as I believe and hope they will, I shall be quite as willing to do justice to them as to Otago and Canterbury. Our opponents found very great difficulty in condemning the Bill, but, it being their business to condemn the Government, they said that we stole this, and other Bills of reform from our predecessors. Now, it is quite true that our predecessors did talk a great deal, and set up a great many theories about reform. They had a splendid opportunity for carrying out those theories into practice, but they entirely threw their opportunity away. They had a large majority in the House, and could have carried whatever they liked; and had they done so, the last election might have been held under a fairer basis of population than it was. But, as I say, they threw away their opportunity. We did not copy them in that. We took up this question of electoral reform, not with the intention of talking about it, but with the intention of working it out; and I do claim for this Government that we have worked it out during the three sessions that we have held office.

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We have not been content with talking about it, but we have carried measures of liberal reform, which have put the representation on a very satisfactory footing. Besides this, the Bills we have passed, as you will find if you will look at them, are not stolen from our predecessors; they are of a different construction, and, I venture to say, they are more practical and efficient. And we now possess a Constitution as liberal as-if not more liberal than-that of any other British Colony.

## **THE LICENSING BILL.**

A measure, which occupied a great deal of the time and attention of Parliament, is the Bill for the Regulation of Public houses the Licensing Bill. This has swept away a great mass of complicated and contradictory legislation, which has been growing up for many years in the various Provincial districts, and provides one law for the whole of the colony. This Bill occupied very much of the time of the House, and some gentlemen thought themselves justified in sneering at the spending of so much time on it. I differ from them, however, altogether, for I think that a measure dealing so largely with the social

condition of the people of New Zealand was worthy of the whole of the time it occupied. For, once get one law for the colony, even if it is found not to work satisfactorily, there will be no difficulty in the General Assembly amending it. But this could not be done with the same facility so long as a different law existed in the different parts of the colony. The main features of this Bill are, that in the case of new licenses, it gives the people in the district an opportunity of voting for or against the issuing of a new license; and it makes the licensing body elective, instead of being nominated by the Governor, as it had previously been.

### **THE RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION BILL.**

You will recollect that at our last meeting I stated it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill which would provide for the granting of land to companies prepared to introduce new lines of railway. In spite of considerable opposition, this Bill has been introduced and passed into law. It provides that, to companies forming railway lines approved of by Government, grants of land may be made to the extent of 30 per cent of the cost; but these grants must not be in one continuous block, but in sections alternating with others reserved for the public. We believe that when that can be done the sections remaining to the Government will, by reason of the railway, be so largely enhanced in value, as to be worth as much as-if not more than-the whole of the land was worth before. The Bill provides that the landholders along the line, if they think fit to give a guarantee, may do so by raising a rate; but that, we think, should be optional. The Bill also enables the Government to take over the line at a valuation. Such measures have been found useful in other countries, and in New Zealand already for the construction of two lines; and its usefulness, I trust, will be extended. It has been stated that with regard to any railways, the construction of which is really desirable, the Government should make them. That may be very true under some circumstances, but in the case of a colony with so large a debt as New Zealand, it is exceedingly desirable that we should lose no opportunity of getting these works done for us without increasing our debt. If we can, so much the better, I say. And there is this also to be said: If we were to leave the railways until they could be constructed by the Government, many districts which, I believe, will get them soon under this system, would have to wait for a very long time.

### **GOVERNMENT LIABILITY.**

A Bill, an improvement in the law, was carried into effect, which, I believe, is a valuable one. That is, a provision to enable any person who is injured by the Government or its officers, in the carrying out of works which Government carries on for a profit, to bring an action against the Government as he could against an ordinary company. While Government confines itself to its ordinary work, that is, the protection of life and property, it may be desirable that its officers should have special immunities; but when a Government engages in the construction of railways, thus taking the place of private individuals, I think it should be subject to the same liabilities as private individuals, and should, not be able to prevent injured persons going into a court of law, and seeking for redress.

### **THE RABBIT BILL.**

Another subject, which may seem a small one to refer to on an occasion of this kind, is the subject of the steps taken for or abating the rabbit pest. I believe it is of grave importance to the material prosperity of this colony. The effects, as seen in some districts in the southern parts of this Island, and in some parts of the North Island too, are very serious. Not only in pastoral, but also in farming districts, the pest is becoming a very aggravated one from the absence of legislation to compel everyone to join in stamping it out. Last session we passed a Bill which will do that, and which also provides for the rabbits being destroyed upon Crown lands. Previously, although private individuals might, and many did, join for the purpose of exterminating this pest from their own lands, no means existed for exterminating them from the Crown lands. Now, the provisions of the Bill will apply to the Crown lands. I noticed that in a speech lately made by Mr. Ormond, he sneered at this being made the subject of legislation in Wellington. If Mr. Ormond's vision was not generally limited to Hawke's Bay, he would know that it was the fact of the thing being left to local management that got us into the position in which we now are. It was local management that introduced the pest, that allowed it to grow, and that failed to provide legislative authority for dealing with it. And when, in the session before last, an Act was passed in the General Assembly for dealing with it, but the carrying of it out was left to local authorities, that, also, entirely broke down.

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This case proves, perhaps, more conclusively than any other, that there are cases in which a general control is urgently required. I am not a Centralist. I agree that strictly local matters should be dealt with by local bodies; but such a pest as this, which is not confined to one or two districts, but affects the whole of the colony, I deny to be a local question, and one which the colony at large should not deal with.

### **PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND TAXATION.**

As I suppose you know, Government has been engaged in reducing the public expenditure of this colony. It has succeeded so far, that during the last session we were able to present Estimates smaller by £300,000, than were the Estimates of the previous year. By this means, gentlemen, by the improved returns from the railways, by an amendment in the legacy duties, by stopping a hole in the Property Tax, by means of which a large amount invested in property in the colony escaped taxation, we were able to propose a reduction of the taxation. The reduction was, in the first instance, applied to the Customs duties, on a large number of articles used for local manufactures, and on clothing; but we thought it only fair to give a share of the reduction to the payers of the Property Tax, which has been reduced to the extent of one farthing in the £. I think you will consider, with me, that generally welcome as all reductions are, a reduction is doubly welcome when it is obtained by economy in expenditure.

While on this subject, I will refer to one or two proposals lately made for the alteration of the Property Tax. Some persons advocate our returning to the Land Tax. If you will notice who they are, you will find generally, that they are those

who, under a Land Tax, would escape taxation to a very large extent. Let us see what the facts of the case are. The taxable property for the last year has been, real property, that is land, 36 millions; personal property, that is, merchandise, stock, shares, and so on, 25 millions. And besides, there is the addition of foreign capital, which will now be brought under the Property Tax. Why should this large amount of 25 millions and the added foreign capital escape? If land is to be taxed, can you tell me why merchandise, Government stock, and the rest, should escape? I am bound to say that I can see no good reason for it. We are told: " Yes ; but you should not tax a man's stock-in-trade." But is not the land a farmer's stock-in-trade? I say it is, just as much as merchandise is of an ordinary tradesman; and that farmers have to work just as hard for their living as other tradesmen have, I think you will agree with me.

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The question was fully considered, and the issues were put to the country at the last election; and to my mind the verdict was most decided, that no reason existed why personal property should not pay as well as the land.

Another suggestion is that we should resort to an Income Tax. At first sight this appears equitable enough, but if you go into the subject a little you will find that there are great practical difficulties and objections to an Income Tax. For instance, in the case of men working the land in a new country, it is very difficult for them to say what their bona fide incomes are. A man knows what his return is, but his expenditure in realising is so mixed up with the expenditure for improving his land, that it is extremely difficult for him to separate them. Indeed, I think it would not be very difficult for some of us to show that at the end of the year we had no income at all. At any rate, that would be shown by the most improving farmers, who spend all their money on their farms. With respect to manufacturers and tradesmen, the same remarks do not apply. But one could only learn from them what their income was by searching all through their books, and examining the whole of their transactions for the year. (A voice: "Lawyers and others.") I will come to the lawyers presently. The Income Tax would come to be a tax upon the conscience. The man with a tender conscience would pay more than a man with an elastic or convenient conscience. You must either take his statement, or resort to a process of a most inquisitorial kind. Now, to come to professional incomes. It is quite true that they escape; but I don't think that the amount to be raised from them would be sufficient to make it worth one's while to introduce an Income Tax. And besides, the men who live by the exercise of their brains pay indirectly, through the Customs, more than the people who have land do. We have an assertion made, that the Property Tax favours the wealthy class. We see it so stated in the speeches of candidates. Here again, what are the facts? Of the 104 millions, which the real and personal property of New Zealand is estimated to be worth, how much do you think escapes, owing to the £500 exemption. And then let us see which class is favoured. Why, of the 104 millions, 43 millions are entirely exempt, and the tax is paid only on 61 millions. If any class is favoured, it is not the wealthy class. I believe the Property Tax is the fairest system in principle, and the most convenient in practice that we could adopt for taxation. I now come to another suggestion, a proposal which is put forward as a panacea for all our ills, which is to reduce taxation, and at the same time to leave us a full treasury. This is what is called the Progressive Land Tax. Now what would a moderately Increased Land Tax upon large properties; added to the present taxation, produce?

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The total value of all the freehold property in New Zealand is 69 millions, and that of the properties which are over £20,000 in value comes to 9 millions. Supposing that freehold property produces a return of 6 per cent, which is quite as much as it will, this gives an annual income of £540,000. If you put on a tax of 10 per cent, which, in addition to the present tax would be pretty stiff, that would only produce £54,000. The fact is, the amount of property which is held in large estates in New Zealand is much smaller than it is generally supposed to be. What it is, I have told you from actual figures.

But there may be other reasons for this proposal. I say distinctly that if this proposal is merely an attempt to seize upon what we have formerly sold, then it is an unjust proposal. The land was sold by the Government on certain terms, and the presumption was that it would have to bear its fair share of the public burdens; but not any special burden for the purpose of taking it back again. That is an injustice which the people of this colony will not, I am quite sure, listen to for a moment. Another reason given is that it is necessary to burst up the large estates for settlement. If it were really the case that land was unavailable for settlement on reasonable terms, or if it should ever become the case, it might then well be the duty of the Legislature to consider how that land could be secured for the people, consistently with good faith and justice to the holders. But, are there no Crown lands open for settlement? If any of you will invest sixpence in the "Crown Lands Guide," you will find there a full description of the land which is open for sale. You will find that 8 million acres of land are open for sale now, on all kinds of terms. Some are to be sold by auction, some on deferred payments; some are village settlements; some agricultural settlements; and some on such conditions as almost amounted to no payment at all. (A voice: " That's the lot. ") We don't give the best land for that you have to take what you can get. In addition to that, as I stated at our last meeting, there will shortly be three million acres available for settlement in the Province of Otago. I stated the terms, they have been advertised, and you will see them in the papers. In Canterbury also, in the month of May, 1882, it will be open to the Government to sell part of the existing runs upon what is called the pastoral deferred payment system. As to the existence of large private estates, I don't think this is a country where such a thing is likely to obtain. It has been shown that the land in New Zealand is more distributed than in any other country, or, at any rate, in most countries of the world. I believe it is to the interest of those who hold the large estates to burst them up themselves, and I think they show every indication of an intention to do so. We had, some little time ago, two visitors to the colony, who travelled over all parts of it in order to report at Home what were the facilities for settlement here. Those visitors, Messrs. Grant and Foster, who got to know what land was available better than most of us, have reported that three-fourths of New Zealand was open for sale.

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Therefore, I say that it is not a fact that there is no land available for settlement. What is wanted to assist the progress of the country, irrespective of other resources, is land, capital, and labour. We have land in abundance, and labour is not scarce, but what we want is capitalists-not men to lend money, but to invest in the land, so as to increase our exports and our population.

And I suggest to you whether it may not deter investors of that kind if anything like violent legislation is made to deal with the land. If we impose violent and excessive taxation on it the injustice of itself would seriously check the progress of the colony.

## **THE LAND LAWS.**

You may remember that last year I called your attention to features in the English laws relating to the tenure and transfer of land, which had worked mischief in the Old Country, and would do so here, especially the law of entail, by which the power is given to a man of locking up lands by his will, in some cases for a hundred years, so that it could not be sold by the proprietor, it could not be mortgaged, and, therefore, that it could not be improved, for that really makes the land comparatively un-improvable. That law has done much mischief in the Old Country, and would do so here. It has not been acted upon to any extent, but it has begun to be acted upon. I stated to you before that the Government would endeavour to abolish the law of entail. A Bill was introduced, and the Legislative Council considered the matter, but they decided to recommend the postponement of the measure. I am sorry for that, but in the case of so large and so important a change in the law, I don't know that it is a matter for very much surprise. I think that the Bill should be introduced again next session, and that it should be persevered with till it becomes the law of the land.

Another alteration proposed last session was a proposal for taking away the special privilege of the landlord of distraining rent. He has special facility, above other creditors, by being able himself to go in and distraining for rent. Government could see no reason for his being favoured above other creditors, and they introduced a Bill for abolishing distress for rent. That Bill was not carried, but it will be introduced again next session, and persevered with.

A third improvement, which, I think, is required, is an alteration in the law relating to fixtures. At present, if a tenant erects improvements in the shape of buildings, when he leaves they are the property of the landlord. That is a system which has existed so long that it does not strike us as extraordinary; but it tends to prevent improvements being made, and I think, to, it is unjust. Of course, landlords and tenants may make any agreements they like; but I think that if a tenant wishes any improvements, unless the landlord paid him compensation for them, he should be allowed to remove them, of course, paying the landlord for any damage he may commit in so removing them.

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A Bill on this subject was introduced last session, and was not carried; but it will be introduced again, and, I have no doubt, will be passed. When these improvements have been in operation some little time, we shall wonder how we could have endured the state of things from which we have been emancipated.

## **THE FUTURE.**

Now with respect to the future. Your Chairman has stated that I should not only give an account for the past, but that I should also refer to the future. On former occasions I was able to state to you the specific proposals which the Government intended to lay before Parliament. On the present occasion, I think you will agree with me that, for obvious reasons, I cannot do that. I state generally the principal improvements which I think desirable, and the general principles which should govern the affairs of this colony. The policy of a Government of a new country should be distinctly one of progress; progress in the adaptation of political institutions to the rapidly developing state of the colony; in the development of its resources, because in new countries the Government should assist in colonising, by affording every facility for settlement on the land, and for the development of the country's resources. That is a general principle which should always govern the policy of the Government of a colony. With regard to the political institutions, I contend that they are now placed on a very liberal footing.

## **THE ELECTORAL LAWS**

It has been suggested, in some speeches delivered during this election, that no man should have more than one vote. I dissent altogether from that. I say that in the election of a tax-imposing body, property should have a reasonable amount of representation. If not, we should very soon arrive at a state of things in which one class would impose taxation, and another class would pay it. Now, what are the privileges of property at the present time? In addition to residence, the possession of a £25 freehold gives a vote. That cannot be said to be a privilege given to rich men. I say that it is given to an industrious permanent settler who has a stake in the colony, and not given to one who may be here to-day and gone to-morrow. I think it is a reasonable concession to men who occupy that position. I say it is only reasonable that in some cases and it does not occur in many cases- a man should have an additional vote for his property. The most absurd statements have been made as to the effect of this. It has been said that property will swamp the residential voters.

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I have taken the trouble to look over the roll for this district, and mark those who are not residents; and who therefore vote in respect of property qualification. The number on the printed roll is 746, and how many, do you think, of those are not resident in the district? Roughly running through the roll, I find that there are only 51 non-resident electors. Is it not absurd to talk of the residential electors being swamped by these? It is not one-tenth of the electors who are not actually resident. It has been contended that many men would be able to give, and would give as many as ten votes. Now, I don't believe that in the present election there will be a hundred men who will give as many as four votes. You will find that many will give two votes, and a good many, three. For my own part, I think it not unreasonable to limit the number. If the proposal to limit the number had not been so very much bungled by those who brought it forward last session, that would have been agreed to.

There is one other remark that I wish to make on this subject, and that is, that there appears to me to be very little danger of property exercising undue influence, if the property holders who live in other parts of the colony are as apathetic as those who live in this part are. But there are two improvements which, I think, may still be made. One defect in the present system, which is felt chiefly in towns, is, that leaseholders who may really have a larger interest in a piece of land than the

freeholder himself has, have no right to a vote. In some parts of towns a majority of the occupiers are leaseholders. They occupy a piece of land with, we will say, a ground rent of £50 a year. Their improvements have made it worth £500; yet they have no vote, while the freeholder, with only a tenth part of the interest in the land, has a vote. I was told that in one of the principal streets of Christchurch, the only man in the whole street who had a vote was a caretaker. All the leaseholders were non-residents, and the only resident was a caretaker. Now, I think that is not a proper state of things.

Another alteration which I think should be effected, though I am not very sanguine that it will be- and in saying this I speak for myself, and not for my colleagues- I cannot see why, in many cases, a woman should not have a vote. I am not at all joking. I say that, where a woman is supporting herself, and very often her children, and paying rates and taxes, I cannot see any good reason why she should not have the same voice in the government of the country as a man has. Women have quite as much brains, as, and, in many cases, more than, men have, and they have quite as much interest in the colony. And, if you wanted to find out which candidate was a humbug, and which was not, a woman would be able to tell you, just as quickly as a man would.

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## **THE UPPER HOUSE.**

You will remember that last year I drew your attention to the constitution of the second Chamber of the Legislature, and I told you why I thought a second Chamber was desirable and necessary for the working of the national legislation. Before I gave you my reasons for thinking the present mode of appointment not satisfactory, I suggested another mode, but I did not promise that a Bill would be introduced, as has been stated; I expressed a hope that the subject would be discussed, and that has been done. I am still of opinion that a second Chamber is desirable. I will not go over the arguments again, but I will merely say that in my opinion the second Chamber should represent the permanent and settled opinions of the colony, and in that capacity should act as a check upon the temporary impulses of the more popular Chamber, that it should act as a fly-wheel to the working of the machinery of the constitution. That is still my opinion, and I think it desirable that there should be a change. I think that the second Chamber should be elected. I noticed that my friend, Mr. Rennie, said last Saturday that he was glad to find I had been converted. I think it only justice to myself, and I think you will agree with me, that I said last year that it was desirable the second Chamber should be elected by a system of indirect election. The discussion which has taken place has altered my opinion as to the mode of election. I believe it would be better that the Council should be elected by the people at large, upon a moderate property qualification, so as not to be a mere duplicate of the House of Representatives. It should not be elected on a system of separate electorates, but upon Hare's system, under which the whole number of the candidates are submitted to the whole of the constituencies. This would put into the Legislative Council men not to be influenced by local views and opinions, but who take a more comprehensive view of their duties than men elected for small constituencies. It would also give us those men who were known throughout the colony by their character, and distinguished for long-continued public services. And in this matter I would give a concession which, I think, would be appreciated in the North Island. I would give an equal number of members to both Islands, for, I may say, the people of the North Island are afraid of great injustice being done to them. I think their fear is unfounded; but it would be satisfactory to them that there should be an equal number of members from each island. That is the system by which I think we should secure a Legislative Council thoroughly calculated to discharge the duties which a second Chamber should discharge; and I sincerely hope that the Parliament which is now about to be elected will not separate until a Bill of that kind is passed.

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## **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

And now with regard to the House of Representatives itself. No one holds more clearly than I do, the necessity for, and no one appreciates more highly than I do, the privilege of liberty of speech in the Legislative Assembly. Without it, anything like discussion would, of course, be a mere mockery. But, by that liberty of speech I mean that freedom which is necessary for the arguments on the one side and on the other being fairly stated. Now, in the British House of Commons, and in the representative bodies of British Colonies, there has generally, up to the present time, been practically no- or, hardly any- limitation to this liberty of speech. In other countries, there has been; but the restrictions elsewhere obtaining have hitherto been found unnecessary in British countries, owing to the existence of a traditional spirit of fair play and moderation in the use, not the abuse, of that privilege of freedom of speech. There has been an unwritten law, which has restrained men, and no positive law was necessary. But unfortunately here, as elsewhere, a change seems to have come over the spirit of the dream, and individuals have thought themselves justified in occupying the time of Parliament to an unreasonable and unjustifiable extent. So much has that been the case, so much has the time of the House been taken up by the number and length of the speeches made by these men, as to render the careful consideration of the measures brought before the House almost impossible; and the evil has grown, is growing, and must be put an end to. The time, in my opinion, has arrived in this colony, as it appears to have done in the minds of many men of distinction in the Mother Country, when a limit must be put to the time occupied by members in speaking. Still more must a stop be put to the measures now being adopted by the minority for the purpose of coercing the majority. You will remember that the Bill for the re-distribution of representation was obstructed for weeks; and two-thirds of that time was absolutely wasted. The forms of the House allow a motion for adjournment to be made at any time, and upon that motion for adjournment a member may speak on any subject for any length of time. So much advantage was taken of this, that for three or four days we were actually not allowed to come to the consideration of the Bill at all. I ask you, is that a state of things that ought to be allowed? I say clearly that the time has come when that state of things should be put an end to. It is quite true that the Speaker extricated us by a very bold exercise of his authority; but I don't think we ought to have to depend upon that again. The first duty of the new Parliament should be to correct the forms of the House so as to put down the talking against time, the excessive length of speeches. If nothing is done, business will be obstructed, and the whole Constitution will fall into contempt. You may have noticed that in England men like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright

have declared that the time has come when this subject should be dealt with in the House of Commons; and I think the time has come for us to do so, without any undue interference with the liberty of discussion.

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The next subject I will come to is that of local government. When a general election comes round, it is exceedingly desirable for a political party to have a good cry to go to the country with. Now, the gentlemen who are in opposition to the Government were rather at a loss for a good cry. They could not say that we had not passed liberal measures, and they could not find fault with our administration. I really felt for them very much. They cast about, however, for a cry, and determined to take up the cry of local government. They pretended that the colony wanted local government—that that was the universal wish of the country. They talked a good deal about it, but did not submit any proposition, and, so far as could be gathered, no two of them agreed. We had, from Mr. Ormond, a long speech, the gist of which appeared to be the re-institution of something like Provincial Government, adapted to the circumstances of Hawke's Bay. Mr. Macandrew proposed, practically, that we should make a separate Province of each island. The functions and revenues of the General Government were to be very limited, and the rest was to be handed over to these Provinces. The functions of these Provinces, however, were not defined, except in an exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory manner. Now, I say that would not be local government. Surely the south part of this island, supposing the seat of Government of the Middle Island to be placed in Canterbury—surely, I submit, the southern part would not be content to have its local affairs managed in Christchurch. Nor should we be content to have ours managed in Dunedin. I say that would not be local government.

Well, Sir George Grey brought in a Bill embodying his views. I have it here, but it is too long to read. He calls it a Bill for Local Government; I call it local government with a vengeance. By it, to the best of my memory, any district having 25,000 souls, was to have an independent local government. Why, we should have had twenty such districts. Each district was to have a Council, and a President, occupying the position, I suppose, of the former Superintendents. These Councils were to have the fullest powers of legislation, except upon certain subjects. They were even to have the power of abolishing the form of local government given to them in this Bill, and to substitute any other they liked for it. Just imagine what might have been the result. You might have had established the most autocratic form of government that any man could dream of. I have not time to go through the whole of the Bill, but I may tell you that they had power to establish tribunals wherein to try all except capital offences. We should have therefore had an infinite variety of criminal procedure. They were even to have control of the volunteers, and we should thus have had twenty different standing armies, As for finance, they were to have the leavings of the General Assembly— that is to say, they were to have anything that the General Assembly did not appropriate. (A Voice: "That wouldn't be much.")

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They were to have the endowments of waste lands, with power to lease these, which I shall come to presently. That was Sir George Grey's plan, which was to be received with enthusiasm, but which was, in point of fact, and, as I think, deservedly, received with ridicule.

Both these systems went on the principle of cutting up New Zealand into a series of petty States. The objections to that are so well stated in a despatch written some time ago by Lord Carnarvon, then Governor of the Dominion of Canada, that I will read it. He states as follows :-" A Legislature, selected from an extended area, and representing a diversity of interests, is likely to deal more comprehensively with large questions, more impartially with small questions, and more conclusively with both, than is possible when controversies are carried on and decided upon in the comparatively narrow circle in which they arise. Questions of purely local interest will be more carefully and dispassionately considered when disengaged from the larger politics of the country, and, at the same time, will be more sagaciously considered by persons who have had this larger political education. The interest of every Province of British North America will be more advanced by enabling the wealth, credit, and intelligence of the whole to be brought to bear on every part, than by encouraging each in the contracted policy of taking care of itself, possibly at the expense of its neighbour." These are words of wisdom which, I think, we should bear in mind when discussing this question, and when proposals are made to cut the colony up into a series of petty States.

I don't assert that no improvement is required in the present system of local government. In so far as the towns are concerned, I think it is admitted that satisfactory provision exists. Last session a Bill was passed providing for small centres of population, a simpler and more economical system than had previously existed for rural districts that have County Councils and Road Boards. I have not time to go into their respective functions, but, as you know, generally the Road Boards are for local works, and the County Councils are over larger areas, besides which they have the administration of what I may call questions of rural municipal police. Some parts of the colony are found to prefer one, and some another of these. The country near Auckland disapproves of the Counties, and in other parts of the colony the Road Boards have been abolished, and the people only desire Counties. I think our present system should be made more elastic, so that those who desire only Road Boards should be able to place the County system on the shelf; and that, on the other hand, where the people desire that the Road Boards should merge into the Counties, they should have every facility for doing that. There should also, I think, be greater facility than there is for Road Boards uniting.

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In this way, the present system would be the most satisfactory for the colony. I think also, that many of the powers now exercised by the Government in Wellington, as the successors of the Superintendents, may fairly be delegated to local bodies. That is the way in which I should deal with the powers of the local bodies.

The second point connected with this subject is the want of money. This is especially the case where great works are required. There are many parts of the colony in which the land is covered with bush, where the receipts from the Land Fund are small, and the expenditure is great; where practically the Road Boards are brought to a standstill. The Government proposed to

deal with that difficulty in this way: In those districts where a large amount of Crown Land and of Native Land exists, the settlers have to expend money on the making of roads which improve the Crown Lands and the Native Lands without being able to raise one sixpence from those lands. We brought in a Bill for rating the Crown Lands and the Native Lands. I am sorry to say that we were not able to pass it into law; but I think the principle is a sound one, that where land is thus benefited the owners should pay for the benefit in the shape of rates. We proposed further assistance in the case of a distinctly main road. If the district was willing to rate itself so as to repay, in a reasonable time, one-fourth of the cost of a Government main road, that fourth would be advanced to the district, and the Government itself would pay the other three-fourths. And in the case of district roads, the Government proposed to lend money at a reasonable rate of interest, to be repaid by instalments extending over thirteen years. That Bill, I hope, will be yet carried, and I think it will meet the reasonable wants of local bodies.

## **PUBLIC WORKS.**

Now, on the subject of public works. The Government has been charged, by some inconsiderate persons, with doing injury to the colony by stopping the public works. That we have put a check on the expenditure on public works, I admit. We did so, for one reason, because we could not help it. We came into office with only a balance of the loan left, and unable to borrow more until the end of next year. Unless we wished to land the colony in a serious financial difficulty, it was our duty to check expenditure. It is all nonsense for people to blame us for it. But have we really stopped public works? The expenditure during the last nine months of 1879-80 was £1,750,000; and for the twelve months ending in March last it was £1,958,000. It is a mis-statement to say that we have stopped public works. We have had the unpleasant task of making our accounts balance; and we shall continue to have to do so. It will be the duty of the Government to take stock of our position, and to ascertain what further public works are necessary or desirable to be undertaken for the development of the resources of this colony; also, what we can further undertake without adding seriously to the burden of the colony, and to come to the House with a scheme showing what is necessary, and how the money is to be expended.

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It would be premature, at the present time, to indicate even generally in what direction this expenditure should take place; but I think the two prominent features should be the continuation of main trunk lines of railway, and the construction of such works as will open up land for settlement. These should be the two prominent matters for the next Parliament. I believe this colony can afford to use its credit still further, for I believe the position of the colony has vastly improved during the last two years. The amount of Savings Bank deposits, one great test of the prosperity of the people, is very satisfactory. The balance of deposits over withdrawals is very considerable. The balance of immigration over emigration, in spite of all the fuss which has been made about it, is largely in our favour; and altogether we are in a very much more satisfactory position than we were at the last general election.

## **CROWN LANDS SETTLEMENTS.**

A few words, now, upon the subject of the Crown Lands Settlements. Some candidates announce to you, as if it was a great discovery on their part, that every facility should be given for the settlement of the people on the Crown Lands. But that is a matter on which no difference of opinion exists. I believe it is to the interest of every individual in the colony that the Crown Lands should be disposed of as rapidly as is compatible with their occupation. I challenge enquiry into what has been done by the present Government, and say that no Government has been more liberal in placing land in the market, or has made the facilities for acquiring land more widely known, by publishing the several conditions upon which Crown lands are open, some for cash, and some for terms which are suited to almost every class of settler. As I stated last year, lands are falling in, in the neighbouring district of Otago, and will be open for sale in the manner stated in the advertisement to which I have already alluded. Among the variety of proposals which have been put forward at the present elections, there is one for stopping the sale of Crown Lands. The theory has been broached, that the cultivators of the land should not be freeholders, but should be tenants of the Government. Some gentlemen are very fond of airing new theories, but if they studied them a little more, I venture to think that they would not be so ready to do so. They allege that by this measure we should be greatly relieved from taxation, and that the land would be so largely increased in value that a very large revenue would be derived from it. I am not quite so sanguine as these gentlemen are as to the increase in the value of the land. But what would be the effect on the colony itself? What interest in the land would the tenant have when he knew that his farm would be put up to auction at the end of twenty years?

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It cannot be to his interest to increase the rental of the land; he would rather devote his energies to getting out of the land as much as he could, and not to improving it. Take the case of another man, who knows that every improvement on the land will remain the property of himself or of his children. Where you have two men, one a tenant, and the other a freeholder, at the expiration of ten or fourteen years the freeholder's farm will be much more improved than that of the tenant. If you had a system under which the cultivators of the soil were merely Crown Tenants, it would be, I believe, exceedingly injurious to the country. Besides which, I don't think such a system could possibly last. What most of us came here for was to have land for ourselves, and to transmit to our children. If you had any large proportion of the electors who were mere tenants of the Crown, there would be a perpetual agitation among them until they could put themselves into the position of freeholders. I should therefore oppose any system like that.

## **THE NATIVE QUESTION.**

Now a few words upon the Native Question. I think you will agree with me that, speaking generally, the position of the Native Question has, during the last two years, undergone a great improvement. I need not repeat what I have shown you

before- the extent to which the Native Office has been cleansed and purified, and the manner in which an end has been put to the squandering of public money, the expenditure having been reduced from £38,000 a year to £15,000 a year. The contingencies also, that portion of the expenditure which escapes the control of Parliament, and therefore of the electors, have been reduced from £14,000 a year to the sum of £4,000 a year, and I believe the Natives are all the better for it, for they cease to rely upon Government gifts, and are taught to rely on their own industry. The system adopted by the Government with the Natives who were estranged from us in the King country, of letting them alone, has had the most satisfactory results. The result has been that the so-called Maori King, Tawhiao, came in and laid his arms down of his own accord at the feet of the Magistrate, and expressed his desire, and the desire of his people, to live at peace with the Europeans, and he is now engaged in making arrangements for a meeting which is to be a general settlement with the European settlers. That, I think, is a cause for very great congratulation in the matter of Native affairs.

### **THE PARIHAKA AFFAIR.**

But there is one portion of the question which is not yet in a satisfactory position, and which is, at the present time, absorbing a large share of the attention of the colony, and that is the position of affairs on the West Coast of the North Island. Many persons holding prominent positions have recognised the fact that this should not be made a party question, and I quite appreciate the manner in which they have dealt with it.

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But there are some who have no scruples in using it for party purposes. A party is, perhaps, justified in saying that the party opposed to them have done everything they ought not to have done, and have left undone everything that they ought to have done. That is fair enough. But what those opposed to us do is not fair. They say that we have done what we have not done, and have left undone what we have done. That is the action which the gentlemen who have opposed us have taken. They have put forth the most unblushing statements which it is possible to conceive against the Government. As these misrepresentations have been put forward, I will trouble you with a few facts. I will go back to the time when the present Government took office. We found that a portion of the confiscated land had been advertised for sale, that the surveyors had been put on to it, and that they had been turned off by the Natives, so that everything was at a standstill.

Our first step was to ascertain what were really the grievances which the Maoris had to complain of; and for this purpose we appointed a Commission, consisting of the best men we could find, to get to the bottom of them. These gentlemen did their work, and they presented a report, which, on all hands, is admitted to be a thorough and an excellent report. They stated that the grievances consisted of promises having been made to the Maoris which had not been fulfilled. They stated what remedies should be applied, and pointed out what land, after the fulfilment of the promises, would be available for settlement. The Government accepted their report, and lost no time in carrying it out in a liberal spirit. We appointed Commissioners, and when one left we appointed the other, Sir William Fox, to work it out; and he has had full powers ever since.

But how were these liberal overtures of the Government met by Te Whiti ? In the first place I would state, in answer to those persons who allege that we are acting illegally, that Te Whiti had refused an offer made to him by Sir George Grey, that the whole matter should go before the Supreme Court, the Government themselves finding the necessary funds. Te Whiti and his followers refused to recognise the Commission in any kind of way whatever. After the report was received, we sent Mr. Parris to explain what it was, and how the Government was prepared to deal with it. But Te Whiti refused positively to allow Mr. Parris to speak. Having understood that he always said he wished to see the Governor, we recommended the Governor to see him; but this infatuated person refused that invitation. Lastly, the Native Minister, Mr. Rolleston, went to him with a view to ask what were the grievances, and how they could be settled. But again he refused, and his reply was;

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"With regard to the laws of the Government, I have entirely forgotten them; they have no place in my mind," thus entirely ignoring the Government of the colony. That is the position which this man unfortunately took up. It has been stated that the recommendations of the Commissioners have not been laid before the Maoris, but I state on authority that every portion has been translated and read over to Te Whiti himself. I have it from the lips of the gentleman who read it. Can it, after that, be said that it is the fault of the Government that no peaceful solution, of the difficulty has been arrived at? What more could have been done except to say to Te Whiti: "We will allow you to make the laws, and we will obey them?"

It has been said that he always worked for peace. It is true that he always talked of peace, and that he did not exhort his followers to resist the Government when the Government force was more powerful than his own. But it has been well expressed by himself what his policy is when he used the expression: "When the tide is in, you do not gather pipis, but when the tide is out, you do gather pipis." The explanation of this is, that when the soldiers are here, you do not resist the Government; but when they are not, then you do. The Government, relying upon his peaceable representation, released the prisoners, and reduced the Armed Constabulary. He then changed his tone, and on September 7th he used words which I have not here, but which were to the following effect: "If the Government force come with guns, you must oppose them with guns. If they strike you, you must strike them; and if they take prisoners, you must take prisoners too," and so on. There is no question about that, showing that at that time he believed and he was perfectly right- that his strength was greater than ours; and he advised his people to resist the Government. Acting upon that advice, the Natives began erecting fences upon land which they were distinctly told was not set apart for them. Any part of the land for which they had any attachment had been reserved for them, and the rest had been laid out and sold. But the Natives disregarded that warning, and defied the Government officers. At that time they went in such numbers, and adopted such an attitude, that bloodshed was only avoided by our submitting to whatever they thought fit to do. Colonel Roberts was turned back on a Government road, and they stripped the dray's of the Armed Constabulary, and sent them home empty. They turned the settlers off the land which had been purchased from Government, and destroyed their fences; and all this was done, not by men belonging to that part of the colony, who might pretend to claim the land, but by men who came from other parts to the camp of Parihaka. And you will remember that for two years Te Whiti had sheltered a man named Hiroki, who was charged with murder. And this is called

peace. I maintain that Te Whiti was peaceful only so long as he felt himself

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unable to be otherwise, and that he was peaceful only so long as the standing army was kept up, the cost of which was a grievous burden to the colony. Did the Government show themselves greedy to resume the land? Nothing of the kind. We gave him a solemn warning, under the hand of the Queen's representative, that the time must come when the offers would cease to be open; that if he would come in, we would consider most liberally any claims he might put forward, but that if he still resisted the authority of the law, the offers of the Government must be considered at an end.

And now, just one word as to what those offers were. You are made to believe that the Natives were very badly off. The Commissioners led us to believe that the Natives numbered not exceeding 3,000, men, women, and children. The amount reserved for them was 260,000 acres, valued at £600,000. I have seen gentlemen who know the reserves, who say that they are worth a million, and that if the Natives chose to accept a fair rental for them, they would be the richest people in the colony. They have refused to accept the offers, and then the Government had no alternative but to enforce the law. We took steps for enforcing that which our opponents said we ought. We took steps for arresting Te Whiti, and for compelling those who had no business over at Parihaka to return to their own homes. We took the precaution to collect so large a force on the Coast, that the Natives might see that resistance was hopeless. If we had not been regardful of their lives, if we had not shrunk from the shedding of one drop of blood which could be avoided, we should not have placed so large a force in the field; but we did it out of mercy to the Natives themselves. The Armed Constabulary, armed as they were, would have been quite sufficient if they had been allowed to use their weapons; but we believed that if we opposed a large body of men there, the Natives would shrink from resistance. The result, I think, has amply justified the steps we have taken, The Natives are being dispersed, the greater number of the strangers are already on their way to their homes; and when those who remain submit to the law, but not before, they will find us still prepared to deal with them in the most just, considerate, and generous manner. It is a gross calumny to say that we are dealing unjustly with them. I believe that in no case have the aboriginal inhabitants received fairer treatment than in New Zealand. I should not do justice to my feelings if I left this subject without expressing my appreciation of the conduct of the Volunteers. For their services, so loyally tendered, I think they deserve our warmest thanks. Not one of those men was ordered to leave his home; they all came as Volunteers. We had offers from all parts of the colony, to an extent far greater than we could avail ourselves of. Those who came, left their homes at short notice; they came from all parts, in fact, and in such numbers as enabled the Government to achieve the success which they have achieved; and their conduct has been most praiseworthy.

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They have submitted to great hardships, and have done that which is of value not only for this particular emergency, but also for any future emergency; for they have shown that we have a force well trained and well armed, on which the Government may depend in any emergency that may arise.

## RECAPITULATION.

I am ashamed to find how late it is. There are other subjects on which I should wish to speak, but I have exceeded my time, and, I am afraid, have exhausted your patience. I shall be happy to answer questions on other subjects, on which I have not touched. I may mention that I have not gone into the question of the railway tariff, because I understand that some questions are to be asked about it, and I wish to treat the subject as a whole, and not piecemeal. I may, however, say that the subject of the grain tariff is under consideration, and an alteration in it will be carried out long before the grain season. I have now stated my opinions unreservedly on many of the questions which will occupy the attention of the Government. I will briefly recapitulate, with regard to the most important of them, what I think should be done. I think that the second Chamber should be preserved, but that it should be made elective. I think that the proceedings of the House of Representatives should be modified with a view to checking waste of time by unreasonable length and numbers of speeches, and of ensuring the proper dispatch of business. I think we should persevere in a policy of economy and retrenchment. By this means, and by the augmenting revenue arising out of increased prosperity, we shall be able to further relieve the taxation of the country. I think we should studiously avoid anything which might injuriously affect the public credit, and make such moderate use of that credit at the end of next year as will provide for the progress of public works necessary for developing the resources of the colony. I think we should encourage by every legitimate means local industries and the settlement of the waste lands. We should improve the constitution of existing local bodies, and transfer to them some powers now vested in the Colonial Government. I believe we should in all cases treat the Natives with consideration and generosity, but should firmly repress any resistance to the law. This is not perhaps a very sensational programme. I might amuse you and endeavour to catch votes by what I may call a programme of political fireworks, affording a prospect of a short blaze of prosperity based on a lavish expenditure of borrowed money. But I know that would have to be atoned for, as it has been in times past, by a protracted period of gloom and depression. If I cannot win this election without resort to political artifices of that kind, then I shall be content to lose it. The platform upon which I wish to stand, while it is a substantial and a safe one, is also a platform of progress.

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In a new country the functions of Government should not be confined merely to the protection of life and property. They should extend to colonising the country, and to inducing the introduction of a population to occupy its waste lands and develop its natural resources. And in New Zealand, gentlemen, we have a land worthy of our best efforts in that direction. We have a land blessed above most others as regards climate, soil, and abundance of resources, which, by a policy of steady, energetic and prudent progress, may be made the prosperous home not only of our children, but of a large multitude of our fellow countrymen. These are my opinions on the principal questions of the day. If they meet with your approval, and if, from what you know of my public conduct in the past, you believe that I am likely in future to do good service to you and to the colony, I

shall feel it a great honour to be again elected your representative.

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V.

## A CANDIDATE FOR SELWYN.

(LEESTON, JULY, 30TH, 1887.)

*[In 1887 the Stout-Vogel Government was defeated on the Customs Duties Bill, an amendment being carried on the motion of the Hon. Major Atkinson to the effect "That in the opinion of this House the Tariff and other financial proposals of the Government are unsatisfactory." A dissolution was granted, and the general election, in compliance with a resolution of the House, took place under the Representation Act which was passed prior to the prorogation. Sir John Hall offered himself as a candidate for Selwyn, and was opposed by Mr. J. McLachlan. The election resulted as follows:- Hall, 756 votes; McLachlan, 555; majority for Hall, 201. The following speech was made by Sir John Hall in opening his campaign.]*

### REPLY TO CRITICISM.

BEFORE I enter upon the large questions which will occupy our attention, you will expect that I should make some reference to the attack made upon me by our friend Mr. McLachlan, on the occasion of his meeting. I must confess that I was rather surprised at the extent of the attack, because, as you all know, we have been staunch political allies in the past. I was surprised to find that he had gone back to the earliest history of the province, that he has ransacked Hansard and studied the Statute Book, in order to obtain materials with which to attack my conduct. The first charge he made against me was, that I had received more money in public salaries than any other man in New Zealand. Gentlemen, in a democratic community it is only by the confidence of one's fellow settlers that a man holds public office. If, therefore it is true that I have held office longer than any other man in New Zealand- which is not the case- it is a proof that I have enjoyed the confidence of my fellow settlers, which is not a thing to be ashamed of, but a thing to be proud of. I think I may appeal to my fellow settlers to say that I have eaten no idle bread at the hands of the people of New Zealand.

I have a long list of Mr. McLachlan's charges, to all of which I cannot refer. I must content myself with noticing one or two, but I shall be quite willing to answer any of the others if any elector signifies his desire that I should do so. Mr. McLachlan asserts that I manipulated the land laws for the benefit of myself and my friends. That is a broad general assertion which can only be met by a general denial, and I say that there is absolutely no foundation for it, and that it cannot possibly be proved. The next charge to which I shall advert is that I spoke against the five million loan on a motion of Mr. Waterhouse in the Legislative Council, and that I voted for it.

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That was not a candid statement. What I did say was this- I deprecated the necessity of raising that loan, but I said that the colony had got into such a position that it was necessary for the credit of the colony that it should be passed. Was I justified or was I not in voting for it under those circumstances? And was it candid to omit that part of my speech, and refer only to the other?

Next, my former political ally accuses me generally of extravagance in the management of public money, and of having spent more borrowed money than almost any other public man. Now, about the expenditure of the Government of which I was a member. Mr. McLachlan, when making this charge, had in his hand a speech which I delivered in this room in November, 1881, the last speech which I delivered before I was obliged, through ill-health, to retire from public life. In that speech I showed that when the Hall Ministry took office in September, 1879, a five million loan had been authorised, but not raised. It had been anticipated largely, and there were liabilities incurred to the amount of two millions sterling. There were also liabilities for Native lands purchase to the extent of £1,200,000. For our first year of office, in spite of our best efforts, the liabilities we found outstanding compelled a public works expenditure- practically inherited from our predecessors of £1,800,000. During our second year there was the same amount, but in the third year, when we were comparatively free agents, we brought the expenditure down to £977,000. For the year ending March, 1883, it was further reduced to £867,000. So much for our alleged extravagance in the expenditure of borrowed money. So little of extravagance was there that Sir Julius Vogel has denounced our proceedings as "dozing." My opponent must have known that those were the facts, for he heard me explain them on the occasion to which I refer. With regard to the public debt, we found in October, 1879, that, including £600,000 deficiency bills, and including the five million loan, which I have explained was largely anticipated, the public debt was £27,113,000. In March, 1882, when I left office, the debt, including deficiency bills, was £27,680,000, showing an increase for the three years of no more than £566,000. Now, was Mr. McLachlan fairly describing our expenditure of borrowed money when we reduced the public works expenditure to the extent I have stated?

So much for the alleged excessive borrowing. Now, as to our extravagance in ordinary expenditure. I cannot do better than read an extract from the very speech to which I have already referred. It was delivered from the spot on which I am now standing, in November, 1881. I then said:- " The Government has been engaged in reducing the public expenditure of the colony. It has succeeded so far that during last session we were able to present Estimates smaller in amount by over £300,000 than those of the previous year.

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By this means, by the improved returns we have obtained from railways, by an amendment in the legacy duties, and by stopping the holes in the Property Tax Acts through which a large amount of foreign capital invested in New Zealand escaped taxation, the financial position of the colony was so far improved that we were able to propose-[not an increase but- a reduction of taxation. The reduction was effected partly in the Customs Tariff- duties were taken off a large number of articles

used as materials for local manufactures, and off materials for the cheaper kinds of clothing. I think you will agree with me that a reduction of taxation is especially welcome when it is obtained by economy in the public expenditure." This statement was not challenged at the time, and cannot be disputed. In March, 1882, the revenues of the colony showed a surplus of £200,000 a year over the expenditure. Justice compels me to say that these economies were mainly the work of my colleagues, in whose departments they were effected. As an illustration I may cite the Native Department, where Mr. Bryce reduced the officials from 117 to 67, and salaries from £15,164 to £6,527. The contingencies he reduced from £18,000 to £4,000. Now, gentlemen, is not this the kind of retrenchment we want now, -a-days?

I am sorry to have had to take up your time with personal matters of this kind, but you must admit that it was only due to myself and those who acted with me that I should expose the absurdities which have been circulated, not only in this hall, but through the public Press, to make believe that the Government of which I was a member was an extravagant Government. I shall not detain you in regard to the other charges, but shall be perfectly ready to answer any questions concerning them. I am not going to retort on Mr. McLachlan; I should have no difficulty in finding weak spots in his armour into which to put my sword, but I do not think it is a worthy or a dignified or a creditable course for a candidate to adopt. I will only read one short speech which Mr. McLachlan made in this hall, which will show you that his opinions have undergone a marvellous change. On three occasions when I addressed you here he seconded a vote of thanks and confidence in me. I will not trouble you with his remarks on all those occasions. The last will be sufficient. The following is an extract from the report :- "Mr. Gardiner moved the following resolution- 'That this meeting expresses its thanks to Mr. Hall for his address, and its confidence in him as the representative of the Selwyn district.' Mr. John McLachlan seconded it. Although he did not agree with all Mr. Hall's opinions he regarded him as, without exception, the best man they could get to represent their varied interests." Now, gentlemen, have I been able to do anything which would justify Mr. McLachlan in altering his opinion. Since then I have been altogether out of public life, through severe illness. What have I done to turn good cream sour?

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I am standing between Mr. McLachlan and a seat in the House of Representatives. That is my only crime, gentlemen. I must add this, that a gentleman who, standing on the floor of the hall as an independent elector, with a given set of facts before him, expresses one opinion, and then with no other facts before him, gets up on this platform and gives us a diametrically contrary opinion, is not, to my mind, a person who is entitled to the confidence of the Selwyn electors.

Mr. McLachlan said, and I fully accept his statement, that he has stated nothing of me behind my back which he would not repeat before my face; but, gentlemen, it cannot be unknown to you that his supporters have done something very different:-They have, circulated all kinds of untrue stories amongst the electors in order to blacken my character and take away my votes. I will only refer to two. One is a statement absurd in itself, but it might have weight with persons who were not well informed- that I was responsible for raising the Grain Tariff. When that Tariff was raised I was at the other end of the world and I had no more to do with it than you, Mr. Chairman. The next accusation is one which I cannot repeat here, but it is so base and so mean a charge that unless it came to me from a reliable source, I could hardly believe that anyone connected with the district could circulate it. It will be understood to what I refer. I will only say that it is as false as it is foul, and that there is not a shred of a shadow of foundation for it.

## **THE STOUT-VOGEL GOVERNMENT.**

Now, gentlemen, I turn to the larger questions, which ought properly to occupy our attention on this important occasion. The choice of representatives in Parliament is always a matter of the highest moment, and I know of no occasion within my experience on which it has been more so than the present time. I know of no occasion on which the issue of an election has been more likely to be fraught with consequences, good or bad, to the future of New Zealand. The Parliament of the colony has expressed its want of confidence in the Ministers, and has declared that they have asked the country to submit to taxation larger than the circumstances of the colony justify. The Government, as they had a right to do, have appealed from that verdict to the country at large, and we are now met to give our decision on that appeal.

Unlike former occasions when I addressed you, I have, of course, no access to official data in the Government offices. The only figures I can quote are those which are at your service, namely public official papers, speeches in Hansard, and authenticated statements in the public prints. I will trouble you with as few figures as I think necessary to make my opinions clear. The Government are charged with proposing taxation which is unnecessary. They are charged with not being an economical Government to additional taxation on the mere dictum of Ministers that no further retrenchment can be made as they undertook to be.

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They came into office promising to make a reduction of from £80,000 to £100,000 a year. What is the state of the case? For the last year it is this:- According to the Treasurer there was a deficit of £92,000, but practically, the deficit was nearly £200,000, because he availed himself of a windfall, in the shape of liberated Sinking Fund, of £104,000. He alleges savings in the year of £152,000. That is not correct. The diminished payments arise mostly from services not required; for instance, a diminished expenditure for fewer trains in consequence of a smaller traffic cannot be called a saving. For interest over - estimated, for education capitation not called for, and a few other items, there was a diminished expenditure of £112,000. Anyone who wishes for full and complete information cannot do better than refer to the speech of a gentleman who, I am sorry to hear, we shall not again see in the Parliament of New Zealand - Mr. Montgomery. He went fully into the question, and I have not seen a clearer statement than was given by him in the House of Representatives. Of course, I do not allege that the Government is to blame for the falling off in the public revenue, but I think they are to blame for taking an over - sanguine view of the revenue for the year, in spite of the warnings addressed to them. They were warned that they must not expect so large a revenue as they had estimated, but, nevertheless, they took off a portion of the Property Tax. That is a proceeding for which they may properly be blamed.

Now, as to their proposals for the current year, upon which they were defeated. The colony had a right to expect that

the Government, before asking for additional taxation, would make every possible retrenchment in the public expenditure, and they, profess to have done so, but their retrenchments are not *bona fide*. They include the cost of "assessing Property Tax," which is not required this year; "a reduction of the subsidies to local bodies," such items as "boilers for the Hinemoa," and various others, amounting in all to £117,000. The only actual saving which the Government has made to ward off additional taxation, and meet diminished income is that resulting from an Income Tax on the salaries of the Civil Servants, and a trifling reduction in the honorarium. Before we are satisfied with the assertion of the Government that further retrenchments are impossible we ought to consider their character as economists, and how far they have carried out former promises of retrenchment. The total expenditure of the year 1883-84, when they came into office, was £2,115,000 and for the last year, 1886-7, £2,367,000, an increase of £252,000. Part of that was, of course, unavoidable, such as cost of increased railway services, increased education payments, increased post and telegraph services, and so on ; but, after making full allowance for all these, this expenditure shows an increase of £50,000, instead of the saving they promised on taking office of £80,000 to £100,000. Judged by the results of their three years of office, I cannot call them an economical Government.

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Now, judge them by their speeches. I am bound to say that I do not think Sir Robert Stout is naturally extravagant, rather, I believe, the reverse - but he has certainly not enforced his opinions in that respect upon his colleagues, and I have recently been dismayed at finding him telling an Otago audience, in our existing circumstances, that we should raise another loan, to be largely employed in carrying a railway to Lake Hawea. That is a project which the colony is not justified in undertaking at the present time and it shakes my faith in the economical tendencies of the Prime Minister. I will now quote speeches from two other Ministers. Mr. Larnach, the Minister of Mines, speaking at Dunedin, said: "If Victoria found it advantageous, with £4,000,000 in the Treasury to propose a loan of £8,000,000, in this colony we could not afford to be so independent, nor was our colony so much superior to other colonies as to enable us to disregard what our neighbours were doing. We were running in the same race, and therefore it would not do for us to allow ourselves to be left behind." Then we come to the Colonial Treasurer, Sir Julius Vogel, and I think that his best friends will admit that he comes up with rather a bad reputation in the matter of borrowing. I will only give you an extract from one public deliverance of his, in which he says:- "Are you going to give the colony another chance? Are you going to follow the example of New South Wales - not on the gigantic scale which it sets you, but on a small moderate scale? You have to consider very carefully two policies before the country - one to stop borrowing and make your public works upon a very slow and a very small scale; the other to carry them on with vigour." Then in a speech delivered in Otago, Sir Julius Vogel shadowed forth a proposal for another ten million loan. Further, he actually proposed to pass an Act giving £325,000 a year to local bodies for twenty-five years, and, lest the House should repent, and retrace its steps, the Act authorised the local bodies to borrow upon the strength of those subsidies. I do not hesitate to say that if this proposal had been accepted, it would have been a fatal blow to the prosperity of the colony. Then I come to expenditure, not so much of an extensive as of a significant character - what we may call personal expenditure. The expenditure on Ministers' travelling allowances, has been out of proportion to that of their predecessors; the extent to which they have indulged in special trains and steamers; the large amounts expended on Ministerial residences, and knowing those residences as I do I cannot understand what this expenditure can have been required for. I repeat, that whether judged by their accounts, their speeches, or their acts, Ministers cannot be considered an economical Government. Therefore, I am not prepared to agree to additional taxation on the mere dictum of Ministers that no further retrenchment can be made.

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In point of fact, within a week or ten days of Parliament being prorogued, Sir R. Stout announced that they could do what they previously said they could not do, and that they see their way to a further reduction of £100,000. If they can do that, why did they propose to put on another £100,000 of taxation, which was not necessary?

With regard to retrenchment, of course no person without official information can give anything like a definite assertion as to the economies which might be effected, but there are some which an outsider can say at once could be undertaken. I will commence at the very top- the Governor himself. Statements have been made with regard to the Governor's income, which are not correct. It is said that the Governor has an income of £10,000. That is not the case. The salary is - £5,000, with an allowance of £,500 to pay expenses, which were formerly paid by the colony. That is not a satisfactory arrangement. The salary might be put at £5,000 - I do not think that in any of the Australian colonies it is less- and any necessary expenses which the Governor is put to should be paid by the colony. With regard to the salaries of Ministers, I do not consider that if we were in a prosperous financial position, and looking to the importance of their duties, the salaries paid would be too high. But we are not in that position. We have to look round for all possible economies, and I think the salaries of Ministers may be reduced, as they were when I was in office- the Prime Minister to £1,500 or less, and the others to £1,000. Thirdly, I think that a reduction, which I have always advocated, may be made in the honorarium of members of Parliament. When I first entered the New Zealand Parliament, 31 years ago, we received a guinea a day and while I am of opinion that there should be such an allowance as would render it not difficult for the poorest man amongst us to take his place in the House of Representatives, I put it to you whether seven guineas a week is not sufficient for that purpose. My own opinion is that £100 honorarium would be enough, but I hope that the session will not pass over without its being reduced, at any rate, to £150.

## TAXATION

I believe that by careful retrenchment we can very largely reduce the necessity for additional taxation, if not do away with it altogether, but it is only fair that any candidate for your suffrages should give you his opinions on the subject of taxation if it should be found indispensable to impose it. The Government proposes that additional revenue should be raised by direct and indirect taxation, both upon property and through the Customs, which is a perfectly sound principle- Government exists for the protection of life, property and liberty.

It is, therefore, perfectly right that property should pay for the protection which it enjoys, and I think: that property should pay in proportion to the amount of that protection; that is, that one man who has twice as much property as another man should pay twice as much, but I cannot see the fairness of his paying three times as much. On the subject of this graduated Property Tax, there appears to be a difference of opinion between, at least there is a different account given of it by, Ministers. Sir Julius Vogel has rather tried to tone it down, and make out that it is nothing more than the English Income tax. Sir Robert Stout considers it is the assertion of the broad general principle that we ought to pay on the basis of equality of sacrifice. Our friend, Mr. John McLachlan, with the candour of a youthful politician, has been rather more outspoken than the veterans to whom I have referred. Mr. McLachlan, as you remember, stated - he will correct me if I misquote him- that the tax ought to increase with every £5,000 of property, until when it reached 50,000, to use his own significant expression, he would confiscate, one-third of the interest. I am sorry that the gentleman who elicited that statement from him did not press his question a little farther, and ask what he would do in the case of property above that amount, if it was, say, £100,000; I suppose in that case, the whole of it would be confiscated and if any man should be so wicked as to have more than £100,000, perhaps he would have to go to gaol.

This system is defended by three words, which have been repeated so often that I expect to hear parrots exclaim, "Equality of sacrifice." We are not often assisted to an explanation of what they really mean, but I assume them to mean that a man who has more than another man can spare more, the wants of all men being equal. So that, Mr. Chairman, if you have £2,000, and I have £1,000 you ought to spare £1,000. But, is the amount of property which a man possesses a fair test of what he is able to pay? [A Voice: "Yes."] Will my friend wait a little? A man's ability to pay may depend upon many other things than the amount of money which he owns. I will illustrate my meaning by two or three cases. Take the case of a professional man in the prime of life, making a good income by his profession, with £2,400 of property, he pays taxes at the reduced rate upon that amount. The next may be a man in bad health, having a large family, and who finds it all that he can do to earn a livelihood, and owning £2,500. Can he afford to pay a higher rate of taxation than the man with a professional income and £2,400 off property? Of course not. Then, again, suppose the case of a widow, with ten children, who has only £2,500 of property. Can she better afford to pay than the professional man, owner of £2,400? [A Voice: "Of course not."] The thing would be monstrous. It is impossible to gauge accurately ability of every man to pay. The nearest approach to it is that every man should pay in proportion to the protection to his property which he receives from the State.

Mr. McLachlan contends that a (Graduated Tax is according to a principle of "equality of sacrifice," laid down by Adam Smith. [A Voice: "He was a Scotchman."] I should like my opponent to point out the passage where Adam Smith recommends "equality of sacrifice." He laid down four canons of taxation, the first of which is as follows:--"The subjects of any State ought to contribute to the support of the Government as much as possible in proportion to their respective abilities. That is in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the State. In the observation or neglect of this maxim consists what is called the equality or inequality of taxation." Adam Smith's view, therefore, is that if one man owns twice as much as another, he ought to pay twice as much. I think my friend must have read Adam Smith backwards. Adam Smith is dead against him.

The science of political economy has not stood still since Adam Smith's time. A writer on the subject- a great authority- also deals with the question of taxation. I mean John Stuart Mill. What does he say on the subject? After stating that a certain minimum of income sufficient to provide the necessaries of life should be exempt, he states- "I am as desirous as any one that measures should be taken to diminish these inequalities (of wealth), but not so as to relieve the prodigal at the expense of the prudent. To tax the larger incomes at a higher percentage than the smaller is to lay a tax on industry and economy, to impose a penalty on people for having worked harder, and saved more than their neighbours. A wise and just legislation would abstain from holding out motives for dissipation, rather saving the earnings of honest exertion." Gentlemen, these are wise words, and from important authority, and I hope that they will not be lost sight of in the legislation of this colony. Gentlemen, time is going on, and I cannot go further into this taxation question. I shall have to speak at Southbridge, and at other places, and then I may, perhaps, pursue this matter further. Though the increase in the rate now proposed is not alarming, it is the insertion of the thin end of the wedge, of which the thick end was the proposal made by my opponent the other evening.

## **THE TARIFF.**

I will now refer to the other taxation proposals of the Government. They wish to raise additional revenue by means of the Customs Tariff. I agree that you should, to the utmost extent of your power, raise Customs revenue from luxuries, but you must be careful not to overstep the point at which such duties cease to be productive. If you tax luxuries above a certain extent, and make them so expensive that people will not use them, you will actually lose revenue. Tax silks, satins, champagne, and carriages, by all means, tax also spirits and tobacco, and other luxuries, but not to an extent which would actually reduce your revenue instead of increasing it.

If, after doing this, more revenue is required, let us proceed upon and develop the principle of the Tariff of 1879, which was to endeavour to assist the establishment of those industries for which the colony presents natural advantages. In this matter I am at issue with my opponent. Upon this subject I rather agree with the Government. He disagrees with the Government upon this subject as upon most others. I admit the dangers to be apprehended from pushing protection far. By doing so you may seriously raise the cost of living. But bearing in mind the number of children growing up around us, and who will soon require employment, I cannot help feeling anxious as to the future. No doubt the land is what we should look to to support as large a share of the population as possible; but you will agree with me that all will not be able to find employment upon the land, and therefore we ought to strain a point to bring about the establishment of industries which would afford occupation to as large a

portion of the population as possible. At the same time I deprecate the wholesale increases in the Customs proposed by the Government. They have carried these increases further than there was any occasion for, or than was at all wise. They also propose to impose additional duties upon articles largely used by farmers, who are not in a position to bear any additional burdens, who represent the most important industry in the country and which we should do our best to support. On that account I object to the proposals of the Government. I would take the case of each article by itself, and consider whether a moderate increase of duty upon it would enable a new industry to be established which would not be established without such assistance, If such could be done then it would be, in my opinion, justifiable and proper to impose such additional duty.

## **EDUCATION.**

I come now, gentlemen, to the subject of Education. In the list of economies which even an outsider can discern to be practicable. I believe some economy can be effected in the expenditure on Education. I dissent altogether from the wild assertions that enormous reductions are possible, but, on the other hand, I protest against the doctrine that the Education Department is a kind of sacred ark upon which no man's hand is to be put, and that we are not under any circumstances to touch it. That Department must be subject to inquiry like every other. While we carefully avoid anything; which might deprive the rising generation of the means of obtaining a good education- the most valuable gift we can bestow upon them -we have a fair right to inquire whether it can be obtained at a smaller cost than is now being paid for it. We should hear in mind that the present cost is exceedingly large, being, according to a return laid before the Legislative Council year.

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It is constantly increasing, and is much greater than was contemplated when the Act introducing the system was passed. Its cost is complained of not by one class only, but by all classes, who are threatened with additional taxation. If reasonable economy be not practised in connection with our education system I believe that it will lose much of its popularity, which to my mind, would be a great misfortune.

I do not presume to speak definitely as to how savings can be effected. There are four directions into which our inquiries should be directed. First, there is the age at which children are admitted to school. We should consider whether the Government should pay for children so young as they are now doing. I would also consider whether, when children have passed the fourth or fifth standards, they have not received the rudiments of an education which will enable them, if anxious to push their way in life, to carry on their education when they have left school, In addition to the capitation payment which was originally authorised, the Government are paying a further sum which might be done away with.

Then, with regard to Secondary Schools for Higher Education. We find that in many places the teaching in these overlaps that in the Primary Schools. That is to say, the lower branches of the Secondary Schools are receiving the same instruction as the higher branches of the Primary Schools. You are employing two sets of people to do the same work. Economy may surely be effected here. In regard to Higher Education, it is contended that it ought not to be supported by the Government; that it is a provision for the rich, and that they ought to pay for it themselves. I quite agree that the rich should pay for any education which they can afford to pay for, but it appears to me that the establishment of Secondary Schools by the Government is not so much for the benefit of the rich as for that of people of limited means, who wish to give their children a better education than the Primary Schools provide, and who cannot afford to pay the entire cost of such higher education. If the Government did not maintain these Secondary Schools the rich would provide for their children by means of private schools, paying the whole expense. Many persons of limited means could not afford to send their children to these private schools. [A Voice "Scholarships."] I will come to that. Now, how ought these Government Secondary Schools to be maintained? The payments by those who can afford to make them should, in my opinion, be higher than at present, and provision be made for a more liberal system of Scholarships. The intellect and brain power of the youth of our colony is one of its most valuable possessions, and we ought to be very careful not to do anything which would interfere with the cultivation thereof. If, therefore, you raise the payments at Secondary Schools considerably, you should accompany it by a liberal system of Scholarships, which would enable boys and girls of exceptional industry and talent to pursue their studies at the High Schools, and thus make what has been called an educational ladder from the gutter to the University.

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## **THE LAND QUESTION.**

I now come to the question of the land. The Government have made various proposals on this important question, which should be considered by the electors. The beneficial settlement of the land is a matter in which every individual in this country is necessarily interested. The more land that is beneficially occupied and settled by people who are making a comfortable living, the better must it be for every man, woman and child in the colony. No one can dispute that. Therefore, I protest against the assertion that if I object to some scheme which the Government is proposing, I object to the settlement of the land. It has been asserted by the Premier that the settlement of the land is objected to by, of all people in the world, the large land-owners. Now, if there is one class of people in the community who would benefit by such settlement more than another, it is the large landholders, because the more the land is occupied by settlers the greater will be the value of their land. I refer to this because, in other cases, when the Premier has to meet an attack on Government proposals, or to make an attack upon an opponent, he generally brings out the large land- owner. [A Voice: "A good shot, too."] I think it is a very bad shot; a random shot. I cannot pass on without claiming for my late colleague, Mr. Rolleston, great credit for what he did to settle people upon the land. No man laboured more indefatigably, or, I believe, more successfully, for that object than Mr. Rolleston. He settled a large number of people, without calling upon the colon for the large pecuniary sacrifices now being demanded by the present Minister of Lands.

What is objected to by those who disapprove of Mr. Balance's scheme, is not the placing of the people upon the land,

but the manner in which he is proposing to effect it. Under the Village Settlement, and Special Settlement Schemes, Mr. Ballance is advancing them public money- £20 for a house, and £2 10s an acre for the cultivation of the land, besides giving employment at road- work. I quite believe that the Minister is zealous and earnest in his desire to settle the people, but I cannot think that the means which he is adopting to bring about the result is likely to be eventually successful. We are told that 2,000 persons have been so settled. I ask you whether they have really been settled? They have been put upon the land it is true, but they are being maintained there at the Government expense. I fear that when the Government payments come to an end we shall find a large number of them leaving their sections and re-joining the ranks of the unemployed, and that the taxpayers' money which the Government advanced will have been wasted.

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The kind of settlement which it would be most expedient to encourage, in my opinion is mixed settlement- that is, settlement both of persons of moderate capital, who would enter upon the cultivation of land and employ labour, and with these there should be small settlers, who would derive some of their subsistence from their sections, and obtain occasional employment from their wealthier neighbours. This kind of settlement is the most likely to be permanently successful, and was the kind encouraged by my colleague, Mr. Rolleston.

Then, in regard to the £60,000 liabilities which Mr. Ballance incurred without the sanction of Parliament. It is admitted upon all hands to have been an irregular proceeding. We must maintain the fundamental principle that no portion of our money is to be expended or pledged without the consent of our representatives. Mr. Ballance has acted contrary to this principle, without necessity and without justification. The explanations given on this subject are inconsistent with each other. At one time it is said by the friends of the Government that it was absolutely necessary to incur these liabilities in order to meet an unforeseen emergency, viz., to provide work for numbers of unemployed. On the other hand Mr. Ballance says that he asked for a vote of £5,000 to commence these Special Settlements, and the House must have known when he asked for that that it involved the larger liabilities. If he knew that, why did he not state it at the time? But he refrained from doing so and it was not till after the information was dragged out of him that the public found that he had incurred a liability to the extent of £60,000 or £70,000 without the sanction of Parliament. This is a proceeding which deserves the condemnation of every member who is a watchful guardian of the public purse.

### **LAND ACQUISITION BILL.**

The Government have introduced a Bill called the Land Acquisition Bill. It is a Bill authorising the Government to acquire private estates for the purpose of settling the people thereon. I have said in this hall that when it shall be necessary to obtain private land upon which to place settlers it will be justifiable to take the land with or without the consent of the proprietor, paying reasonable compensation for it, but it is not just, either to the proprietor or to the taxpayer, to do this unless there is a real necessity for it. It seems to me that it will be hard to show any necessity for such a step when, according to the last Financial Statement of the Treasurer, there are thirteen millions worth of Crown Land unoccupied. Then again we are told that it is the large land-owners who object to this Bill. I do not know whether you think the large landowners fools. If they are not they ought to be the last men to object to it. I believe that nine out of ten of them would be only too glad to get rid of their property, if they could do so at a reasonable price.

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This Bill would help them to do it. It is the taxpayers who object to being saddled with so large a liability- not, indeed, of immediate taxation, for the money would have to be borrowed, but a large liability for loans, the results of which would be very doubtful. I think the necessity for this Bill has not been proved. Till it has been, more conclusively than at present, we should not be justified in allowing the Government to engage in this manner in the purchase of private land.

### **PERPETUAL LEASES.**

The next subject in connection with the land is that of Perpetual Leases. The Government propose to induce settlement of the lands, not by giving people the opportunity of acquiring the freehold, but by leasing for a term of years, with the right of renewal at a valuation and allowance for improvements. In this hall, upon a former occasion, I stated my objection to that proposal. It is this. That a man who is only a leaseholder has not the same permanent interest in his holding, nor the same inducement to improve it as one -who owns the land. A man who knows that his lease is coming to an end in two or three years' time, and that the land is to be revalued, is not likely to improve it, and so make it worth a higher rental. If you put two men side by side, each having a hundred acres; one being a freeholder, knowing that the land is his own, and that he can leave it to his children; and the other that his holding is only a leasehold, and is to be re-valued when the land is re-leased which is the most likely to treat the land well, and to do most good for the country? [A Voice : "The freeholder, of course." ] The freeholder, of course. Therefore, I object to perpetual leases. The Premier stated in a speech in Otago what a great country this would be if Crown Lands had only been leased instead of being sold, and pointed to the revenue they would be returning, and the great things it would have done. It might have been, under such treatment, a glorious country for the squatters. Do you think it likely that British farmers wishing to settle in a new country, and ascertaining that freeholds were obtainable in the United States, Canada, Australia, or the Cape, would not go to those countries in preference to coming where they could only obtain leases? The leasehold system would, in my opinion, have been the greatest possible check to colonisation of this country, and have been a measure which would have played only into the hands of the squatters. I must now briefly refer to one or two other subjects, and pass over others which I will deal with at future meetings.

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### **DEFENCE OF THE COLONY.**

I ask your attention to the question of the Defence of the Colony. Of course, at a time of pecuniary difficulty it is hard

to obtain favour for an expenditure which does not appear immediately pressing.

But I cannot agree with the theory that the less we are defended the safer we are from foreign aggression. In past times the Australian colonies occupied a very different position from what they now do. We were practically much further from the old world. Steam communication had not brought us so much within the reach of foreign navies. The case is now altered. Moreover, at the time of the last war in which England was engaged with a naval power we were a small community, our property was not large, and we were not worth attacking. This is now entirely altered. Steam has brought us much nearer. The French have got a colony in our own immediate neighbourhood, and there would be a considerable amount of plunder to be got out of these settlements. If they are to be reasonably safe they must have further protection, and we cannot call upon the Mother Country to spend more money in our defence unless we are prepared to bear a fair share of the burden. There are no communities on the face of the globe which have expended so little for their defence as the Australasian colonies, at any rate, New Zealand. Therefore, I think that the Government was right in taking energetic measures for the defence of the colony. Whether the amount spent is a reasonable one, or whether they have spent it in the most prudent manner, is a matter upon which I cannot express an opinion; but whatever is necessary to provide reasonable defence I believe it is our duty and interest to provide.

## THE CONDITION OF NEW ZEALAND.

I am now only left time to refer to one other question, but it is a most important one, that is the general condition of the colony, and the outlook for us. The portion of my printed address on this subject was misread. I did not say that the condition of the colony was similar to that of 1879, but that the condition of our public affairs was so, and I illustrated my meaning by pointing to the deficiency in the public finances which existed then and now. The material condition of the colony is indeed very different from that of 1879. Property of all kinds has depreciated largely. Profits have been reduced to almost vanishing point. Prices are lower, and employment is more scarce. [A Voice : "Wages are lower."] No doubt, wages are somewhat lower. I feel for those who are suffering from this state of things for a very good reason, that I am a fellow-sufferer myself. What is the cause of this depression? No doubt the most influential cause is the very considerable fall in the price of our chief products. I fear that there is no prospect of the price of wheat and other staples returning to their former level. The second cause is the loss of confidence in this country abroad, owing largely to the excessive amount of the New Zealand debt; also, I believe, to the extreme and crude political theories which are advocated by some of our leading public men. Speaking from experience, I know that these facts have a very disturbing influence

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on opinion in the Mother Country with respect to this colony. People are afraid to come, or to invest in New Zealand, because it is already so heavily taxed, and because theories seem in favour which make them fear the imposition of still heavier burdens upon the property which they may bring with them. It has been asserted that this loss of confidence, and the depreciation in New Zealand securities are largely due to statements by New Zealand colonists residing in the Mother Country. I have been in a position to know whether this assertion is true, and I firmly believe that there is no foundation for it. As far as I have observed, whenever the condition of the colony was in question at Home, colonists made the best of it. A third cause of the depression is the immense annual drain upon the colony for interest on debts public and private. The amount which has to be sent out of the country for this purpose is variously estimated at from three to four millions a year. Let us take it at three millions. Our exports of produce amount to about seven millions a year, and our imports to about the same sum. Therefore our exports suffice only to pay for our imports, and the additional three millions have to be drawn from other sources. The raising of taxes in excess of what is absolutely necessary to keep up an economical Government is a very great evil, but if this money be spent in the country, though the taxpayer is poorer the country is not so; but when the proceeds of taxes are sent away to another land, evidently our own country is the poorer for it. One pound raised by taxation to be so parted with must impoverish us more than say five pounds spent in the colony.

Is the Public Works policy itself responsible for the excessive indebtedness of New Zealand, with its heavy annual drain upon the country? It is not the principle or its proper application, but the abuse, of the Public Works scheme which is responsible. The principle of that scheme was a sound one, namely, that we should, by the construction of railways, make the waste lands of New Zealand accessible and productive. Now, had we confined ourselves to only necessary expenditure we should have been amply repaid for it. When the policy was introduced in 1870, I expressed my approval of its principle, but also stated that I was afraid it was a system very likely to be abused, and while I should support the scheme my efforts would be directed to keep it within moderate limits. I have shown you to-night that, although I have been accused of extravagance in the expenditure of borrowed money, there is really no foundation for the charge. During the first two years of office of my colleagues and myself the expenditure was not one for which we could be responsible. That which was undertaken on our responsibility was moderate indeed. I have, when I had an opportunity, tried to put the brake upon public works expenditure, and for so doing have been called a "croaker," been caricatured as a Rip Van Winkle, and been burned in effigy for insisting upon unpalatable economy.

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This has done me no harm, and I believe I have effected some good. We are now, gentlemen, feeling the consequences of extravagance. It is not worth while to stop to attempt to see who is to blame. Our time will be far better and more usefully employed in seeing what can be done to help the colony out of its present difficulty. The balance of trade, including the interest, we have to send home, is heavily against us. We should endeavour to remedy this state of things by exporting more and importing less. Free traders contend we ought to do the first, and protectionists the last. I think we should strive to do both. As regards the export of grain, I think the prospects are hopeful; we appear to have got to the bottom of price of wheat, and may rely generally on not less than 3s. per bushel. We have also learnt to reduce the cost of producing it. I believe we shall see again an increase in the production of this important staple. In another direction I hope to see an extension of the exports of the colony. I refer to dairy produce. I have visited many new countries, and have nowhere seen greater natural facilities for the

production of dairy produce than in New Zealand. In Canada, owing to the character of its climate, the industry is under great difficulties for half the year. In South America the weather is too hot, and the people are too lazy, but here in New Zealand the climate is especially adapted for dairying, and now that we can send this produce in cool chambers in direct steamers to a market in the Old Country. I think we may fairly look for a great increase in its export. The export of this article from America to Great Britain has increased to a wonderful extent.

Another subject to which my mind has been directed is the possibility of increasing the productive powers of the Canterbury Plains by means of irrigation. In this immediate neighbourhood you do not require it, certainly not at present; but there are large portions of the plains of which the fertility might be greatly increased by a system of irrigation. We have every facility, viz., large rivers, plenty of fall, and a large area of land to irrigate. Under these circumstances I think the subject is well worthy of careful inquiry, which might be instituted by the Government.

I also agree with those who think that we should look forward to the establishment of local industries for a great improvement in our position, and in redressing the balance of trade. As a further means of improving our condition we must introduce the utmost economy into our public expenditure. Colonists have been doing this extensively in private life, and I can see no reason why the same reform should not be extended to the public expenditure of the colony, and thus reduce its burdens. Of the greatest importance it is that we should practically stop borrowing. I don't mean that we may not have to borrow another shilling, but we must not be content with the Treasurer's suggestions for contracting our borrowing for the present, nor with the Premier's suggestion of " tapering off " with a railway to Lake Hawea.

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I am unaware of what our actual existing liabilities for public works expenditure are, but I would go to the extent of stopping some works which are now in progress, which cannot be remunerative, rather than incur further public debt. We should also discountenance many political fads which are propagated by persons in high places, and which alarm outsiders as to the prospects of the colony. If this is done our credit will be improved, and we shall have again what has lately become scarce, viz., an influx of settlers, with capital to help us in developing the resources and capabilities of New Zealand. It may be said there is no danger of a continuance of borrowing as the demand for retrenchment is now so universal. I am not so sure about that. Just at present, perhaps, there is no danger, on account of the strong feeling on the subject, but there are persons in this colony who, when this feeling subsides somewhat, will egg us on to a renewal of borrowing. There is a part of the community for whom the expenditure of borrowed money has great charms, and the responsibility of future payment no terrors, because when pay day comes they can put their property into a carpet bag, and turn their backs on New Zealand and her difficulties. This is not your case, gentlemen. You, and others like you, who are permanent settlers, must share the fate of the colony for weal or woe. It is for you to insist that persevering economy and prudence shall be exercised. If this is done it will tend to restore confidence abroad, and bring to us men with moderate capital to invest in New Zealand, and help us to develop its great and varied resources. If this is not done, I foresee a sad and disastrous ending; but I hope for better things, and that before long we shall see brighter days, and see justice done to the great resources of New Zealand, and the energy and industry of its inhabitants.

## CONCLUSION.

I have now, gentlemen, to thank you for the patient hearing which you have accorded me on this and on the many former occasions when it was my privilege to address you. I will conclude as I commenced, by saying that I remember no occasion on which the duties thrown upon electors generally were more important than the present. We have to decide an appeal from the Parliament of the colony whether the financial policy of the Government is unsatisfactory, and whether the people shall submit to the additional taxation which the Government desire to impose. You in this district have now to make your choice between two candidates. My opponent is well-known to you, and you have heard a statement of his political views. If you think he is better able to grapple with the difficulties by which we are beset, and better able to help to steer the ship of the State through the shoals and quick sands by which it is surrounded, then, by all means, return him. I shall not murmur at your verdict.

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But if you think from what you know of my public work in the past, and what you have now heard of my views that I can render you the better service, then I shall feel it an honour once more to represent the Selwyn district, and whatever of health and strength I possess shall be devoted to the welfare of the district and of the colony of New Zealand.

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## VI

### A FAREWELL CRITICISM.

(LEESTON, APRIL 25TH, 1893).

*[In 1890 Sir John Hall was elected for the Ellesmere seat (which had taken the place of Selwyn under the redistribution of that year), his opponent being Mr. J. McLachlan, and the voting:- Hall, 757; McLachlan, 652; majority for Hall, 105. When according to his usual custom, he addressed his constituents shortly before the opening of the session of 1893-the last session before the General Election-he intimated at the close of a vigorous and exhaustive criticism of the Ballance Government, that it was not his intention to seek re-election. He had now seen, as he remarked, nearly three score and ten years, forty of which had been given to public life in New Zealand and nearly the whole of them in the Colonial Parliament. He was the oldest member of the House of Representatives, and had been associated with its work almost from the earliest days of his existence. In one respect he achieved a record almost, if not quite, unparalleled among Colonial politicians, in the fact that he never lost*

*an election. Among the questions still exciting interest with which he dealt on this occasion, are Industrial Legislation, Labour Bills and Representation of Minorities.]*

"WHEN I had the pleasure of addressing you last year the recess had been made lively by many platform speeches from Ministers of the Crown. This year the recess has been politically quiet, in fact rather dull. Probably one of the reasons for the change is the serious illness of the Premier, for which I beg to express my sincere regret. Differing though I do widely from Mr. Ballance's policy, and disapproving of much of his administration, I gladly acknowledge the courtesy with which he has conducted parliamentary warfare, and I feel sure the regret at his illness will be general throughout the colony. For the dullness of the political season some Government supporters try to blame the Opposition. This is unreasonable; Opposition members understand the wants of their constituents, and know that they are occupied in the work of colonisation, and not thirsting for political excitement. We are aware that Ministerial administration and policy are being brought to the test of experience, and the eyes of people are being opened without the aid of constant political agitation. But our opponents are hard to please; they grumble at our silence, and when the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rolleston) does give excellent addresses, both in Canterbury and Auckland, they still grumble. There is not excitement enough for them in those speeches; they complain that Mr. Rolleston has not made a partisan onslaught upon the Ministry and all their works, nor propounded a new and sensational policy for New Zealand. Mr. Rolleston is perfectly well able to fight his own battles, and requires no defence from me,

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but that is no reason why I should not express my entire concurrence in the line he has taken up. For the absence of new policies New Zealanders, as a rule, will be devoutly thankful. We have been the victims of political experiments. They promised brilliant results, but the outcome of the greater part has been a painful addition to our debt and taxation. What New Zealand wants is rather a steady perseverance in the work of developing: the resources and settling the lands of the colony, and so reducing the burden of taxation which past policies have laid on the shoulders of all classes of the community. Then, as to the absence of violent partisanship from Mr. Rolleston's speeches, this is a feature that the real settler will not complain of. Some of our politicians seem to think that the one great object of a public man must be to turn out one Government and put in another. I do not think so. It matters little, in my opinion, to the mass of the settlers of New Zealand, whether Mr. Ballance or Mr. Rolleston is Premier. What does matter to us all is that the affairs of the colony shall be wisely and honestly administered. If Mr. Ballance and his friends would give us good Government and promote the permanent prosperity of the colony, they might, as far as I am concerned, remain in office till doomsday. If I sit on Opposition benches, it is because I cannot think they are doing either. Some busybodies are trying to make out that Mr. Rolleston's action is displeasing to his own supporters, and that certain of them are forming a Middle Party. This is a mere invention of the enemy; I know the opinions of nearly all the gentlemen who have been named, and there is not a shadow of foundation for the views attributed to them. They recognise the ability and the judgment with which Mr. Rolleston fills a difficult position, and are as thoroughly loyal to him as he is to his party. When you want information as to the views of the Opposition please do not go to Government organs for it.

### **CHARGE OF OBSTRUCTION.**

Speaking for myself I have only to say that I come at the usual period to render my constituents the usual account of my stewardship, to speak of the work of the past and coming sessions, and to answer any enquiry which any elector may desire to put to me. I shall not trouble you about new policies. In the absence of Mr. Ballance from the political platform, it seems to have chiefly devolved upon Mr. Reeves to speak the Ministerial mind, and to denounce the Opposition and all their deeds. Mr. Seddon has more recently sounded the Ministerial trumpet very loudly, but I have not seen a full report of his speech, and shall not, therefore, make much reference to it. I have, however, read Mr. Reeves's speeches at Auckland, Nelson, Christchurch, and other places, and I cannot think that he has been successful, although I quite admit that he has made the best of a bad case and of unpromising materials.

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He fell back on the old manoeuvre of setting up bogeys in the shape of imaginary Opposition delinquencies, and then proceeding to demolish them. For instance, he charges the Opposition with systematic obstruction during the last session. Such a charge from such a quarter is serious, because Mr. Reeves' party are admitted authorities in the science of Parliamentary obstruction. It is a common saying in Wellington that Mr. Seddon stonewalled himself into office, and that it has become so much second nature with him that he cannot refrain from stonewalling even his own Bills. Mr. Reeves, whom I heard at Christchurch, attempted to prove his accusation by giving measurements of Opposition speeches as printed in "Hansard," but he carefully abstained from giving the measure of the speeches of his own colleagues and supporters. For one occasion I can supply the omission. The Wellington Ministerial paper gives the following figures with regard to the three weeks' debate on the Financial Statement. It states that twenty-three Opposition speeches took up thirty hours and forty minutes, while thirty-two Government supporters occupied thirty-three hours and forty seven minutes to express their views. Speeches from Ministerial benches were, therefore, both more numerous and took up more time than those from our side. If there was waste of time it is clear the Government party were more responsible for it than their opponents. If quality had been taken into consideration, I admit the preponderance would be largely on the side of the Opposition. I am far from saying that there is not more talk in Parliament than is necessary, but let us lay the blame on the right shoulders. I have often denounced obstruction, and advocated amendment of Parliamentary rules for the purpose of checking it. Ministers have shown no desire for this amendment. With an overwhelming and obedient majority they could easily have done in this direction what their predecessors could not do, but they have allowed two sessions to go by without attempting to check the evil they profess to deplore. It is, moreover, only fair to suggest, if you will allow me to do so, that constituents are themselves somewhat responsible for the verbosity of their representatives. As a rule they expect their member to cut a figure in debate, and if his name does not appear frequently in

"Hansard" they set him down as a dummy, and as exercising no influence. This is a great mistake. In Parliament, as elsewhere, silence is often golden, and the most talkative men are far from being the most influential.

## FINANCE.

I will first ask your attention to our financial position. This question is not now the critical one in which the so-called Liberal party left it in 1887, and on many other occasions. The Atkinson Government, by steadily tapering off loan expenditure, by other fiscal reforms, and by strict economy, made good the large deficit they inherited, restored our finances, and left to their successors a large unexpended balance in the Treasury.

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The enterprise and industry which New Zealand settlers have devoted to the development of the great natural resources of the colony have increased its wealth, and this again is reflected in the increased returns from the colonial revenue. The state of the colonial Treasury is, from causes independent of the action of our present rulers, no longer a source of anxiety. But it is still, and always must be, a matter deserving the watchful attention of the electors.

Finance has been said to be the key to modern politics. It is well, therefore, that we should examine our present position. We are being constantly told that the present Government has adopted a policy of financial self-reliance, has abandoned borrowing, and is meeting its public works expenditure chiefly out of ordinary revenue. Let us see what amount of truth there is in this assertion. The Financial Statement of last session was delivered with creditable promptitude; or, at least, Mr. Ballance's portion of it. The Public Works Statement and Estimates, however, an essential part of the Colonial Budget, were kept back until almost the last days of the session, so that the finance as a whole could not be properly considered. Of the proposals for the year 1892-3, just ended, there was no fault to be found with the estimate of income. In fact, owing to the elasticity of the public revenue this estimate has been exceeded; but in the proposed expenditure, instead of an alleged decrease of £8,000, there was really an increase of the controllable expenditure for the year of £15,000. To this must be added about -£50,000 for Supplementary Estimates. There are tricks in every trade, and it is a common manoeuvre for a Colonial Treasurer to contrast the whole expenditure of the past year with that which he first proposes in his estimates for the current year, knowing though he does that these will be largely added to by Supplementary Estimates. Mr. Ballance was, in this respect, no worse than his predecessors. The feature of the Statement was, of course, the estimated surplus of £330,000. The so-called Liberals have crowed so much over this £330,000 that it is worth-while enquiring how it is made up, and how far it is a genuine surplus of the year. It is made up- First, by the surplus of £165,000 from the year 1891-2, the result of Atkinsonian finance; secondly, by the payment of £80,000 of the year's interest on our loans being postponed until next year; thirdly, the estimate for the year includes the proceeds of Treasury bills for over £280,000 issued to provide for the payment of Sinking Funds. In this respect Mr. Ballance continued a practice initiated by Sir Julius Vogel. If these items are eliminated, the *bonà fide* receipts for the year leave no surplus whatever over the ordinary expenditure. This £330,000, or whatever it may be, about which you have heard so much, is not therefore a genuine surplus of ordinary receipts of the year over expenditure, and to pretend that it is an attempt to delude the public.

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So much for the ordinary account. Let us now turn to the Public Works or Loan Account. So-called Liberal politicians are never tired of boasting that borrowing has ceased, and that under their guidance New Zealand has entered upon a policy of self-reliance. For instance, the Financial Statement speaks of "the policy of self-reliance upon which we have entered," &c., The Public Works Statement of Mr. Seddon says, "the policy which has been adopted here is to live within our means to gradually improve the condition of the country from the revenues received," and finally announces "the resolute determination of the Government to avoid even the appearance of a borrowing policy." Ministers have gone on repeating such assertions so often that they have not only got other people to believe them, but almost to believe them themselves. Let us see what amount of truth they contain, and whether the present policy is anything more than an attempt to "avoid even the appearance of borrowing," and to follow Mr. Skimpole's injunction to "live within our means, even if we have to borrow the money to do it with."

What are the facts in regard to the Public Works expenditure? In the last year of the Atkinson Government the expenditure of Loan Money had been reduced from £1,200,000 in 1887 to £335,000. The amount voted last session for actual expenditure within the year was increased to £682,000, involving authority for £801,000. This is a bold reversal of the tapering off of Public Works expenditure which received the approval of the constituencies in 1890. Where was this money to come from? Is it borrowed money or not? Ministers assert that £200,000 is contributed from the ordinary taxation of the colony, but they do not tell you that the revenue from taxation has to be helped, as I have mentioned, by £280,000 a year of Treasury Bills to enable the Sinking Fund to be paid. The £200,000 is not, therefore, a contribution from the real revenue of the year, but from the revenue helped by Treasury Bills. Then, what about the rest of the Public Works Fund? £500,000 of it is the proceeds of "collared" Sinking Fund, and the remnant of the loan raised by Sir H. A. Atkinson. The Radicals abused him for raising a loan, but they have lived upon the proceeds of it ever since. He might have echoed the complaint of Byron, I think, against some reviewers:- "If they have given me gall instead of honey, all I can say is they have had my money." Then the Treasurer obtained authority in last and previous sessions to issue £150,000 a year of

Treasury Bills to provide for road works, purchase of Native lands, and purchase of land for settlement. With these facts before you, a very simple arithmetical operation will show that we are really paying for Public Works out of borrowed money, and that the contrary assertion is a fiction.

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I am not giving these figures here for the first time; I stated all this in my place in Parliament in the presence of Ministers, who could have contradicted me if I had been wrong. They never attempted to question the accuracy of the statement.

Besides the borrowing I have enumerated, the Treasurer obtained further authority last session to issue an additional

£550,000 of Treasury Bills; £100,000 was to enable him to anticipate revenue, and the other £450,000 was not to be actually issued, but only used as a security, to be pawned if required. I shall be agreeably surprised if this intention has been carried out. I suspect the Cheviot purchase has made a big hole in it. Mr. Seddon is reported to have told the people at Greymouth that the purchase had been effected without borrowing, that it had been paid for out of revenue. I am afraid he has allowed his imagination to mislead him, and that his speech gives no clue to the facts. Altogether, therefore, the Ballance Government, with £500,000 of loan money and released Sinking Fund in hand, took further authority in one session to increase our floating debt by £700,000. For a so-called self-reliant non-borrowing Government this seems a rather extraordinary performance. It hardly realises Mr. Seddon's wish to "avoid even the appearance of borrowing." The latest edition, indeed, of the Ministerial policy, as revised and corrected in Mr. Reeves's speeches, no longer says that they are not going to borrow, but only "we will not borrow in London." Here the cat is out of the bag. The Government find that under their management borrowing is inevitable although they have been denouncing it. They propose to borrow therefore, not in London, but in a way which will impose on the taxpayer a higher rate of interest than if they did borrow in London, and than the credit of New Zealand requires.

Now the injury resulting from large sums of money being annually sent out of the colony for interest is so great, that if it really could be avoided, it might be worth our while to submit to some increase in the rate of interest. But will it be avoided by so-called local borrowing? Will the interest on these new loans really remain in the colony and be spent there? It will not. So long as money is very much cheaper in London than in New Zealand, so long will any considerable sums borrowed by government come indirectly, if not directly, from the London money-lender, and to him will the annual interest find its way. You may nominally borrow from a colonial money-lender, but he will draw the money from London, and after retaining a commission for himself he will send the balance of the interest to England, being probably a larger amount than would have been paid for a loan raised directly on the Stock Exchange. To ensure the success of his operations, Mr. Ballance would have to place an import duty on British money to protect the New Zealand capitalist; but we have hardly got as far as this. The Treasurer may, perhaps, rake into his chest some local trust funds and Savings Bank deposits of inconsiderable amount, but the large sums required to keep up the present rate of Public Works expenditure must come from outside the colony, so long as New Zealand, instead of having surplus capital to invest, is a debtor to outside creditors for at least sixty millions sterling.

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I wish it were otherwise, but it is of no use harbouring foolish delusions. No man who is heavily in debt can, at the same time, be a large lender, unless indeed he is a money-broker, borrowing at one rate of interest and lending at a higher. Ministers must know all this perfectly well, and they are trying to mislead the electors when they assert that they will not draw money from London. It is nothing more than an attempt to "avoid the appearance of borrowing" there. It will only be possible to borrow at a reasonable rate of interest any considerable amount of New Zealand capital, when surplus capital shall have accumulated here. This is a slow process, and one which our present rulers do not encourage.

Before leaving the question of borrowing, I must refer to an assertion made by the Colonial Treasurer, and echoed by his supporters, that Ministers have, during the past year, reduced the net public debt of New Zealand. The Financial Statement says, there has been a net reduction of the public debt of £117,000. If this were true, it would be the first time in our history that such reduction had been effected, and Ministerial organs have, accordingly, claimed vast credit to their chief for such an unprecedented performance. It is paraded as a proof of extraordinary economy and financial skill. But the statement is absolutely untrue, I hold in my hands official returns which prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. They show that the gross debt of the New Zealand Government on the 31st March, 1891, was £38,830,350. Against this there was a large accumulated Sinking Fund, provided expressly for the payment of this debt. The balance, representing the net amount of our liabilities, or what is properly called the net debt, was £37,343,308. In the year 1891-02, £350,000 of this Sinking Fund had to be applied towards the payment of debentures. Our gross debt by this operation was diminished by £350,000, but to that extent also the Sinking Fund disappeared. Our actual liabilities, or net debt, was neither increased nor diminished. Other operations effected during the year have, however, added to our net debt, which, as the return proves, was £331,898 larger in March, 1892, than in 1891. The case has been summarised so clearly by a Wellington paper that I cannot do better than read what it says. It is as follows :-"The real test of whether the debt of the colony was reduced or added to is- What amount would the colony have had to raise to redeem its total indebtedness at the respective periods? On the 31st March, 1892, it would have had to raise £331,898 more than would have sufficed on the 31st March, 1891, to relieve itself from debt." Our actual debt is, therefore, increased by that sum, and to pretend anything else is an audacious attempt to delude the public.

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I should not have troubled you at length on this question had not the attempt been repeated quite recently by a Minister of the Crown. You have now the whole facts before you, and you can judge by them of the reliance which can be placed on Ministerial figures.

## TAXATION.

Upon the subject of taxation I shall not say much. I have not changed my opinions, but the colony has adopted a new fiscal system and I repeat what I said last year, that it should have the fairest possible trial. It will conduce, however, to such trial if the new system is criticised, and its defects, anomalies, eccentricities, and injustices are pointed out, with a view to their correction. This was done by the Opposition both last session, and in 1891. We received scant thanks or encouragement, but several of the objections which, in 1891, we had urged in vain were last session, admitted to be just. The preposterous double taxation blunderingly placed on foreign, debenture capital, and which, in 1891, the Treasurer insisted on retaining, was, last session, abandoned. The absentee tax is retained, but as a source of revenue has proved a failure. It turns out that New Zealand does not "swarm with absentee landlords," as was alleged. Judged by the proceeds of the tax, their number is unimportant.

The Act still retains many inequalities very unfair to country, districts. For instance, if three men are partners in a trading or manufacturing establishment each of them is allowed an absolute exemption of £300 of income, or £900 in the

whole, before he pays any Income Tax at all. But if three men are partners in a farm chargeable with land tax, only one exemption for land or improvements is allowed for the whole three. This distinction is surely absurd, yet when it was proposed to put both town and country taxpayers on the same footing in this respect the Treasurer resisted what seems an act of bare justice, and was supported by his obedient majority. The case is still harder where a number of beneficiaries are dependent on trust property invested in land, Their incomes may be far below £300 each, but they are denied the exemption which incomes below that sum are supposed to receive. For instance, the English Church Property in Canterbury is subject to a heavy Graduated Land Tax, as if its proceeds went to a single individual, whereas, in fact, they are chiefly devoted to making a very moderate contribution to the incomes of poorly paid clergy. The system of graduation has increased the taxation on this property by over 60 per cent, and considerable reduction has had to be made in the small contributions I have mentioned; cases of extreme hard-ship have been the result. I repeatedly pressed this matter on the attention of the Treasurer, but no relief has been afforded. In this and many similar cases taxation is certainly not laid on the shoulders best able to bear it.

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Then, again, the obnoxious provision by which improvements on land are taxed, as if they were the land itself, is retained, although its impolicy is admitted. Ministers do not attempt to justify it, but with an alleged surplus of £330,000 a year plead that they cannot afford to part with the £40,000 which this tax produces. If they cannot afford it now, when can they do so? It has been charged against me that the Property Tax of 1879 included a tax on improvements, and that I am, therefore, inconsistent in now objecting to it. This is one of those half-truths which are ever the most misleading of statements. When the Property Tax Act was passed we had not a surplus of £300,000 a year, but the Liberal party had bequeathed to us, as is their custom, a deficit of £900,000, and we had, at short notice, to fill this tremendous gap. The Act proceeded on the principle that all property, whether in land, cash, Bank shares, or improvements on land, with trifling exceptions, should be taxed equally. Whether a man's property was on deposit in a Bank, on invested in improvements on land, he paid his penny in the pound all the same. If he withdrew money from the Bank, and applied it to giving work and wages to his fellow colonists, he was not punished as he is now by having his taxation trebled if his expenditure exceeded £3,000. Improvements were, therefore, not discouraged. This is, however, just what the present law does. If a man who has already spent £3,000 in improvements takes another £1,000 from the Bank, and drains or fences land with it, then, instead of paying perhaps no tax at all, or at the most 6d in the pound, on the income from his £1,000, he will have to pay a tax equal to 1s 8d in the pound on that income. This is the wrong and the folly against which, you may recollect, that I protested. It was not contained in the Act of 1879, and there is no inconsistency in my objecting to it.

I could point out other injustices involved in the present law, but time will not allow me. I will only repeat my inability to perceive why, if the principle of graduation in taxation is just and expedient, its application should be confined to real property. The value of personal property in New Zealand is about eighty-five millions; many of its possessors are neither toilers nor spinners, far less so than land-owners and workers. Why should the latter be placed on a less favourable footing than their fellow-colonists in cities and towns? If Mr. Jay Gould, who died the other day, possessed of fifteen millions sterling, chiefly personal property, had resided in New Zealand, he would have paid a very much smaller rate of taxation than many a hard-working farmer owning the land he tills. The Ministerial party are endeavouring to woo the country electors, and protest against the idea that they are unfavourable to the country, but we must judge them by their acts, and their insistence upon such unfair inequality is inflicting a great wrong upon the country. They attempt to answer our complaints by stating that many farmers pay less now than they did previously.

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That may be the case, but it is no justification of such an inequality of sacrifice as between town and country property as I have referred to. The more this aspect of the case becomes familiar to the country electors, small as well as great, the more certain they are to recognise its injustice, and to insist on its correction. The farmer who pays less now than formerly will not be bribed thereby into supporting manifest injustice to his less fortunate neighbour. With regard to this question there is an extract published in yesterday's Press from a speech by Mr Seddon, delivered at Greymouth, that is important. The Government profess that they do not wish to be unjust to the land, but this is what Mr Seddon says- "He approved of reducing taxation on industries in every shape. They should be reduced as much as possible, and it would be the business of the Government to reduce these taxes until they were finally able to put the tax on the land entirely." That is what you who are landowners are to expect, and I hope you enjoy the prospect.

## LAND QUESTION.

At last we have got a new Land Act, with alterations proposed by the Minister of Lands. As introduced, the Bill contained the old perpetual lease clauses, reserving to the State the increment of value which wrecked last year's Bill. But there was a strong feeling on both sides of the House against such legislation, and, what was of more immediate importance, a bye-election was taking place in Rangitikei, which showed unmistakably the objection of the country electors to the denial of the freehold. Reluctantly, but prudently, therefore, the Minister made what was a practical surrender of the principle he had been fighting for, and agreed to a lease for 999 years, appropriately dubbed the "eternal" lease. Like many compromises this one fails to thoroughly satisfy either side. It does not give to the State the growing value of the land, as Land Nationalisers claim, and does not satisfy the unmistakable desire of the settler to possess the actual freehold of his holding. It will, no doubt, create a large number of State tenants, holding at rents which the Minister of the day may or may not enforce the punctual payment of, and thus open the door to much favouritism. The lease itself will not be eternal, but so long as it lasts it will be an eternal source of political agitation and pressure for reduction of payments and other relaxation of conditions. The leaseholders will believe that these conditions are unreasonable and oppressive to them, and of no advantage to the State, and will insist on their removal as soon as they are numerous enough to do so. The more leaseholders the Minister creates, the sooner will his leasehold system come to an end. For most practical purposes a 999 years' lease is as good as a freehold title, and I cannot see why it should not be made so in name as well as in substance. [A Voice: "He will mortgage it."] If he does it will mean that

one man wants to borrow and another wants to lend. The two will assuredly come together. If the borrower cannot give satisfactory security like freehold, he will have to pay a higher rate of interest to the money-lender.

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On the questions of Land Nationalisation and the Single Tax, which mean nearly the same thing, we hear less of late than a year since. Some Government supporters would have us believe that nothing of the kind is seriously contemplated. The truth is that the unmistakeable disapproval with which suggestions from influential quarters were received, especially in country districts, and the approach of a General Election, have made the advocates of these doctrines somewhat cautious. But the snake is only scotched, not killed. The Prime Minister has not unsaid what he told a deputation of advocates of the Single Tax, viz., that he sympathised with them, but that they could not attain their object all at once. Nor has he withdrawn any of the opinions which he put forward in a pamphlet published by him to advocate the "State Ownership of Land." Replying in this pamphlet to the argument that the State tenants might combine to obtain the freehold, he says: - "Let us suppose now, that we have only national land. The phenomena presented in this case would be; on the one hand, a body of cultivators paying rent to the State; and on the other a greater body living by wages, mainly in towns, deriving a beneficial interest from the rents, and remaining content in the knowledge that they participate in the prosperity of the agricultural tenant. On the ground of self-interest the more numerous class will cast their votes against the disturbance of a system which works in their favour." And to influence the town majorities he says, "We have a moral right to use every prejudice, every tendency of the popular or legislative mind, to assist us in the work." Therefore the Minister would, if he could, keep the occupiers of the soil in the position of State tenants however much they might desire to emerge from that position, and by using "popular prejudice" in the towns he would, if he could, cram land nationalisation down our throats, whatever the opinions and wishes of country settlers might be. If I could find any good ground for believing that general State ownership of land would be a beneficial and an enduring system I would not raise my voice against it. But the more I have enquired into and examined the subject, the more certain it appears to me that any such system, while it would not be permanent, would, while it lasted, be infinitely mischievous. It would discourage careful husbandry, and involve the existence of a huge State tenantry owing rents which might or might not be enforced by the Minister of the hour in need of political support, and would lead to an amount of political unrest, of jobbery and corruption, with which honest Government would have no chance.

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### **ELECTORAL - WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.**

I now come to the Electoral question, and the subject of Women's Franchise - towards which I was glad to hear the Chairman express himself so favourably. You said, sir, that if Female Franchise was obtained party government would be done away with. If it had not been for party slavery, Woman's Franchise would now be the law of the land. A large majority of members were in favour of this reform, and would have taken it even with the amendments of the Legislative Council - which I did not agree with - but they had to follow their party leader, and wreck the Bill placing our Electoral machinery on a better footing, which had been discussed at length and passed both Houses. I think this was not creditable to either. The disagreement was connected with "Woman's Franchise." The progress of public opinion on this question has been most satisfactory - argument is now pretty well admitted to be all on one side. Those who dread to see women vote, are driven to dodges and tricks to stave off the evil day; they start one excuse after another for postponing this reform. Unfortunately, the Legislative Council gave them a chance; they introduced into the Bill clauses for enabling women living at a distance from a polling booth to send their votes by post in the same manner as shearers or commercial travellers. Whatever may be thought about this provision, it was a mistake for the Council to introduce it into the Bill, and a greater mistake to insist on it. But the greatest mistake of all was for the House of Representatives to abandon the Bill rather than admit the alteration. There is no mistake that Mr. Seddon, the acting leader of the House, made this an excuse for depriving women of their vote. The pretended alarm at the secrecy of the ballot being infringed was only a dodge by means of which a great reform, desired by a large majority of the representatives of the people, as well as the people themselves, has, for the present, been defeated. What will be its fate next session? If some of the Ministers by hook or by crook can prevent its passing they will do so. The excuse will be that there is not time for women to register before the next election, and that the question wants further consideration. As of this last, the subject has now been before the electors for the last thirteen years with constantly increasing support, and I have not the smallest doubt that the next election would increase the majority in its favour. But, if it is right that women should vote, as Parliament has affirmed, they ought not to be kept out of their right for another three or four years. And, as for getting their names on the Electoral Roll, I think we may safely leave them to look after that. There seems a general impression, even among Government supporters, that the Government will next session manoeuvre to shelve the subject. I trust this attempt will be defeated, and that the supporters of Women's Franchise, on whichever side of the House they sit, will not submit to so base a betrayal of a great principle.

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Party considerations should be thrown aside, as recommended by the Chairman. If this is done the enfranchisement of women will, next session, be an accomplished fact. New Zealand is looked upon as leading in this cause, and if, with so large a preponderance of public opinion in its favour, we allow it to be again sacrificed, we shall occupy in the eyes of the world a ridiculous and humiliating position.

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES.**

Second only in importance to the subject I have just referred to, is that of securing due representation for minorities. I have so often argued this question here that I might weary you by going at length over the same ground. Of course, majorities

must rule, not, indeed, because there is any Divine right in 2,000 men to bind 1,000, but because 2,000 have force on their side, and, as a rule, can enforce compliance with their wishes. This is the reason why we admit the right of the majority to rule. But it is no reason why the minority should not be fairly heard and represented in proportion to their numbers. Our present mode of voting denies them this. The injustice of the existing system is especially felt in those large cities which return three representatives. An important part of these constituencies, upon whose enterprise and outlay of capital the cities largely depend, have, in three cases out of four, no representation whatever, and no prospect of obtaining it. They are practically blotted out of the representation. Under any just system of voting, their numbers would entitle them to at least one representative. I may give an illustration which has just reached us from the late elections in England of the working of the present system. In Wales the Liberals polled 129,000 votes and the Conservatives 78,000. That should have entitled the former to twenty-two members, and the latter to twelve. They actually obtained, however, thirty - one and three respectively. In an important contest such as that on Home Rule nine members, making eighteen on a division, may have most serious results. Another reason why the existing plan of voting is unsatisfactory, is that changes in public opinion in a self-governing community should be fairly reflected in Parliament; but this is not the outcome of our present electoral machinery. Many contests are decided by trifling majorities, and a comparatively small modification in the opinion, of the constituencies involves quite disproportionate changes in the balance of political power, and in the policy of the colony. This would be avoided by a mode of voting under which various parties and opinions would have representation in proportion to their numbers. More steadiness in our policy and administration would be ensured, and what is felt to be a standing injustice would be removed. Such a plan for recording votes is not far to seek. It has been elaborated and widely discussed in other countries, and is in operation in some.

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The machinery is so simple and effective, that when tried even by village audiences in England, it has been easily understood, and worked with perfect success. It is amazing and amusing that those who claim the title of Liberals and Democrats should oppose so liberal and democratic a measure, and should object to the claim of minorities for a fair share of representation, without which no genuine Democratic Government can exist. This reform may not come in my day, but with extended education, and a broader view of political questions, I am satisfied that it will eventually be made part of our representative system. To those persons with whom Mr. Gladstone is an authority I may mention that in introducing his Home Rule Bill he dwelt on the justice of minorities being protected, and stated that his Bill would contain provision for that purpose. The nature of that provision may or may not be approved, but the affirmation of the principle should remove any suspicion of its being an illiberal or reactionary one.

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

You have no doubt read the debates which took place respecting the difference between the Governor and his Ministers on the subject of proposed additions to the Legislative Council. The Governor offered nine members. Mr. Ballance insisted on not less than twelve; how many more he asked for has not transpired. The conduct of Ministers in refusing to appoint at once the nine members offered is difficult to understand. They never ceased complaining that their measures could not properly be discussed in the Council, as they had no supporters there. They could have taken nine additions without abandoning their claim for the other three, and have carried nearly all the Bills whose loss they profess to deplore, but they declined to make a single appointment until the session was over. There must have been other reasons for such remarkable conduct. The dispute involved a far-reaching constitutional principle, viz., whether the Governor is bound to appoint whatever number of Councillors the Premier recommends, even to the extent of swamping the Council, or whether the Governor, as an independent and impartial arbiter between political parties in the colony can, in his discretion, refuse so extreme a measure without at least a reference to the electors. His Excellency held the latter position. His Ministers insisted on the former. The difference was very serious. Mr. Ballance had in Auckland stated "it was said that the Governor would refuse to put members into the Council if advised to do so by the Government. So long as they- the Government- had a majority, they must insist on their advice being followed by the Governor, and if he refused to take their advice they could follow the constitutional course of allowing others to take their places. They would not consent to be thwarted; and if their advice, representing as they did the majority of the people, were disregarded, it would be undignified for them to continue to hold office."

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But when it came to the point Ministers pocketed their dignity and stuck to their seats. They induced the Governor to refer the question to Lord Ripon instead of to the electors of New Zealand, who should have been arbiters in the matter. What opinion has Lord Ripon given on this important question? We are not allowed to know. His Lordship, by cable, advised the Governor to concede the three appointments in dispute, but did not then give his reasons- he promised to state them fully by despatch, this was more than six months ago; we have heard nothing of the despatch, and still the colony is in ignorance of the view which the Secretary of State takes of the important question submitted to him. Either Lord Ripon has forgotten his promise, or the despatch has been received and pigeon-holed. If it is the case that Ministers have recommended that it should not be published, their conduct is unjustifiable. The electors of the colony have surely a right to know whether the reasons why Lord Ripon advised the concession of the three appointments in dispute applied to this special case only or are of general application. An obedient Parliamentary majority may condone this as they do other misconduct, but the colonists generally will condemn it.

Sir R. Stout has raised the question of the necessity for a Second Chamber at all, and recommends us to have an Elective Governor, and only one Chamber, and he refers as a precedent to the Provincial Legislatures of New Zealand. But the cases are not parallel or even similar. In the first place, many most important powers in the matter of legislation were altogether withheld from Provincial Councils, and, in the second place, the Colonial Government was practically a revising chamber, possessing a veto in Provincial legislation which was very freely exercised. Moreover, I am not sure that the history

of Provincial Governments and their doings should make us look upon them as models for a larger Legislature; I think the verdict of New Zealand would be the other way. Looking beyond New Zealand you will find that nearly every Representative Constitution of importance provides, by a Second Chamber, a check upon hasty legislation by a Parliamentary majority, or even by the electors themselves. Mr. Gladstone, in the speech to which I have referred, states that "looking out over the whole circumference of the British Empire, and even of the world, experience does not recommend or warrant resort to the system of a single Chamber." And further, "A nominated Council is a weak Council. An Elective Council is the only form which can give any force or vitality to the institution." I am confident that the electors of New Zealand including Sir R. Stout, if he were in a position of responsibility, would think twice, and, indeed, many times, before they entertained a proposal so revolutionary as he has made, so opposed to the opinions of the wisest statesmen, and the experience of Parliamentary Governments all over the World.

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But while I think a second Chamber a necessary feature of a Democratic Constitution, I do not think that our present mode of appointing Legislative Councillors is satisfactory. The best mode of providing for such appointments has been found to be one of the most difficult problems with which statesmen have to deal. To leave them, as now, practically to the Premier of the hour, without limit as to numbers, makes him despotic, and makes the Council a mere creature of the Minister. In this matter the weight of argument appears to me to be in favour of some mode of election by the people, which, while placing the Council in harmony with deliberate and matured public opinion, would nevertheless enable it to be a useful drag on precipitate legislation, or even passing waves of popular emotion. The election need not be based on any property qualification, but it should be one which would not give a mere duplicate of the House of Representatives, or, of course, it would be useless. The election of men of mature age for a longer term than three years and for larger districts, and, above all, by a system which would enable minorities to be fairly represented, has been suggested, and is well worthy of consideration. Provisions for dealing with obstinate differences of opinion between the two Houses and avoiding a deadlock would be necessary, and examples of this kind are already in existence. Such a system would be both Conservative and Liberal in the best sense of those terms. It would, while guarding against impulsive and ill-considered action, provide for the matured will of the people being given effect to without unreasonable delay. It would also avert the danger which is ahead of us of large additions to the Council, which in the future can hardly fail to be pressed on the Governor for the time being by incoming Ministers, and which, with due regard to the precedent that has now been established, the Governor could hardly refuse.

## **LABOUR BILLS.**

In New Zealand, as elsewhere, the machinery for constituting a Government is beginning to occupy less attention than the work that Government has at do, especially in connection with social problems. Our time was accordingly largely given last session, and will be again, to Labour questions. With regard to the Labour Bureau, I have never joined in hostile criticism of this institution. The name chosen for it was, I think, unfortunate. I understand it is in reality a Labour Exchange, with branches all over the Colony. By means of Government officials it ascertains where there is a surplus of labour, and where it is deficient, and helps to bring employer and labourer together; this is a legitimate and useful work. Unfortunately the speeches and proceedings of Ministers and some of their supporters have created an impression that it is the duty of this Bureau to go much further, and to find work for any individual who requires it, at the ordinary rate of wages.

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Every right-minded man must desire to see labour fully employed and well paid, not only for the sake of the labourer himself, but because such a state of things, when the result of legitimate industrial operations, is a sure proof of the prosperity of the colony. But to use the taxation of the settlers, or to borrow money for the sake of providing constant and regular work is a different thing. Temporary assistance for those who require it in order to tide over temporary want of employment may properly be given, but this should be on terms which will discourage the recipients from continuing to depend on the Government, and should stimulate them to seek employment elsewhere. The idea that the Government ought, or indeed can, provide every man requiring it with work at the ordinary rate of wages is as mischievous as it is impracticable. It has sometimes been tried, but, has in every instance, whether in national workshops or elsewhere, proved a disastrous failure.

With regard to the Labour Bills, Ministers wisely took several of those which had been framed and introduced by the Atkinson Government, but which persistent obstruction rendered it impossible for them to pass into law. Some of these Bills, as the Truck Act, the Employers' Liability Act, and the Factories Act, are now on the Statute Book. Those measures were fairly criticised by the Opposition, without a trace of the obstructive tactics by which in a former Parliament legislation was frustrated. Generally, they are, calculated to do good, but they would have been more effective and difficulties would have been avoided, if fairer consideration had been given to the suggestions of employers. The refusal to do this has involved defects and blunders harassing to employers of labour without being of real benefit to the employed.

One of the most important of the Labour Bills introduced last session did not become law, viz., that providing facilities for the settlement of labour disputes by conciliation or arbitration. Mr. Reeves introduced a Bill on which he had evidently bestowed much thought and labour. I cannot, however, consider that he dealt with the subject successfully. His Bill was open to two fatal objections. Practically wage-earners could not avail themselves of its provisions unless they were members of Trades Unions. This seems unreasonable, and looks like an attempt to force every working man to join a Union, whether he wishes it or not. Trade Unions have done much good, and can do still more, but men should be free to belong to them or not, as they think proper. I can see no reason why men should be excluded from any State assistance for arriving at a peaceable settlement of trade differences, merely because they choose not to join a Trades Union. This is surely class legislation of the worst kind. The second objection to the Bill was that the award of arbitrators was to be enforced by pains and penalties; in other words, that either party, whether or not he had agreed in a reference to the arbitration tribunal, was to have

its decision forced upon him.

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This would not only be unreasonable but absolutely unworkable, and earned for the Bill the title of a Coercion and not a Conciliation Bill. I have been unable to discover that any such provision has been successfully introduced in the modern legislation of any free country. In the New South Wales. Parliament a Bill with compulsory provisions was recently made short work of, several of the labour members protesting against it. In England the evidence given before the important Labour Commission now sitting is distinctly in favour of the voluntary system, and the Bill about to be introduced into the House of Commons by the Board of Trade is to be framed on the same lines. The subject has been thoroughly ventilated both in other colonies and the Mother Country, and the weight of argument and evidence is strongly against any attempt at compulsion. Indeed, common sense must suggest to us that it is useless to attempt to compel an employer to carry on a business on terms which he is satisfied will give him an insufficient or no profit, and it is still more hopeless to attempt to compel men to work for what they believe to be insufficient remuneration or under unreasonable conditions. Such a law would be productive of irritation and distrust injurious to trade and would be absolutely inoperative for good. I trust that during the coming session a more reasonable view will be taken of this important question, in which case we shall doubtless obtain a useful measure.

Of other Labour Bills, the Workmen's Lien, Employers' Liability, and Amendment of the Factories Act, became law. Some persons argue that these and similar measures are not yet required in New Zealand, but they are calculated to prevent the growth of abuses which have arisen in the Mother Country, and as such deserved the careful consideration which they received. On the other hand, Bills for placing lodging-houses all over the country, as well as hawkers and pedlars, under all kinds of restrictions and regulations, involved an amount of Government interference to which I think no necessity has been shown, and I am glad to say they were not passed.

### **SOCIALISM.**

Before leaving this subject, I will add a few words on what appears to be the Socialistic drift of the policy of our present Government. What some persons will call a form of Socialism we have had since the days of Queen Bess and probably longer. Of late years also the functions of the State have been extended, as in the case of the Labour Bills just referred to and other subjects, and provided it is done with prudence they may be still further enlarged. But all this falls far short of the Socialism which has many advocates in New Zealand, and towards which we appear to be drifting. Their ideal is partly foreshadowed in the programme of an Association inaugurated at Dunedin last year, under the immediate auspices

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of a leading Minister of the Crown, and which programme has quite recently been again put forward by certain Labour Unions. Some of the planks of this platform are as follows:- Government, to undertake as a State function employment of all needing work; State ownership of all land, mines, railways, and coastal marine services; statutory limitation of legal rent and interest; State Bank of Issue, and so on. I may be told that Ministers have not taken their stand on this platform. That may be true at present, but their steps are turned in that direction, and they are urged on by numerous and energetic supporters. The State Socialism to which all this tends would attempt the regulation by the State of the occupations, the earnings, the properties, and even the liberties of the people- and would train men to rely for their well-being rather on the arm of the State than on their own individual energy and thrift. It would extinguish healthy competition, with its rewards to individual excellence, and its stimulus to individual effort, and, while under it, the individual would gradually sink into reliance on the State, it would involve enormous machinery, with its chance of enormous jobbery, and would end in financial embarrassment, and, as I believe, in bankruptcy. Some persons may think that I am conjuring up imaginary dangers. I have had a long experience of public life, and am convinced that this is no visionary prospect, and that we are drifting towards Socialistic rocks faster than many persons are aware of. The head of the Government, addressing a public meeting, has said that the doctrine of individualism is one of "Devil take the hindmost." If he means that those who are less gifted than their fellows, less enterprising, less industrious, and less thrifty will fall behind their fellows in the battle of life he may be right. So long as the world lasts the race will be to the swift, and the battle to the strong, and any attempt to reverse this process will be a fight against nature in which we shall be worsted. Before you can succeed in this you must alter human nature. Indeed, could we reduce men to a dead level, and abolish reward to individual exertion, we should produce a state of society in which, instead of the devil taking the hindmost, the devil would, in this sense, take the lot.

The subject is too large to be more than glanced at on such an occasion as this. One should not leave it without reminding you how much has, during the lifetime of many who are not yet old, been done to improve the condition of the mass of the people. Their earnings are increased, their hours of labour shortened, they have better food, better houses, better clothing, better health, and longer lives; they have free education for their children, and they are far more independent. All this has been achieved, not by State Socialism, or departing from fundamental principles of Government. Much more remains to be done, and should be done, and will be done. It may be done by continuing to work together at what is reasonable and practicable in our day in the way of social improvement. By this means we shall do more good to our fellow men than by hounding on one portion of the community against the other, or by crude dangerous Socialistic schemes, towards which some of our leading politicians seem drifting.

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### **SOURCE OF THE COLONY'S PROSPERITY.**

There are other subjects worthy of your attention, such as the Native Land Question, Railway Management, Increased Payment of Members, Election of Governor, Protection, the Cheviot Estate, the Co-operative System, the Farm Homestead

Associations, &c. on which I should have been glad to speak, but time will not allow me to go into them. I hope to do so on another occasion, but shall be ready now to answer any questions on these subjects. On the improved condition of the colony I congratulate my constituents. I also congratulate Ministers- although it is not their work, it is greatly to their advantage. Mr. Seddon appears to labour under the amiable delusion that Ministers have really had something to do with it. He is reported to have said at Greymouth that the Government had "wiped out the depression that sat on the land to a grievous extent, and redeemed the colony from the depression that afflicted it." If he had gone further and told us how the Government had done this, the information would have been interesting. The ancient Egyptians had a belief that the rising of Sirius, or the Dog Star, caused the overflow of the Nile, which happened about the same time of the year. There was about as much truth in this superstition as in the idea that the rise of the Seddon star in our political firmament has given material prosperity to New Zealand. If credit is due anywhere, it is to a quadruped that Radical orators denounce as if it were vermin, and to the much-abused capitalists who have established our freezing works. The low price of grain and bad seasons are telling, as you know, very seriously on the principal industry of the colony; most opportunely, however, it has been helped by the vast export of frozen mutton, which puts nearly 12 millions sterling per annum into the pockets of our farmers, small as well as great, and is thence distributed amongst other portions of the community. But for this assistance the position of the farming industry would have been very serious. Sheep still provide nearly four-fifths of our exports, and are the best friends of those who depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for support. So far from increased settlement displacing sheep, it will be chiefly by increasing their number, especially in the North Island, that it will be made successful.

The position of our public credit and finance compared with that of our neighbours is also matter for congratulation. But we hear a little too much Pharisaical laudation of ourselves on this account, too much thanking God that we are not as other colonies, or even as those spendthrift Australians.

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We should not forget our own excesses and embarrassments in days not long gone by, nor the fact that these excesses have left behind a debt which is still larger in proportion to our population than that of any Australian colony. Nor lastly ought we to forget that for the improved position of our finance, which, in 1887, was one of danger and discredit, we are indebted to the years of careful management and rigid economy during which we had a Government inspired and presided over by the late Sir Harry Atkinson. The manner in which you received that remark confirms me in the belief that the people of New Zealand will not forget one to whose services they owe so much, and who has left the colony greatly poorer by his death.

## **INTENDED RETIREMENT FROM POLITICS.**

Before concluding, I think it only respectful and fair to my constituents to state that it is not my intention to seek re-election when the present Parliament expires. This resolution is arrived at on purely personal grounds, and has not been recently formed. It has long been my opinion that at the age at which I have arrived a man should retire from the toil and turmoil of active political life, and leave to younger and stronger men to carry on the work. [A Voice: "No."] Accordingly, at the election of 1890 I intimated to my friends that it would be my last. I have now seen nearly three score and ten years, forty of which have been given to public life in New Zealand, nearly the whole of them in the Colonial Parliament. I cannot leave without regret the House of Representatives in whose work I have been associated from nearly the first days of its existence, and of which I am the oldest member. I shall ever retain a sincere interest in the public affairs of the colony, as well as a grateful recollection of the confidence and consideration which has been extended to me by this and other constituencies whom I have had the honour to represent.

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## **VII.**

### **RETIREMENT FROM POLITICS. (LEESTON, MARCH 7TH, 1894.)**

*[A large and representative gathering of settlers from all parts of the Ellesmere District was held in the Town Hall Leeston, on Wednesday evening March 7th, 1894, on the occasion of the presentation to Sir John Hall of an illuminated address from his late constituents, in recognition of his long and faithful services as their representative in the General Assembly. By this time the Act conferring the franchise on women, for which Sir John Hall had laboured so unceasingly, had been passed, and the audience included a large proportion of women electors of the district. A handsome bouquet was presented on behalf of the ladies of Leeston to Lady Hall, who occupied a seat on the platform with Sir John Hall and the Committee. Mr. D. McMillan presided, and in presenting the address referred to Sir John's services in the Provincial Council, and on various local bodies, as well as in the House of Representatives. He had been a Member of Parliament almost continuously since 1855, and had filled nearly every office in the Government of the Colony, from that of Premier downwards. In fact his whole life had been spent in assisting to carry on the public affairs of the Colony, and he had worked throughout in a manner reflecting great credit on himself and with eminent advantage to the Colony. Mr. John Rennie, speaking as one who had been strongly opposed to Sir John in politics, bore equally strong testimony to the industry and zeal which he displayed in everything he undertook, more especially with regard to public matters. He expressed his deep regret that Sir John Hall was retiring from public life adding that he belonged to a class of men who were fast passing away, and who would be most seriously missed by the country when they were gone. Notwithstanding a tinge of sadness natural to the occasion, the enthusiasm which prevailed throughout the meeting was a striking tribute to the esteem and respect in which Sir John Hall was held by those who knew him best.]*

I desire first to thank you most heartily on behalf of Lady Hall for the very handsome bouquet which has been

presented to her by the ladies of Leeston. As to myself, let me say that I do not intend to make a long speech, but there are one or two points to which I must briefly refer. The feelings to which the present meeting give rise are necessarily mixed. On the one hand it is a heartfelt pleasure to receive from so large a gathering so flattering a proof of their approval and good will; but, on the other, there is something saddening in the reflection that it means bidding a formal good-bye to the work in which the best part of my life has been spent and in which I continue to take a deep and abiding interest. For another reason it is difficult for me to reply to this address. It is customary on occasions of this kind for an old politician to dwell on the contests in which he has been engaged, and to glorify the principles and measures for which he has fought. But the friends who have come together to-night are not those only by whose side I have fought, but also those against whom it has been my lot to contend. It would be ungrateful and ungenerous if I were to improve this occasion by saying what they might disagree with, but could not reply to. This is neither the time nor the place for controversy, and I will avoid it.

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Fortunately there are some questions which by lapse of time have ceased to be matters of controversy, and may be almost ranked as ancient history. On one or two of these I will say a few words. We are often told that men, and women too, are apt to idealise the past and to let their imagination shed a rosy tint over bygone days, which they think and speak of as the "good old times." I do not think this is a weakness of the younger race of colonial politicians. On the contrary, they seem to consider our older public men as perhaps well enough for their day, but in reality little more than unenlightened relics of a worn-out old world. They patronise us old people as interesting fossils who appear to have come out of Noah's ark. I confess, however, to a weakness for the old days of Canterbury. I think the work done in the old Provincial days and the men who did it, deserve to be held in grateful recollection. The administration, at whose head were men like FitzGerald, Sefton Moorhouse and W. Rolleston, was characterised by honesty, ability, and intelligent dealing with the difficult circumstances of a new country. I was a member of the first Provincial Council, and of the last. Most of my old colleagues have long since passed away. They would have done credit to any Legislature. Perhaps their Parliamentary education would nowadays be considered incomplete. In their days "stonewalling" was unborn, and deliberate obstruction was an unknown art. Men of ordinary physical powers could do their duty with satisfaction; and the whole proceedings of the Council would compare favourably with those of the august body to which we now look for political salvation. It has been well said that the history and character of a Government may be read in the monuments which it leaves behind. When we consider what our Canterbury Provincial Government has left behind, especially in the matter of public works- when we look at the roads, bridges, harbour works, and even rail-roads, by which the Province was opened up; when we look on the large immigration which was secured; on the liberal education system which was erected, and on the fact, which statistics prove, that in proportion to our available agricultural area a larger amount of actual settlement was secured, and more agricultural produce was raised than in any other part of the colony, we are justified in believing that the days of the Provincial Government were some of Canterbury's best days. It has been said, and I think with truth, that no part of the colonial empire, unaided by mineral wealth, ever made more rapid progress in solid and permanent settlement than did Canterbury in the days of its Provincial Government. I will only add that if the work of other Provinces had been as well done as that of Canterbury; provincial institutions might have remained in existence to the present day.

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There are some other public subjects which I should like to speak upon, but to which, as they are still in the range of party politics, I will not refer. But the question of Women's Franchise has now passed out of the range of party politics; there seems now to be no difference of opinion upon the subject. Nearly every politician, and of course every candidate, is in favour of it. I cannot lose this opportunity of congratulating the fairer part of our population not only on the grant of Women's Suffrage, but on its apparent success. I congratulate the women of the colony not merely on the right to vote being conceded by Parliament, but still more on the extent to which they have availed themselves of it. It was said by the opponents of the measure that the women would not avail themselves of the franchise if it were granted to them, but the fact that some 100,000 women registered their votes throughout the colony, and of these some 90,000 voted at the last election, proves that they were mistaken. As to the effect of the women's vote on the fortunes of one or other of the political parties, I do not think it worth my while to enquire. I only know that whether women have voted on one side or the other they have as much right to a voice in the Government of the country and in making the laws by which they are bound as men have. That the women in New Zealand have exercised the right in such large numbers, and in so orderly and apparently in so intelligent a manner, seems to me to constitute a powerful argument for similar concessions being made in other lands. It has been said more than once that I had predicted that the women's vote would give the preponderance to the Opposition party. Nothing is further from the truth; I defy anyone to quote a single expression of mine which will bear out such an assertion. All I have ever said is that I believed it would increase the influence of the family and of settled colonists as against the unsettled wandering single man, and I have no doubt it has done so. Under an efficient ballot system, such as we possess, it is impossible to know how the votes of any class of electors have been cast. According; however, to the best information I have been able to gather, I believe that where a temperance candidate has been in the field the influence of the women's vote has been given in his favour irrespective of other considerations. But where this was not the case, they appear as a rule to have voted with their male belongings, and, except under the circumstances I have mentioned, the result of the recent elections on the fate of parties would, I believe, have been the same as it has been if the women had not voted at all.

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One word; ladies and gentlemen, on a personal matter to which I should not have alluded but for a recent speech by a Minister of the Crown. An amusing controversy has arisen as to who is entitled to the credit of enfranchising women in New Zealand. A Press Association telegram, reporting a speech of the Hon. Mr. Ward

to distinguished Australasian visitors lately, contains the following words:- "On the question of Female Franchise, the Ministry had been accused of deceitfulness, tortuous conduct, and insincerity, yet the fact remained that it was the Seddon Ministry, and they only, who conferred the franchise on women, whatever might be said to the contrary." This is truly one of the most extraordinary flights of fancy I ever heard. I freely admit that my name has been placed too exclusively in the front with regard to the movement. It is true I have worked for thirteen years to keep the claims of women to the franchise before the public, and before one Government after another, and have thus had something to do with its success. But others- men and women too, not Ministers- have worked consistently and steadily in the same cause, and have helped to prove to Parliament and to Ministers not only that all arguments were in our favour, but that a vast preponderance of public opinion was on our side, and that Ministers must either pass the measure themselves or have it passed over their heads. I received a proof of what the opinion of the Premier on the subject was when the Bill became law. So soon as it was finally passed, Mr. Seddon came across the floor of the House and asked me if, as a memento of the important event, I would accept a copy of the Act printed on parchment. I accepted the offer gratefully, and promised to give the interesting document a place in my family archives. But I am sorry to say that this is the last I have heard of the matter, and the place in my family archives reserved for the Prime Minister's present is still vacant. The valuable parchment may, perhaps, have found its way into the Seddonian family archives, and if Mr. Seddon should, by any chance read the report of this gathering, he may yet see his way to redeem the promise made to me.

Turning to another subject, I wish I could congratulate you on the present and prospective prosperity of this portion of the colony, and I cannot but think that those who now attempt to do so are perpetrating a cruel mockery. Unfortunate seasons and miserable markets have dealt a heavy blow to the farming industry in this portion of the colony, and, of course, trading and other interests share in the depression. The circumstances call for every assistance which a Government can give, but in reality, though a Government can do much to cause depression, they cannot do much to cure it. This cure must come from the courage, the self-denial, and the patient thrift of the men who are now suffering so grievously viz., the farmers, who are the backbone of the colony.

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Turning now from public questions, let me again say that, though this is the pleasantest of many pleasant evenings I have spent in this room, yet it has for me its unpleasant side. It means parting from old Associations and old friends. Public work, when engaged in not from selfish or ambitious motives, but from a sincere, desire to do public good, is one of the best and worthiest occupations to which a man can devote himself, and ought not to be lightly abandoned. Especially is this the case when a man has been treated with the consideration which I have received from the public generally, and particularly from this constituency. No man ever had better constituents. You have not always agreed with my opinions or approved my acts (I am conscious of many, mistakes and many shortcomings), but you have been:

"To my virtues ever kind;  
To my faults a little blind."

Of one failing I trust you will acquit me, and that is of having, for the sake of popularity, concealed my actual opinions, or professed those I did not really hold. Unpopularity has, from time to time, befallen me, but I have to thank the electors of this as well as other districts for never during forty years of almost constant political contests having, on any occasion, placed me at the bottom of the poll.

Some of my friends twit me with being fond of work, and one of them, with whom I was remonstrating on his indolence, retorted that he deserved more credit for doing a day's work than I did for a whole week's. This is not quite correct. Yet I do believe thoroughly that a life which is not a life of labour is not worth living, and is a wasted existence. But there is a time for all things. At three score and ten a man's capacity for usefulness is generally lessened, and I have long thought that at that time he should give place to younger men. As many of you are aware, my decision has not been hastily or recently arrived at. I feel that my old tasks can no longer be efficiently performed, and that it is my duty to make way for a younger man. On behalf of myself, and of those who are closely connected with me, I now thank you most sincerely for the many kindnesses which, during many years, I have received from Ellesmere electors of all shades of opinion. I thank you for the compliment you have paid me in coming here to-night in such large numbers, and, lastly, I thank you for this very handsome address, so numerously signed as it is by old supporters as well as old opponents. You could not have given me a more acceptable gift. The sight of it will, during the few years I may yet be spared, often wake very pleasant memories, and it will be one of the most valuable possessions I shall leave behind me. Finally, let me assure you that I shall carry into my retirement a deep and abiding interest in the progress and prosperity of New Zealand, and especially of that portion of it with which I have been so long and so intimately associated.

## VIII.

## NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL TO MR. SEDDON.

(CANTERBURY HALL, CHRISTCHURCH, TUESDAY, APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>, 1902.)

*[In the beginning of 1902 a movement was set on foot for a general recognition of the services of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable R. J. Seddon, in despatching contingents to the aid of the Motherland in the South African War. It was very cordially supported throughout the Colony, and 20,000 signatures were appended to the testimonial, which was signed by persons representing all shades of political opinion in every part of New Zealand. Sir John Hall was asked to make the presentation and did so at a crowded and enthusiastic meeting held in the Canterbury Hall, Christchurch, on Tuesday evening, April 6th, the Mayor of Christchurch, Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes, being in the chair.]*

I Feel that not only a very honourable, but a very pleasant task has been entrusted to me, namely, to present to Mr. Seddon a testimonial of the feelings of the whole colony of New Zealand for the valuable services which he has rendered in organising and despatching the assistance we have been able to render to the Mother Country in South Africa. Mr. Seddon, you have heard my voice on other occasions, and I think not always in the same strain as you will hear me this evening. I am afraid you may recollect occasions upon which I have endeavoured to show that your policy was wrong, your legislation worse, and your administration worst of all. But that was on occasions of what I may call domestic differences, and in every country in which opinion is not stagnant, differences of opinion on those questions are necessary and desirable. Upon the question which has brought us here to-night there is practically in New Zealand no difference at all. It is to acknowledge the very great services you have rendered in organising the assistance we have been able to give to the Mother Country. There is only one feeling, I am sure, throughout the colony, that our membership of the great Empire from which we have sprung, whose flag floats over us, which gave us the free institutions which we enjoy, and which has so long protected us from any attacks at a very trifling cost to ourselves, entails upon us a corresponding obligation- the obligation when the Mother Country finds herself in a difficult position to stand by her, and especially as is now the case, when she has had a great struggle forced upon her to rescue our kith and kin from intolerable oppression and wrong. That feeling pervades the colony. I am sure, sir, you would not claim that you had created it- we old folks brought it with us from the Old Country, and the young folks have been born with it, and have imbibed it with their mother's milk.

It might have been probable that these loyal and patriotic feelings would not have borne good or sufficient fruit if we had not had at the head of the Government of this colony a man who entirely sympathised with it, a man who had the power and also had the will, to do his very best to make them bear good fruit. Fortunately for New Zealand, we have had this time one who had all these qualifications, who entirely sympathised with those patriotic feelings, and was foremost among colonial public men, who threw himself into the task of organising assistance and who succeeded, I think, in making for New Zealand a contingent if not the first, certainly among the very first of men sent from the colonies. You succeeded, sir, also not only in taking that honourable position, but after that, as during the last two years, you have not failed to persevere with determination, untiring energy, and judgment to press forward this great duty on the people of New Zealand, and you have succeeded in sending from New Zealand contingents which, I think I may safely say, are more in number in proportion to our population than have gone from any other colony. Not only were they more in number, but by their glorious services which they have rendered, they have given New Zealand the highest possible character in the Mother Country. It has been my good fortune during a recent visit to England to come across men who have been through the greater part of the campaign, and while they all acknowledge the gallantry and devotion of all the colonial troops, they said that the New Zealanders were distinguished for their steady and general good conduct and their good discipline. I have heard that from men who have seen them under various circumstances. Sir, they have said that they were men to come up to the ideal which Lord Roberts gave of the British soldier. "Heroes on the battlefield and gentlemen out of it."

There is one other action of yours which I desire to offer you thanks from myself and, I am sure, from your brother colonists also, and that is for the vigorous protest you have recently initiated against the shameful slanders uttered in Europe against our army. The abominable slanders which have been uttered on the Continent have been well called "foul and filthy lies," and it is a matter of deep regret that they should have been chiefly uttered in a country and by a nation with which we have always been supposed to be friendly, and upon which we have certainly strong claims of kinship.

But, sir, there have been statements made in the Mother Country itself by men of influence which have been quite as false, it not so coarse, and which have been more mischievous. To say that the British Army has conducted this war by methods of barbarism is, I say, an abominable slander.

Now, one or two words more. What is to be the end of this conflict? I believe I speak your feelings and those of the people of New Zealand, when I say that there can only be one end to it. I am much too old a man to be a "jingo," but I say this fight has got to be fought to a successful finish. Whatever further sacrifices may be required, on the part either of the Mother Country or the colonies, will be cheerfully given to accomplish that end. There is, however, one matter upon which I am bound to say I am not quite free from uneasiness, and that is what the settlement shall be when the conflict is over. I say I am not without uneasiness regarding this because we hear of men of influence even at Home talk about a "patched-up peace" -talk about offering to the Boers as soon as the war is over, the same free institutions as are enjoyed by all other colonists. We know how beneficial these institutions are; we have enjoyed them for many years; we have worked them well; we have found them a

blessing, and it cannot be that colonists so situated would grudge to others the same benefits and the same institutions when we can safely do so. But remember, that this edifice of self-government in the British colonies is erected on a broad and safe foundation of loyalty to the Throne, and attachment to England and her institutions. Should we find that state of things existing in, South Africa, then by all means, give them the free institutions that have done so well for us here. But to give to men who are irreconcilable, who hug their race hatred, and who show no signs of being reconciled in any way we have yet seen- to give to them the large political power we enjoy, they might, and probably would, at the earliest convenient opportunity, make use of it to prepare and renew this struggle- to do that appears to me to be nothing less than political insanity. We have been told by Mr. Chamberlain- a man who has deserved well of his country- that when this question of the settlement comes to be determined, the colonies who have shared the sacrifice with the Mother Country, are entitled to a very powerful voice in, the matter, and nobody can deny that. You, Mr. Seddon, are going to the Old Country, and there you will speak the voice of New Zealand, and I hope and trust- and I feel sure I am representing the feelings of my fellow colonists- that you will protest against any settlement which will not be, at least, a safe and sure one, and provide against the renewal of this struggle, which has cost so much blood and treasure. It is now my duty to read the address, which has been signed by no less than twenty thousand persons, and which will, ultimately, be presented to you in a much more perfect form than this, and which I confidently trust will for you, for many years to come, and for your descendants, be a valued record of your great services to the colony and the Empire.

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Sir John Hall then read the address as follows:

*“To the Right Hon. Richard John Seddon, P.C., D.C.L., Premier of the Colony of New Zealand. Right Honourable Sir, - In the course of a few weeks you will leave us to represent New Zealand at the Coronation of our King, and it is thought that your approaching departure presents a fitting time to express to you our appreciation and approval of the prompt and practical proof you have given of the sympathy of your fellow colonists with their Motherland in her South African struggle.*

*Loyalty is but kinship written large, and every man and woman of this colony is proud of the crimson thread which makes the people of New Zealand loyal sons and daughters of the British Empire.*

*Your high office has been to voice our loyalty and give it effectual shape, and the vigour and judgment you have displayed in this have not only won our gratitude and admiration, but have shown the world that whatever be the sacrifice, we cheerfully stand beside our Mother Country for the maintenance of the honour and the integrity of her Empire.”*

Continuing, Sir John Hall pointed out that the address did not come from one city or party, but from the colony as a whole. When a similar address was recently presented to Mr. Chamberlain, it was enclosed in a gold casket. They had not been able to go to that length, but it would be supported by something tangible that would show that the feeling which prompted the presentation was not merely lip service. This had been subscribed not in a few sums of large amount, but in a very large number of sums of small amount.

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## IX.

### MEMORIAL TO THE HON. W. ROLLESTON.

(DELIVERED AT THE UNVEILING: OF THE STATUE, ROLLESTON AVENUE, CHRISTCHURCH, 1906).

*[Sir John Hall, while Mayor of the City of Christchurch during the year of the New Zealand Exhibition, 1906, performed the ceremony of unveiling the statue of his life-long friend and former colleague, the Hon. W. Rolleston, erected just in front of the Canterbury Museum. The Hon. C. C. Bowen, M.L.C., another of Mr. Rolleston's oldest and most intimate friends, presided on the occasion.]*

MR. Bowen, - I thank you sincerely for having allotted to me the honourable and grateful task of unveiling the statue of one of the best of New Zealand's colonists and statesmen. A long address will be quite unnecessary, for the name of William Rolleston is a household word throughout the colony for great abilities, high character, and long and valuable public service. Mr. Rolleston arrived in New Zealand in 1858, bearing University honours. He showed at once that scholarship and culture are no disqualification, and need give no distaste for the hard work of a colonial pioneer. He took up sheep farming in the back country with the energy and determination which such a task called for. His qualifications for public work, however, were so apparent that he was not allowed to remain a private settler for any length of time. In 1864, he was induced by Mr. Bealey, the then Superintendent, to leave his sheep station, and engage in the service of Canterbury as Provincial Secretary. I was associated with him as Secretary for Public Works. We had not been long in this position before the discovery of gold on the West Coast threw upon the Canterbury Government the important and difficult task of at once organising the machinery of government for a new gold-mining community. The work devolved chiefly on Mr. Rolleston. He threw himself into it with great energy, I may say, with enthusiasm, and guided by a sound judgment, succeeded admirably in an arduous task, and one that was undoubtedly a work of great importance. It was not long after this that he was induced by Sir E. Stafford to accept the office of Under-Secretary in the Native Department, and there, as well as ever afterwards in his official career, he showed himself a sincere and judicious friend of the native race. His anxiety to promote their well-being, and his indignation at wrong done to them, entitle him to the lasting remembrance of the Maori people.

When, in 1868, the office of Superintendent of Canterbury became vacant, all eyes in the Province turned to Mr. Rolleston, who, by this time stood high in the esteem of the Canterbury people. and he was unanimously elected to that important position. The value of his work in this capacity, and the way in which it was appreciated, are shown by the fact that for the eight succeeding years, and until Provincial Governments were abolished, the people of Canterbury kept him as their Superintendent. Some of these years were times of depression and difficulty. Waste lands were abundant, but money was scarce. Railroads had been commenced, but the local revenue was insufficient to proceed with them, and recourse to payment in land had partly to be resorted to. For some time I was one of his responsible advisers in the Provincial Government, and this was the only occasion on which any serious difference arose between us. It never interfered with the most cordial friendship.

Of some of Mr. Rolleston's work this spot, so appropriately chosen for the statue, cannot fail to remind us. It was chiefly through his thoughtful foresight and care that this Museum, second to none in Australasia, and the fine structure in which Canterbury College is so well housed, were erected and endowed by reserves of Crown Lands. Such reserves have also given us our Public Library and the Lincoln School of Agriculture. For all these objects we have obtained, and, indeed, asked for, little from the rest of the colony. Reserves for many other purposes, especially for plantations on our treeless plains, were also set apart by Mr. Rolleston, and have produced valuable results. Other instances of his foresight, by which future generations of Christchurch residents will benefit, perhaps, more than the present, are to be found in the Victoria Park, and the public roads laid out on the Peninsula Hills. During his last illness I saw him more than once, and found him dwelling with much satisfaction upon this portion of his many labours. No doubt these works were shared by his colleagues, but, as I am able to testify, the inspiration came chiefly from Mr. Rolleston. Against the abolition of Provincial institutions Mr. Rolleston fought hard, but when in this he was unsuccessful, his ability and trustworthiness were so universally acknowledged, that the Colonial Government, to which he was politically opposed, were glad to entrust him with the administration of the Provincial affairs until they could be entirely wound up. It will be in the recollection of many who hear me, that his Superintendency was not allowed by the people of Canterbury to close without substantial proof of the admiration and affection which his work had inspired. I was privileged to deliver to him the handsomest testimonial ever given in this Province in the presence of the largest assembly which ever gathered in Latimer Square.

In the New Zealand Parliament, Mr. Rolleston sat for more than twenty years, and though many differed from his opinions, no one was ever heard who did not acknowledge and praise his single minded and unselfish desire, in all he did, to promote the welfare of the colony. For many years I sat by his side, and in 1879 he joined me in the Colonial Ministry as Minister of Lands, of Justice, and of Education, and also, during Mr. Bryce's temporary retirement, as Native Minister. No one could be more untiring in the administration of his Department; none more zealous in the promotion of education, of Maoris as well as Europeans; no one could be actuated by a higher sense of duty in the administration of justice, or by a more earnest desire to see a judicious and successful settlement of people on the Crown Lands of the colony. This settlement was initiated by Mr. Rolleston under considerable difficulties. His efforts were necessarily experimental, but they met with a large measure of success, and formed the basis of future land reforms.

Probably no public position affords men a better opportunity of judging of each other's character than when they are associated as colleagues in a responsible Ministry, a body which may be said to be always fighting for its life. At times of difficulty or danger, Mr. Rolleston was ever bright, courageous, and full of resource. It is only justice to him so say that throughout our Ministerial career, some of the most successful measures of the Government were due to Mr. Rolleston's suggestion and initiative, and that, on the other hand, for one or two measures for which he silently bore blame, he was not really responsible. In common with other public men of the early New Zealand days, he had a strong faith in the future greatness and prosperity of the colony, and his chief anxiety was that New Zealand should not only be prosperous and wealthy, but that its people should be well educated, with a high sense of their political duties and responsibilities.

This reference to Mr. Rolleston's public services must suffice now, although it could be extended greatly. Speaking of Mr. Rolleston's character as disclosed to those who knew him well, it is difficult to say all that one feels without appearing to be fulsome. He was a ripe scholar, and his classical reading moulded his thought, and added grace and dignity to his diction. But he never paraded his scholarship. There was about him to the end an earnestness and simplicity which specially captivated those privileged to know him. One could not think of him as ever descending to an unworthy action for the purpose of gaining popularity or advantage. I know that he valued highly the good opinion of his fellow-colonists, but he scorned to court popular favour by flattery, by expressing an opinion which he did not really hold, or by withholding denunciations of what he believed to be wrong. One could not associate him with anything mean, cowardly, or ungenerous. For him this was impossible. Even the fierce light of party warfare never discovered any trace of such a blemish in his great character. From beginning to end of his career, he acted up to a high standard of public duty, and he has left an example to younger men which should be of infinite value to the public life of the country. In private life, he was one of my earliest and best friends. Those who had this privilege realised how elevating, inspiring, and charming his companionship was. No man has been among us who more deserved and won the affections of his friends, and the universal respect and regard of the people of New Zealand.

"He was a man, take him, for all in all,  
We shall not look upon his like again."

May I add one special merit which Mr. Rolleston possessed in the eyes of Yorkshiremen in New Zealand, viz., that he was a typical Yorkshireman, with their well-known qualities. He often spoke with affection of his Yorkshire home, was proud

of his great county, as we Yorkshiremen were proud of him. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I will perform the pleasant duty of unveiling the likeness of one of the best men we have ever had among us.

Democracies are said to have short memories for great services rendered to them. I cannot believe it will be so in this case. For the present generation, the memory of William Rolleston will be, as I have said, a household word, and to those who come after us, this speaking likeness will tell of a great, a useful and unselfish life spent in the service of their country.

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X.

## YORKSHIRE AND YORKSHIREMEN.

(ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURAL "SOCIAL" OF THE YORKSHIRE SOCIETY OF CAVTERBURY, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 7<sup>th</sup> 1898)

*[The Canterbury Yorkshire Society was of a non-political character formed in 1898, for the purpose of holding social reunions, etc., amongst the men and women of the province hailing from that good old English county. Sir John Hall was the first President of the Society, and Mr. Rolleston was also elected an officer. The inaugural social, held in the Caledonian Society's rooms, on July 7th, was an immense success, there being scarcely standing room in the hall. Mr. H. B. Kirk one of the Vice-Presidents, after explaining the objects of the Society, and the steps which had been taken in its formation, called upon Sir John to deliver his inaugural address.]*

LET me congratulate you on the numerous and representative meeting which has gathered together this evening to inaugurate the Canterbury Yorkshire Society. Allow me, then, to thank the Committee for conferring on me the honourable position of President of this Society, representing, as it does, the great county which, from its area, its population, its industry, wealth and general importance, fairly claims to be the premier county of England, and which, I am glad to know, is well represented in this Colony and Province. You will, I am sure, share my regret that a distinguished Yorkshireman, Mr. W. Rolleston, one of your Vice-Presidents, is unable to be with us this evening. He has, it is true, risen from his sick bed, but has been anxious, as soon as he could move, to be at his post in the General Assembly, or he would have been delighted to join us this evening.

The circumstance that the names of Mr. Rolleston and myself, who have generally been on the same side in New Zealand politics, stand first in the list of your officers, may possibly suggest to some suspicious individual the idea that this Society has something of a political character. Let me, therefore, state at once and positively that nothing could be further from the truth. The Canterbury Yorkshire Society has absolutely no political purposes to serve, and wishes well to any party which will promote the prosperity of New Zealand. The objects of the Society, as concisely stated in our Rules are as follows:—"To promote unity and good-fellowship amongst Yorkshiremen; to draw them together in friendly and social intercourse; to maintain a patriotic attachment to the county of their birth; and to render friendly assistance and information to Yorkshiremen."

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In pursuance of these objects', it is proposed to hold occasional social gatherings at which Yorkshiremen in Canterbury may become better known to each other, at which some broad Yorkshire dialect, always musical to my ears, may probably be heard, at which we may talk over scenes and events, and recollections of common interest, and by which, I trust, a sense of brotherhood may be fostered among natives of the same great county. It has been said by a well known thinker, that patriotism takes its birth in the very parish in which a man is born and reared. If he has no kindly recollection of, no attachment to the place of his birth and his earliest years, he is not likely to care much for his county, or to take any deep interest in the country of which it forms part. And so, the fact that we love to go back in memory to our old homes, and to talk over their features and character with others who are familiar with the same locality, does not show that we are deficient in interest in and attachment to our new home, but rather that we shall be better guardians of it than if we were wanting in affection for and pride of the county of our birth.

If this feeling is natural and justifiable in men and women from any part of England, should it not be especially so in natives of that great county, with its three Ridings, stretching from the Humber to the Tees, so well-known for its extent, its great and varied natural resources, its population counted by millions, its vast industries, and the important part it has played in the development of British manufactures and commerce? Yorkshire exceeds in area any other two counties in England put together, and, leaving out London, its population is greater than that of any other county except one. And if the number of Yorkshire men and women is great, what may we not say of their sterling qualities. Modesty prevents us from telling the whole truth; but I may surely ask, where do you see finer men, more strapping lads, more bonny and buxom lassies, than on the wolds and in the dales of Yorkshire? They may not have the soft and gentle speech and manners of more southern folk; they are plain spoken, and may be blunt and sometimes rough in speech, but they are none the less warm-hearted, and have a sturdy, robust, independence, as well as energy of character, which has not only done good work at Home, but especially fits them for colonial life.

Turning to the manufacturing industries, which have made the fortune of our fatherland, where, except in its neighbour, Lancashire, have they received so wonderful a development as the great hives of industry in the West Riding? Do not let us forget that the chief customers for the wool, which is our staple product and chief support, are Bradford, Huddersfield and other busy Yorkshire towns. Where but in Sheffield are the chief forges of the great armour plates for our Navy, which gives England command of the sea, and protects her colonies and her commerce? Leaving manufactures, let us ask which is the first among the many attractive health resorts of England? Dr. Granville, than whom there was no better judge,

always pronounced Scarborough to be the queen of English watering places.

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Where do men breed better horses of their kind than in the lovely vale of Cleveland, and where have you a better judge of a horse than a Yorkshireman, as others sometimes find to their cost? Where do you have more bracing air than on the Yorkshire moors and wolds more lovely scenery than Yorkshire hills and dales, or a grander coast line than that which extends from Bridlington to the Tees?

Among the many spots of historic interest with which Yorkshire abounds, probably none is of more importance than Marston Moor, at which, 250 years ago, the Royalists and Parliamentary forces met in a great encounter, and at which a deciding blow was given to the attempted autocracy of the Stuarts. What glorious monuments of their genius and liberality have not been bequeathed to us by Yorkshiremen of days gone by? Where in all England do you find a more interesting city than York, the old capital of the north, with its ancient city walls as complete as they were in the times of the Edwards, and its grand, I had almost said unequalled, old Minster? I have visited nearly every Cathedral in England, and they have many and great beauties, but, with one or two exceptions, they are patchwork compared with York. For grandeur and quiet dignity it surpasses anything of its kind I have ever seen: all Yorkshiremen are justly proud of it. To this feeling on the part of a Yorkshire commander of Cromwell's forces, we may doubtless attribute the protection which he gave to the church, and to it we owe the preservation of the ancient stained glass, by which the windows of the choir are still filled, and which remains the finest collection of the kind in the Kingdom. Of the interesting remains of ecclesiastical buildings in which England is so rich, what are more beautiful in themselves and their surroundings than the old Abbeys of Bolton, Fountains, Whitby, Caedmon, Rievaulx and many others?

If I have not wearied you I should like to add a few words on a part of Yorkshire which especially interests myself, namely, the ancient town of Hull, my birthplace. I cannot honestly say it is beautiful; in fact, it is rather the reverse. But it is an enterprising energetic, thriving seaport, taking a leading and increasing part in the spread of the sea-borne trade and commerce of the Empire. Moreover, it has a creditable place in history. In the days of the struggle between King and Parliament, Hull was the first town to shut its gates against a misguided monarch, who was attempting to override the liberties of Parliament and people. A weak Governor, who attempted to turn traitor, was summarily handed over to the executioner. A bright page in the history of the old town is the story of its representation, for nearly twenty years, by that model Member of Parliament, the Yorkshireman, Andrew Marvel. In an age of corruption, he was an incorruptible patriot, and the fearless champion of popular rights and of purity of administration. Charles II endeavoured to purchase his support by repeated offers of place and money, but, though in straitened circumstances, supported by the contributions of his constituents, and living in a garret, he always rejected these offers.

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When neither threats nor insults, nor bribe: could influence Marvel, there is strong reason to believe that poison was employed to get rid of him. In those days shorthand reporters and special correspondents of newspapers were not invented, but Andrew Marvel's constituents were kept regularly informed by himself of the doings of Parliament and the Government. The greater part of this correspondence has been preserved. It is printed, with other writings of this patriotic Yorkshireman, in three large, old volumes, which I propose some day to deposit in our public library. It is just possible that even New Zealand senators might study them with advantage.

Then, in 1745, when the Pretender attempted to re-establish the Stuart dynasty, the old town raised its volunteer corps, to help in defending the Government which the English people had given to themselves. My great grandfather was a member of this corps. In times nearer our own, another great and good man, William Wilberforce, was sent to Parliament by Hull, his native town. I need not remind you of his lifelong labours for the abolition of negro slavery. You all remember his noble efforts in this great cause, and that to him it is largely due that England led the way in this righteous emancipation. Now, coming to New Zealand, let me say a few words as to the place Yorkshiremen have taken in the building up of our colonial Home. Did not the Yorkshire village of Marton give birth to the great navigator, Captain Cook, who, if he was not actually the first discoverer of these islands, was certainly the first to explore and survey their coasts and harbours with wonderful accuracy, and to make known to the civilised world what a goodly land this is. Is it not somewhat of a reflection on our gratitude and public spirit that while a neighbouring colony has erected a beautiful statue to this great man, New Zealand has only commemorated him by the cheap process of calling a Strait after his name? Among the pioneers of New Zealand who undertook the arduous task of developing, amid many difficulties and some danger, the natural resources of these islands what names are better known than that of the Rhodes Brothers, true Yorkshiremen, whose enterprise and energy have borne abundant fruit for themselves and the colony? There is still with us, I am glad to say, an old Yorkshire worthy, whose name should not be forgotten on an occasion, like the present. In the early days of Canterbury, when provincial coffers were practically empty, and much-needed Public Works seemed beyond our reach, the sagacity and enterprise of Mr. William White provided, at his owl risk, with little or no expense to the Government, for the bridging of our two largest and most dangerous rivers, which had rendered travelling difficult, and cost many valuable lives.

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When the important task was given to us of working free political institutions, did Yorkshiremen bear no worthy part in the work? During the greater part of the time in which Canterbury was administered under a Provincial system, was not the chief office of Superintendent filled by two Yorkshiremen, Sefton Moorehouse and William Rolleston? In the Government of the colony, a Yorkshireman had the honour of filling, for some years, the office of Premier. And may I not, without trenching on party politics, say that Yorkshiremen feel a pride at the manner in which William Rolleston has, for many years, further served the colony, both as our Representative in Parliament, and as Minister of the Crown? Then our present Premier, with his record tenure of the office, though not exactly a Yorkshireman, is the next best thing to it, a Lancashire man. We may call him our country cousin. I might extend almost indefinitely the list of claims which Yorkshire has upon the affectionate remembrance of

her sons, and upon the respect and admiration of others who were not born within her borders. The subject is practically inexhaustible. But I have trespassed too long on your time and patience, and must now draw to a conclusion.

You will, I am sure, agree with me that, proud as we Yorkshiremen justly are of the land of our birth, we are not less attached to the land of our adoption. We have all been glad to see established amongst us an Association of native-born New Zealanders, and trust it will help to foster among our young people a sense of their good fortune in being born in so favoured a land as this is, and also of the duties which they owe to it and to each other. But do not let them or anyone imagine that because they have their origin in the colony, they can take a deeper interest in it than those old pioneers who have so largely helped to convert it from a wilderness to a very fruitful field. No, rest assured that no one race of colonists has a monopoly of colonial patriotism and public spirit. We can answer for it that Yorkshiremen have proved the contrary, and will continue to do so by public service, by helpful bearing towards their fellow settlers, by the place they have taken and will take in the working of our free institutions, and also by readiness to take their part in defence of the colony whenever they may be called upon to do so. Finally, let me say that if some of you are inclined to think that I have blown the Yorkshire trumpet a little too loudly, you must forgive it as the outcome of excess of patriotism. If outsiders doubt: the fairness of my eulogy, let them, the next time they visit the Old Country, have a good look at that part of it from which we hail, and assuredly they will return to us confessing that of all the counties of the dear Old Motherland, Yorkshire has been properly described as "the biggest, the bonniest, and the best."

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## XI.

### THE PROSPECTS OF NEW ZEALAND.

SPEECH AT THE NEW ZEALAND DINNER, HELD AT THE TROCADERO, LONDON, ON THURSDAY, JUNE 25TH, 1903.)

*[During a visit to England in 1903, Sir John Hall was a guest of honour at the New Zealand Dinner, held at the Trocadero, London, the Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, being in the chair. Mr. Reeves, in proposing "The Colony of New Zealand," coupled with the name of Sir John Hall, said :- "Sir John Hall, as every New Zealander knows, was the Prime Minister of our Colony. I have been dwelling tonight on the fact that the times now are prosperous, bright, and cheerful. They were not always so in New Zealand, and it so happened that when Sir John was called upon to steer the ship of State, it was in times of great stress difficulty. There are always differences of opinion as to the wisdom of the course taken by every public man, and I, at that time a very young politician, happened to belong to those who opposed Sir John Hall. Nevertheless, time, which vindicates the actions of all public men vindicated, in some important respects, the action then taken by Sir John Hall. In addition to that- to pass beyond the rights and wrongs of his course- there is no one who will deny the courage, the extraordinary industry and the devotion which grappled with the difficulties of that time."]*

SIR JOHN HALL, who was loudly cheered on rising to respond, thanked the Chairman very heartily for the far too generous terms in which he had referred to himself, and remarked that although they had generally found themselves on opposite sides, and had had distinct differences of opinion in New Zealand, he had never had to complain of anything on the part of Mr. Reeves that was not fair, just, and perfectly generous, and he did not think their political differences had ever impaired in any way their personal friendship. In responding for New Zealand, one was tempted to enter upon the great fiscal question, which the Chairman, with very great ability, had dealt with. It was quite impossible to expect such an audience to listen to him upon that subject, although he felt very strongly upon it, or upon the question of the contribution of the colonies to Imperial Defence, with regard to which he ventured to think many people in England were very ignorant; they did not know what the colonies did, they did not hear the arguments on the other side. The only matter he proposed to deal with was what he might call the economical condition of the colony. He wished to tell them what the impressions of an old colonist, just arrived from the colony, were, and what the ideals of an old fossil were (Cries of "No.") He could not speak with official authority, as he did not occupy any official position at the present time. Happily, he was in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.

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He had great pleasure in stating that no one could go through the country and examine its condition ever so cursorily without being satisfied that it was really and solidly prosperous. Whether they considered the amount of land in cultivation, the amount of cultivation which was increasing, whether they considered the trade of the country, whether they looked at the improved buildings and the improved housing of the whole people, whether they looked at the higher wages, or whether they considered the surplus revenue of £300,000 which Mr. Seddon had just announced, there could be no doubt whatever that the colony was thoroughly prosperous. Now, he wished to say a few words upon the question of who it was to whom the credit for this was due. He believed it was stated at a dinner of this kind that the increased prosperity of New Zealand was due to the policy of the present Government in cutting up large estates and putting small settlers upon them. Well, that was a policy to which he had not; he smallest objection. Long before such a policy was introduced, by the New Zealand Government; in fact, long before it was a burning question, in speaking to his constituents he said that whenever land for settlement was required, it was a fair and justifiable thing for the Government to take estates, paying a fair value for them, and so settling the country. This policy having been introduced, he, as one who did not generally support the present Government, was glad to bear his testimony to the fact, that upon the whole, that policy had been fairly carried out.

### LAND ACQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Now, what was the amount of land which had been acquired by the Government? The last return showed that they had bought 386,000 acres, and, according to Mr. Seddon's last speech in New Zealand, the amount of actual land in cultivation was

3,700,000 acres. Now, how could an addition of 10 per cent. to the cultivation- even if it was all cultivated, which it could not be yet- be the main cause of the prosperity of New Zealand? He referred to this rather strongly, because he thought that in that statement a very great injustice was done to the old colonists, to those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, to those who went out into the wilderness and made that into a fruitful garden, to those who laid the foundation of the prosperity of New Zealand, and to those who came after them and erected a splendid superstructure. It was to the exertions of men like these that the prosperity of New Zealand was due, and not to any particular legislation on the part of the colony. He quite believed that the present Government was anxious for the prosperity of the colony, and that they had done their best, but so had all the Governments of New Zealand; they had all been anxious for the prosperity of the colony; they had all done their best, and he believed they had all contributed to the prosperity of the colony.

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In support of his statement that the colony was prosperous, he wished to refer to its exports. First of all, with regard to wool and, by the way, he wished to say that if ever there was a country in which the Speaker of the House should sit upon a Woolsack, it was New Zealand- there was no doubt whatever that wool carried New Zealand on its back, for many of the first years of the colony. Very probably that period was passing away. New Zealand had sent £3,700,000 worth of wool out of the country, £1,000,000 of gold, and £1,300,000 of grain. Those sources of prosperity had existed for many years, but latterly the main cause of their increased prosperity was the export of frozen meat and dairy produce. He thought that the credit for that was also due to the settlers themselves. It was due very largely to those gentlemen who had the enterprise to run the risk of starting freezing meat establishments and dairy establishments. He had personally put money into the Central Dairy establishment in Christchurch. The dairy produce exports amounted to £1,200,000. It was largely due to the enterprise of the mercantile public and the industry of the farmers that the enormous exports of meat had taken place. But there was no set of gentlemen who deserved more credit than the enterprising ship owners, who had sent such splendid ships to carry their frozen meat comfortably, safely, at a very considerably reduced cost. They had done it for their own interests, and not purely out of love to New Zealand, but they had been great benefactors to the colony.

There had been two other temporary sources of prosperity which he hoped would not recur. A market was open to them in South Africa, and the markets in Australia were also opened to them by the unfortunate drought from which that country has suffered. There was one source of prosperity which he had not mentioned, and that was the bountiful Providence which had given them one of the finest countries on the face of the earth. Such fertile land, with the abundance and variety of its resources, and such a splendid climate could hardly fail to make any country prosperous. As he had stated, next to that they were indebted to the industry of old colonists, and he begged as an old and dear friend of Mr. Wm. Rolleston, to thank the Chairman for the generous terms in which he had spoken of him. New Zealand never had a finer character in her service than Mr. Rolleston; no one who always showed greater courage, sometimes even under adverse circumstances, no one who was more entirely wrapped up in the welfare of the colony, no one who had more deeper sympathy for the people, although he scorned to parade his sympathy, as some people did for the sake of popularity, and no one, he thought, who had rendered greater service to the colony.

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## **PUBLIC DEBT AND FUTURE OF NEW ZEALAND.**

Now, he had told them something about the prosperity of the colony, but was not there something to be said on the other side? There was rather a dark shadow upon the colony in the shape of £52,000,000 of debt. £52,000,000, with their population, would be equal with the population of the United Kingdom to £2,000,000,000, and the worst of it was that the interest on that money, which was paid almost entirely in England, went really from one pocket into another. With regard to New Zealand, the interest on that country's debt went in the shape of tribute to another country. £2,000,000 of produce which could otherwise be spent in the colony in employment and improvement, had to be sent, quite properly, to the Mother country. He was told that what Mr. Seddon said upon this subject had been entirely objected to, and rather sneered at. He did not know the words which Mr. Seddon made use of, but if he merely meant that the sending of that large amount of produce out of the country was a great drawback, that they would be very much better off if it could be spent in the country, then he entirely endorsed what Mr. Seddon had said. In conclusion, he wished to say that what he thought was wanted in New Zealand was economy. He was old-fashioned enough to think that, with a surplus of £300,000, something might be done in the way of establishing a Sinking Fund for their large debt. He had no doubt of the future prosperity of the colony. He would not go so far as to say that it was a country that would stand a great deal of bad government; he did not think so. All that he possessed was invested in New Zealand, and he did not mean to move a penny of it. In the course of a long life, he had seen many other lands, but he knew of no colony in which a man could more fairly depend upon making a comfortable living, if he was industrious and frugal, and there was no country in which the people themselves were more sociable and more law-abiding than New Zealand; in fact, there was no country in which if he had to choose over again, he would sooner cast his lot than New Zealand.

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