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DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND



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# DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
ANDRÉ SIEGFRIED  
By E. V. BURNS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
WILLIAM DOWNIE STEWART



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## INTRODUCTION.

It is curious that, while the people of New Zealand are anxious to win the good opinion of the world and are sensitive to criticism, yet the demand by them for books embodying the detailed results of enquiry into their affairs is so restricted as to be almost non-existent. Writers on Australasian life and politics all testify that the chief demand for their works comes, not from Australia and New Zealand, but from Europe and America. An illustration of this is shown in the fact that the call for a translation of this book comes, not from New Zealand, where its merits must be known, at least to some students and parliamentarians, but from England.

This neglect by the people chiefly concerned of so remarkable a study of their life and institutions arises, perhaps, from the general indifference of the New Zealanders to any attempt to apply general principles to their legislation or their manner of life.

M. Siegfried has described very accurately the practical outlook of the New Zealanders, and this is the best explanation that can be offered of their lack of interest in any philosophical study of their attitude towards social and industrial problems.

Nearly ten years have elapsed since the first publication of *Democracy in New Zealand*. The appearance of an English translation affords an opportunity of venturing a few comments as to how far, in the light of after events, M. Siegfried's brilliant interpretation of that democracy still holds good. His survey of New Zealand politics and his delineation of New Zealand life and manners is at once so extensive and yet so compendious that it would be impracticable in the compass of this brief note to discuss, chapter by chapter, the topics dealt with by the author. Nor would it be wise to make any attempt to bring up to date his facts and figures, because the real value of the book consists in its profound insight into the spirit and character of the New Zealand democracy, into the constitution of political parties, and into the attitude of New Zealand towards Imperial problems.

In 1904, when M. Siegfried visited New Zealand, the late Mr. Seddon was still, to all appearances, in the zenith of his power—"secure in the solid and double basis of his majority of small-holders and working men." Under his leadership the Liberal-Labour coalition seemed to have found the secret of political immortality. It had continued to rule the fortunes of New Zealand long after an Independent Labour Party had emerged in Australia. Indeed, the Labour Party had actually secured office in more than one of the states of Australia. The workers were well content to merge their political identity in a party which yielded them nearly all they demanded. As practical men they realised

that while they remained merged in the Liberal Party their influence was, perhaps, all the greater because the exact strength of their vote was unknown, and that, as their success was conditioned by the support of the rural classes, it would be a blunder to exchange a bird in the hand for two in the bush. Moreover, the author found that the New Zealand worker, unlike his European comrade, was hardly conscious of any class hatred, was not revolutionary, and was only vaguely socialistic.

In opposition to this Liberal-Labour Government M. Siegfried found a party whose political attitude it was difficult to define. He realised that to call them "Conservative" in the usual sense of that term would be misleading, and that we must make a fresh definition of the terms "Liberal" and "Conservative," as applied in New Zealand. He saw clearly enough that the Conservatives were not reactionary, and had no real antipathy to the workers. In his view, it was almost an accident of history that they had come to be regarded as the allies of the big landowners and employers. If the chance offered they would indulge in State experiments as freely as did the then Government.

As to the effects of the Labour legislation, passed by the Seddon Government, perhaps the author's general conclusion can be best interpreted from the title of his book *Democracy in New Zealand*. In his view much of that legislation was democratic rather than socialistic in its tendencies. The New Zealanders are not State Socialists—they are cynical and practical opportunists.

At the conclusion of his chapter on Land Legislation he says: "The Policy of the Government consists more in preventing the formation of new wealth than in destroying existing wealth. It is hostile to the large landowner, but it fosters the small one, and is in reality rather democratic than socialistic. In fact, the result of its work is the very opposite of socialistic. If we must somehow define the policy of the Seddon Ministry we must call it democratic, and reserve the name of Socialism for reforms much wider and, indeed, much more pretentious than those of Mr. Seddon and his colleagues."

The author describes, with a touch of admirable banter, the belief of the New Zealand people that they have an apostolic mission to humanity, and that their destiny is to show the old world the path of social progress. They are persuaded that the eyes of the world are centred on their country and on their daring experiments in legislation. He notes also the entire absence in their politicians (with the exception of Mr. W. P. Reeves) of any political philosophy—their contempt of political theories, and their practical and empirical opportunism. "At heart," he says, "they are probably convinced that politics are not as complicated as they have been made out to be, and that a little courage and decision are all that is required to accomplish the reforms of which Europe is so afraid."

It is clear that M. Siegfried was deeply interested in the strange phenomenon of a people, the most democratic in the world, allowing themselves to be governed

by a dictator in the person of Seddon. However, such a conjunction is only another illustration of Morley's remark on Cromwell. "He was never much of a democrat, but the same may be said of many of those whom democracy has used to do its business."

Before we say anything as to M. Siegfried's views on the external affairs of New Zealand, let us try to indicate how far his views on the points already indicated still hold good. He wisely interpreted the New Zealand situation for the most part through the personality of Seddon. It is, therefore, only natural to suppose that with the death of Seddon many changes would occur. Seddon died in 1906. His party continued to hold office under Sir Joseph Ward, survived the election of 1908, was disastrously crippled in 1911, and finally broke up in 1912. Its place has been taken by the party which was in opposition when M. Siegfried visited New Zealand. But the downfall of the Liberal-Labour Government was by no means due solely to the absence of Seddon. We have seen that, in M. Siegfried's view, Seddon's power was built on the double basis of small landowners and working men. But even before Seddon's death this double basis was gradually splitting off in two opposite directions. On the one hand, owing to the high prices for primary products, the small landowners were beginning to wax fat and prosperous, and, consequently, conservative. It is of no consequence that in Seddon's view they were biting the hand that fed them, for, if there is any truth in the economic interpretation of history, the change was

natural and inevitable. On the other hand, the workers envied the success of the Independent Labour Party in Australia, and began to murmur and affirm the need of independence. Without actually withdrawing their support they yielded it grudgingly and with a bad grace. In fact, in 1905, they appear to have concluded that they could gain no more from Seddon, and they sought to return to Parliament ten Independent Labour men, but without any success. These divergent tendencies became rapidly more accentuated after Seddon's death. At the elections of 1908 the Labour Party again failed to get itself established in Parliament. Three years later it seemed to have concluded that the easiest way to effect its purpose was to make things worse (from its point of view), in order to make them better, and there is no doubt that many of the workers voted for the Conservative Party in order to turn out the Government and definitely break the Liberal-Labour alliance, and thus pave the way for an Independent Labour Party.

But in addition to these factors there was also a change going on in the general trend of public opinion. The change consisted in a more or less conscious desire to call a halt and make a valuation of what results had been secured. There had come to be a certain sense of weariness and satiety after what M. Siegfried calls "a perfect debauch of laws, measures, and experiments." In 1908 we find the Prime Minister (Sir Joseph Ward) declaring that what was chiefly wanted was a cessation from legislation and more attention to matters



of administration. It began to be seen that the enthusiasm which had at first been aroused by Seddon's legislation had later been transformed into a personal enthusiasm for Seddon himself. Consequently on his death, it remained for his legislation to stand on its own merits.

In the view of the writer of this preface the greatest blunder Seddon ever made—assuming it could have been avoided—was in losing Reeves and allowing him to go to England. The author's estimate of the viewpoint of Reeves, and of his position in New Zealand politics, is admirable, and is, indeed, the best appreciation of him yet published. But it does not allow sufficiently for his value to Seddon. Reeves was the man of ideas; Seddon the man of action. And, if Reeves had continued to supply the ideas, and to interpret and translate into legislation the aims and aspirations of the workers, the emergence of an Independent Labour Party might have been postponed for many years.

We may illustrate the change in public opinion by an example. When M. Siegfried visited New Zealand he found that the Arbitration Act had "practically suppressed strikes, and it has been loyally applied and obeyed," that as to the judges who presided over the Arbitration Court, "it would most certainly never occur to anyone to suspect their uprightness and good faith"; that "the workers were unanimous in praising the law," and "that the employers were almost unanimously opposed to the Act." The author was careful,

however, to make clear that his conclusions only applied to the facts as he found them, and he made the usual reservation that his conclusions might not hold good if, later on, awards unfavourable to the workers should be made, or if bad times should arrive. But subsequent events have shown that even without the arrival of bad times each of M. Siegfried's statements must be almost reversed to represent the existing conditions of things. In recent years there have been serious and prolonged strikes ; the impartiality of several Arbitration Court judges has been openly and bitterly denied by the Labour Party ; the employers as a body now favour compulsory arbitration, and it is the workers, or a large section of them, who now regard it with suspicion and distrust. All this is not to say that compulsory arbitration has wholly failed. It would be more correct to say that it has succeeded in ways not looked for by its originator. Moreover, although it has failed to prevent strikes it has done much to discourage them. For it has created a strong public opinion which imposes a heavy onus on those who strike to make good their case forthwith, not merely to their party, but to the public. It is clear, that while the Labour Party cannot afford to give up the right to strike, that right may be indirectly limited by a public opinion fostered and enlightened by the operation of the Act.

Again, in the matter of land legislation, M. Siegfried draws a true picture of the hesitancy and vacillation which prevailed between a policy of land nationalisation designed to placate the theorists and a freehold policy

designed to satisfy the settlers. These two claims being irreconcilable, a fatuous compromise had been reached in the lease in perpetuity, which combined all the evils of both systems. Since then, the strength of the rural party has driven Parliament to adopt a definite freehold policy, and this has further tended to harden up the hostility of the city workers to the existing political parties. Moreover, the policy of repurchase for closer settlement has been rendered increasingly difficult each year owing to the rapid rise in land values, and the progress of land settlement has by no means come up to the expectations of those who supported the radical land measures described by M. Siegfried.

It is by reason of these and other shortcomings in their legislation that the people of New Zealand have largely abandoned the view which M. Siegfried rightly attributed to them. They no longer feel the same confidence and self-assurance in legislative panaceas which possessed them under the guidance of Seddon. Their politicians, instead of claiming to lead the world, do not hesitate to cite other countries as examples to be followed in various directions. They point, for example, to Denmark as the country which has been most successful in land settlement. The most successful of all their measures of social reform—the Workers, Compensation for Accidents Act—was copied by Seddon from the measure passed by a Conservative Government in England. Moreover, the Australian Labour Party, which has held office for some years in the Federal Government and at various times in different

States, has outvied New Zealand in humanitarian legislation, and in the extension of State activities.

We have seen that so far as the Labour Party in New Zealand is concerned, it no longer remains true that any other party in Parliament can claim to represent it or hold its confidence. At the present time it is in process of being organised as a distinct political party. One branch of it is distinguished by the very characteristics which M. Siegfried noted as being almost entirely absent in the make-up of the New Zealand worker—namely, class-consciousness and the espousal of revolutionary Socialism. This branch, known as the Federation of Labour, was organised by the Miners' Union, flies the red flag of revolutionary Socialism, and espouses the cause of what is known in Europe as Revolutionary Syndicalism. The other branch represents the Trade Unions in their political capacity, and its members may be described as Fabian Socialists. This branch is by far the more numerous. Recently both branches have made efforts to unite, and the most representative Labour Conference yet held in New Zealand is about to meet to frame a common constitution and platform. If they succeed, M. Siegfried's statement that there is no proper organised political federation of the workers of New Zealand will no longer hold good. In any case, it is obvious that before long in New Zealand, as elsewhere, throughout the world, the old Liberal Party will be crushed between the upper and the nether millstone—between the old "Conservatives" and the new Labour Party.

But although the workers have not yet any Parliamentary Labour Party, and no longer allow that either of the existing parties can claim to represent them in Parliament, their influence in politics is still very powerful. This is notably the case with regard to their opposition to any vigorous policy of immigration, and M. Siegfried's chapter on the Government and Immigration is still an exact and striking picture of the spirit of exclusivism which prevails in New Zealand. The Government in recent years have made efforts to attract farm labourers. But the Labour Party protested emphatically, and claim that there are sufficient workers in the country to meet all necessary requirements. It is still more emphatically opposed to the importation of factory workers, even although the official Government reports show that orders for work are refused over and over again in the textile factories owing to the shortage of labour. Nor is the activity of the Labour Party confined to measures of exclusion. On several occasions it has asked the Government to check the export of food stuffs, so that the price of butter and meat may be reduced, regardless of the fact that these are the main items which go to pay the annual foreign interest bill.

Some one has suggested that if these ideals are ever attained New Zealand will in years to come narrow down into an island Garden of Eden, with the Labour Party as the angel of the flaming sword, keeping watch and ward that neither men nor manufacturers may come in and that nothing may go out.

M. Siegfried's book contains many valuable lessons

for New Zealanders, but none more valuable than the importance he attaches to New Zealand's attitude towards the outside world. He treats New Zealand's external relations in successively widening circles—Australia, the Pacific, and the Empire. With his fine French sense of proportion he realised more fully than most students that however isolated New Zealand may be by nature, and may even desire to remain, by choice, she will be forced into taking some definite line of action as regards Imperial problems.

The fifth part of his book opens with a very clear and satisfactory chapter on New Zealand's attitude towards Australian Federation, and the reasons for her decision to remain aloof. The economic, financial and political reasons for New Zealand's decision against federation have never been stated with more precision or lucidity. New Zealand still remains unalterably opposed to political federation with Australia. Both countries now realise the wisdom of establishing more friendly trade relations, and the respective Governments have recently concluded an agreement for reciprocal tariff concessions which only remains to be confirmed by the Parliaments of each country.

At the time when M. Siegfried wrote, the Colonial Conference of 1902 was the last word on the subject of Imperial Defence. That Conference had reaffirmed the principle of colonial contributions to the Imperial fleet, and the need for an increase in these contributions. But events have moved rapidly since then, and in recent years the whole question of fleet units as against con-

tributions has been so continuously under discussion, that it would be superfluous to recapitulate here the history of the question. It is sufficient for our present purpose to recall the fact that in 1909 Australia decided on a local squadron, and is making progress towards its construction. South Africa last year passed a resolution in favour of a local naval service. Canada is at the present time still in the throes of conflict on the merits of the Borden policy. New Zealand has so far adhered to the subsidy policy.

One reason for that policy is New Zealand's fear (so well described by M. Siegfried) of appearing to play a secondary rôle to Australia.

“The fear of being absorbed by the one (Australia) naturally pushed New Zealand into the arms of the other (England), and in this sense we may say without paradox that the New Zealanders are morally further away from the Australians than they are from the English. To the former they display a distrustful independence, but for the latter they reserve all their devotion, all their favours, all their gratitude.”

At the time when the plan of an Australian navy was first adopted many good people in New Zealand shook their heads and regarded it as a preliminary step towards independence.

But if the proposals of the present Cabinet are ratified New Zealand will soon abandon the policy of contribution.<sup>1</sup> The Minister for Defence (The Hon.

<sup>1</sup> Since these lines were written, this anticipation has been realised.

James Allen) has just returned from England with definite proposals, as the result of his consultation with the British Admiralty, and the Committee of Imperial Defence. It is not clear what the proposals are to be, but it appears that it is desired to bring about combined action between Canada, Australia and New Zealand for the establishment of a navy in the Pacific. Beyond that nothing has yet been announced, except that the Minister for Defence, fully alive to the traditional fear of the New Zealand people, has stated that "there need be no fear that any New Zealand quota to the navy will be put under Australian control." The fact that these words were almost the first uttered by the Minister on his return to the Dominion is clear testimony to the truth of M. Siegfried's statement that "Australian suzerainty would wound the New Zealander's pride to its very roots."

The position of the land forces of New Zealand has, of course, been completely reconstructed since this book was written.

The old "volunteer system" has been replaced by a system of compulsory training for territorial defence. The new system is now well established, and as many articles about it have appeared in the *Round Table* and elsewhere, it is unnecessary to make further reference to it here. But in this connection it is worth noting how truly M. Siegfried gauged the nervous apprehensions of the people of New Zealand in respect to any proposal that might endanger their traditional autonomy. In his final chapter he deals at some length



with the resolution proposed by Mr. Seddon at the Colonial Conference of 1902, for the creation of an Imperial Reserve Force in each Dominion for service in case of emergency outside the Dominion in which such reserve is formed. This motion was rejected because Canada and Australia saw in it a dangerous attempt to interfere with their autonomy, and they "had to withhold little New Zealand from the dangerous slope down which she wished to drag them." It would appear as if something of the same feeling has now infected New Zealand, because not only has the Government had to give repeated assurances that the citizen army is only for home defence, but since the present Defence Minister recently returned from England with a similar proposal to Seddon's for an Imperial Reserve to be used as an expeditionary force, he has been kept busy explaining again and again that such a force must be an entirely voluntary one.

It is singular that while M. Siegfried so fully realised the importance of ascertaining the attitude of New Zealand towards the problem of Imperial Defence, he finishes his book almost abruptly without any reference to the still greater problem implied in any solution of the defence question. Perhaps he was so impressed with New Zealand's passion for autonomy, and her complete and child-like confidence in the greatness and wisdom of England, that he concluded that any readjustment of the political relations between the Mother Country and the Dominions was outside the range of practical politics.

But it is clear that without some readjustment of these political relations Imperial defence can never be organised on a stable and satisfactory basis. So long as the British Government has to rely on the voluntary co-operation of the self-governing dominions, each, possibly, following a different idea of what its service should consist in, there can be no proper organisation of the defence of the Empire. On the other hand, while the present position continues those Dominions occupy an anomalous position. "Anxiety over external relations only weighs on New Zealand to the extent that she desires. Does she want to negotiate for herself? The home Government does not stand in her way, and is content to exercise a nominal control. Does she, on the contrary, want to leave the business of negotiation to other more experienced hands? The English Government again steps in to tender her the support of its experience and its prestige. This Colony is, in fact, a spoilt child which never suffers for its sins, for a helping hand is always there to redeem its faults." M. Siegfried regards this state of affairs as highly desirable from the point of view of New Zealand. But it can only be a transitional period, and if New Zealand is to remain in a position of security without responsibility, she will always remain a spoilt child and nothing more.

Nevertheless, one may hope that M. Siegfried's suggestive and stimulating book will lead to greater public interest in the Dominion in the important questions that are emerging as to her external affairs.

At the present time, owing to that very state of tutelage, in which he found the country, public opinion on Imperial questions is almost entirely uninformed.

In this sphere the haphazard opportunism which M. Siegfried so skilfully describes as characteristic of our legislative experiments will not meet the necessities of the case. The real weakness of New Zealand is the absence of any well-informed and coercive public opinion on external problems. At the present time New Zealand does not consciously stand for any systematic policy as regards Imperial affairs, and it is difficult for her public men to arouse much public interest in matters in regard to which the people feel that they have no definite responsibility.

In some pregnant words dealing with labour legislation the author says: "What the New Zealanders most need, in fact, is principle, convictions, reasoned beliefs," and he quotes Mr. Sidney Webb, who visited New Zealand in 1898, as saying:

"What is serious is the absence throughout the Colony of serious economic study of scientific investigation of these industrial and social problems which the politicians themselves attempt to solve."

These words, charged with sound sense, are equally applicable to Imperial problems, and the crying need at the present time is that both New Zealand and elsewhere some serious and systematic study should be devoted to them.

WM. DOWNIE STEWART.

DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND,

*June, 1913.*



*PART I.*  
GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS.



## CHAPTER I.

### GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE EVOLUTION OF NEW ZEALAND.

“GENTLEMEN, England is an island. Now you know as much as I do of its history,” said Michelet at the opening of a famous course of lectures. It is with a similar remark that our study of that other England of the Southern Seas—New Zealand—must begin.

The thing that first strikes us when, glancing at a map of the Pacific, we discover in the blue immensity of that ocean these two small islands, which seem even more insignificant by contrast with the massive framework of the Australian Continent, is their more than insular character, their enormous distance from anywhere, their complete isolation. New Zealand is almost exactly at the Antipodes of England.<sup>1</sup> The fastest liners from London take five weeks to reach it. From Auckland to San Francisco is a voyage of twenty-one days, and communication with America is possible only at long intervals. As for the closeness of Australia, it is only apparent. Four days at sea are something, even in those regions where distance is recked of so little. From Wellington to Sydney direct is 1239 miles ; it is

<sup>1</sup> But not quite. Wellington is 41° South latitude, Liverpool 53° North.

a voyage almost as long as that from Scotland to Iceland, and the storms which prevail in those latitudes do not help to make the passage easier. New Zealand then must in no sense be regarded as an appanage of Australia, though it is easy to think of her as being so after a superficial look at the map; she is not destined by the force of circumstances to fall into its orbit, for in this part of the world she is a centre unto herself. North, south, east, and west stretches the infinity of the ocean, the eternity of those great southern swells which follow one another in a majestic rhythm, without ever meeting an obstacle. All the large cities of New Zealand look the Pacific in the face, and turn their backs on Australia. Their situation is symbolic, for neither in the early days of its history, nor more especially of recent years, has the colony desired to follow in the wake of the great southern Continent. She has always lived a life apart, obstinately shunning every form of alliance. Only England, who does not offend her dignity, enjoys her confidence and entire devotion. The very distance which separates her from the mother-country is the best guarantee of her independence. For if in many respects New Zealand is still, in the proper sense of the word, a colony, in other ways she is already a nation, whose national beauties and whose history, with its crises of tragedy and romance, have already stirred in her citizens a real love for her.

Other parts of the British Empire, Southern Australia, for instance, or even Victoria, have the semblance of a distinctive personality only thanks to the accidents of a survey; their frontiers are artificial; their populations almost indistinguishable, and we can scarcely say why they begin here and end there. It is quite



otherwise with New Zealand; thanks to her ocean-drawn boundary, to her national loneliness, which she did not choose, but accepts with enthusiasm, she has the distinction of being more than any other British colony a real *country*.

Indeed, we must by no means imagine that this isolated and distant land is simply an islet of the Pacific—the Corsica or Sardinia of that part of the world. It is easy to talk—for it is the first impression which one receives—of those two “little islands of New Zealand lost in the immensity of the Ocean.” But they are little only because of the almost fearful solitude which surrounds them. In reality, New Zealand is as big as England and Scotland together—as big as the Italian Peninsula. True, she is far from having the area of those vast and empty colonies, Western Australia or Queensland, but she is bigger than Tasmania and Victoria.<sup>1</sup> She has, moreover, one immense advantage which gives her a peculiar distinction—that of being isolated. “One continent, one nation” was the proud cry of the Australians at the moment of enthusiasm when they constituted their federation. But New Zealand has been able to meet their advances with similar words, which in a narrower sense are equally apposite. Is she not in her way a tiny continent in this Oceania, where Nature, after the vigorous effort which formed compact Australia, has shown herself so thrifty of new lands?

In geographical classification, Australia and New Zealand usually appear side by side, and yet no two countries could be less alike than these. While Australia is a wide and massive continent with harbourless

<sup>1</sup> Area of New Zealand, 104,612 sq. miles. Italy, 110,688 sq. miles. Western Australia, 975,876 sq. miles. Queensland, 668,497 sq. miles. Tasmania, 26,215 sq. miles. Victoria, 87,884 sq. miles.

shores and a tropical climate—a sort of Africa of the ocean—New Zealand is a narrow land, whose mountains rise to heaven in mighty piles, and are touched at their bases by inlets of the sea. No name could be worse chosen than hers. Zealand is low, flat, monotonous; New Zealand is a land of the most violent contrasts. Her highest mountains overhang the sea, her luxuriant semi-tropical foliage fringes the glaciers which come down almost to the borders of the Pacific. A few miles and the whole countryside changes, while one can travel for whole days in Australia and always see the same undulating hills and the same eucalyptus trees.

New Zealand is made up of three islands; the Northern, the Southern, also called the Middle Island, and Stewart Island, which is small and unimportant. The extent of the coast is considerable in proportion to the area; it is as much as 2982 miles, while Australia's coast line is only 8077 miles for an area thirty times as large. This delicate reticulation of the coast line is one of the great riches of the colony. There are numberless well-protected ports, safe roadsteads, and deep fiords able to accommodate whole squadrons, and the founders of New Zealand cities have felt only the difficulty of choosing between the most magnificent sites. Auckland is built in a fiord celebrated for its beauty; Wellington before a roadstead which dimly recalls that of San Francisco; Lyttelton and Dunedin at the end of gulfs which are so nearly closed as to resemble lakes. Everywhere the sea seems wedded to the land, following its least indentations to make of them refuges which are the envy of less favoured lands. And it is the sea, too, which gives the New Zealanders relatively easy means of communication, refused to them by the tangled disorder of their mountains. The network of the mountain systems of

the two islands, especially that of the Northern Island, is, in fact, a perpetual obstacle to freedom of intercourse between the various parts of the Colony.

The centre of the Northern Island is made up of an undulating plateau, one thousand or twelve hundred feet in height, overlooked here and there by dormant volcanoes, which raise their regular cones to a height of more than 7000 feet. Mount Egmont (8260 feet), which the New Zealanders like to compare to Fujiyama, rises above New Plymouth and dominates the whole province of Taranaki. The craters of Tongariro (7515 feet), and Ruapehu (9000 feet) lie to the south of Lake Taupo, in a district celebrated for its volcanic phenomena.

The waters which descend from this central plateau flow out to all the points of the horizon, and the formation of the valleys naturally led the various attempts at colonisation to divide rather than to unite. The Waikato comes from lake Taupo and runs northward; the Wanganui and the Rangitikei, southward; the Ngaruro and the Mohaka, eastward. The valleys of these rivers, with the wide plains at their mouths, form so many separate districts. The provinces of Hawke's Bay and of Taranaki are cut off from each other by the mountains of Ruahine and of Kaimanawa. The province of Wellington lies isolated in the south; that of Auckland in the north. The towns which have grown up in these different regions, Auckland, Wellington, New Plymouth, and Napier, are in reality little capitals. Between these different centres communication is easiest by sea. It is true that a railway connects Napier, Wellington, Wanganui and New Plymouth. But Auckland only communicates with the two latter towns by sea, and the scheme for constructing a railway between it

and Wellington has only just been realised. As for the Southern Island, it is a long tract of country, mountainous, picturesque, traversed from north to south over its whole length by a chain of lofty mountains, the summit of the highest of which, Mount Cook, is no less than 12,349 feet above sea level. The regular and almost continuous line of these snowy "Alps" closely borders the western coast of the island, leaving to the east a wide plain, where the fine province of Canterbury lies at ease. It is the splendid district of the "sounds," whose fame, long established in Australia, has now penetrated to Europe. Towards the south-east the chains break up into an infinity of wild hills, where the Scotsman finds something like a reproduction of his former home.

The Southern Island is, so to speak, less irregularly fashioned than the Northern, and it is in general true that communication between the principal towns is easier. The provinces of Otago and of Canterbury are connected by a railway which skirts the coast from Christchurch to Invercargill. But the provinces of Marlborough, Nelson and Westland are more cut off, and can only communicate with Otago and Canterbury by means of incomplete sections of railroad and mountain routes, full of tourists in the summer but less frequented in the winter. As for the south-west, its wild and magnificent countryside is almost entirely shut off from the settlers in other parts of the colony, except during the season when excursions are organised to visit and admire its beauties.

The development of colonisation has been much influenced by the physical constitution of New Zealand. There, too, geography has been the mother of statesmanship. In the Australian colonies, everything makes for centralisation. A few scattered ports, the natural

and necessary outlets for a whole district, grow out of all measure, without possible competitors, and become the over-developed heads of anæmic bodies. Sydney and Melbourne are vast cities, utterly out of proportion to the provinces of which they are the capitals. But it was bound to be so. Very special conditions like those of Queensland must inevitably bring about a certain degree of centralisation. The opposite tendency has always prevailed in New Zealand. With the rich sinuous curves of her shores, her abrupt and tangled mountain ranges, she has shown herself from the very beginning hostile to centralisation. There no one city has been able to absorb all the energy and vigour which was at hand—on the contrary, the fact that there is no town which holds undisputed supremacy is still, after fifty years, a characteristic of the colony. The first settlements were made at several points simultaneously, and, as we shall see in the following chapters, long remained unknown to one another. Then, when they came into contact at long intervals, there was serious rivalry between them, for their relations were so irregular that every administrative Act, originating from a distant capital, naturally seemed tinged with injustice and tyranny. Each district had its own interests, its individual life, its capital, almost its race apart, and for long New Zealand was nothing else than “The Six Colonies of New Zealand.”<sup>1</sup> The development of all means of communication and the continuance of a government which was little short of anarchic, were both necessary before the provincial organisation of the early years could give way to a more centralised régime. Still, even to-day, thirty years after it was instituted, the Colony has not yet altogether adapted herself to a centralisation which

<sup>1</sup> The title of a book written in 1851 by William Fox.

will never give expression to her true nature. A glance at the map will sufficiently demonstrate this fact.

Distance, isolation, decentralisation, these are the conditions which predispose New Zealand to become an autonomous and almost independent Colony. Her distance saved her from the greed of European powers ; her isolation preserved her from absorption by neighbours, who were themselves far away ; decentralisation, by teaching her citizens, almost under stress of necessity, the practice of self-government, taught them at the same time to fear external tyranny, were it even that of the mother country. But to complete the advantages of her position, and to allow New Zealand to become the colony for a settled population which she has become, it was also necessary that her climate should suit the white race, and that the colonists should find a free territory, sufficiently empty of inhabitants to be ready to receive them. The first of these two conditions has been more completely realised than in any other quarter of the globe. For the second, as a result of the presence of the Maoris, years were necessary to bring it to pass, and it was in her struggles against them, through a whole succession of difficult wars, that New Zealand won her spurs in the rough and healthy school of adversity.

The New Zealand climate seems purposely designed to welcome the white race. It has neither the burning heat of Queensland or of South Australia, nor the fatal drought of the hinterland of New South Wales. On the contrary, it is peculiarly temperate and healthy, and is remarkable for its mild and equable character. Europeans have been able to retain there all their habits of life, and the race which New Zealand is engaged in building up shows signs of health and vigour which

clearly prove how well the country suits it. As we shall devote a special chapter to New Zealand "demography," we shall have occasion to show how successful has been the acclimatisation there of our race.

If New Zealand had been, as the expression is, a "no man's land"—an unoccupied territory—she would have become by a natural and effortless process a "white man's country." This result, now so brilliantly attained, has cost her years of effort. The presence of a native race, powerful, brave and warlike, was indeed the greatest obstacle that colonisation could meet in a land which seemed made to be developed by whites.

When the first European colonists appeared on the New Zealand sea-board, the Maoris probably numbered one hundred thousand. They were then, and still are, despite many signs of decadence, a sturdy race of men, strongly if rather heavily made. When we come to summarise the first years of New Zealand history, we shall have to tell how their warlike ardour tested the courage and perseverance of their conquerors, and we shall see the beginning of their decline, which thenceforth was bound to increase with fatal and continuous speed. In fact, this tropical race, transported as they had been by a chance migration into a temperate climate, had never become perfectly acclimatised on New Zealand soil. Just as the negroes of the United States gather as by a sort of natural law on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, so the Maoris seem irresistibly drawn towards the north of New Zealand, deserting the Southern Island, where the cold can be too vigorous for their chilly natures.<sup>1</sup> And thus it is that they, the conquered, the former owners of the soil, find themselves, by a strange piece of irony, the race least quali-

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *The Long White Cloud*, p. 54.

fied to prosper and survive there. While the whites develop and multiply before their eyes, they dwindle steadily, and can already guess that in the not distant future the time will come when their power and even their presence in New Zealand will be no more than a memory. A new race of people, first by the right of arms, and then by the right of survival, has taken possession of their islands, and it is to it, after a brief account of the Maori resistance, that we shall devote this book.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF NEW ZEALAND COLONISATION.

NEW Zealand was discovered in 1642 by the Dutch navigator Tasman. He came from Tasmania, and plunged eastward into the ocean in search of a continent which the explorers of that epoch thought they would find in the Southern Pacific. On the way he stumbled suddenly upon the Great Barrier of New Zealand. He caught glimpses, through the fog, rain and storm which so often prevail in these regions, of the line of its lofty snow-clad peaks, suspended, as it seemed, in the heavens, and of the mouths of its deep and narrow sounds. He tried to disembark, but four of his sailors were killed by the Maoris. Discouraged by the tragedy of this first encounter, he set off again, skirting the coast and making no further attempts to land. He doubled the end of the Northern Island, without having made the acquaintance, in that new land which he had himself discovered, of more than her long coast line, magnificent, steep and inhospitable. He called it *Staaten Land*. The Dutch Government, thinking that it was indeed a new continent, gave it the name which it still keeps—New Zealand.

More than a century passed before another navigator appeared in these seas. In 1769 Cook, in the “*Endea-*

your," got within sight of the New Zealand coast. He examined it thoroughly, took possession of the country in the name of George III., and in the course of four successive voyages made maps and wrote descriptions of the country which were long regarded as authoritative. His relations with the Maoris were marked from the first by that strange mingling of cordiality and brutality which was to remain typical of the dealings between them and the Europeans. On the day when Cook landed on the shores of Poverty Bay, the isolation of New Zealand came for ever to an end. But long years were still to pass before the scattered and capricious visits of navigators gave place first to a brutal and disorderly colonisation, and then to the more stable régime of the English annexation and a settled system of government.

During the closing years of the eighteenth century, the Australian colonies, so distant and so little known, stood in Europe for the region of the Antipodes, with all that that word could suggest of the mysterious and the formidable. It needed months to reach them, and travellers, when they landed, noted only the solitude of their virgin forests, or the cruelty of their savage inhabitants. The setting up in 1788 of a convict station at Port Jackson and the foundation of the colony of New South Wales first gave, so to speak, a centre to that part of the world, and attracted Europeans thither. The action of the English Government in that part of the world was extraordinarily cautious. England had other things to think of, and the policy of expansion at any price, of the race for colonies, was not yet in fashion.

Still, the absence of official colonisation by no means involved the absence of actual settlement. The history of the years from about 1790 to 1840, the date of the

annexation, is a record full of incident, confusion, brilliance and romance. On the steep sea-coasts, in the vast and picturesque forests, the Maori jostles with the adventurer who comes to share his life, with the missionary in quest of conversions, and with the trader, often indistinguishable from a thief, who buys from the natives, for some miserable piece of glass beading, their lands and their riches. When we read of the adventures of these early settlers, we are reminded of the heroic days of the Far West of America. The New Zealand of this period had indeed an irresistible attraction for anyone who was not on good terms with organised society. No need to fear government, judges or police. Nothing before one but the liberty of a virgin land, the rough and exciting life of the trapper, the patriarchal simplicity of savage life. Numbers of Europeans, to whom the doors of civilised life were closed, came thus to find a refuge among the Maoris, who treated them sometimes with cruelty, sometimes with good will. If they possessed any special skill, they were even a good deal sought after, for they had useful things to teach. And in this humble scene were they not all in their modest way the pioneers of the white race? The Maoris called them *pakehas*, that is, naturalised strangers, and often made much of them. They acted as something like general agents of the various tribes, and nothing in the nature of dealings with strangers was done except through them. This curious race of *pakehas* lasted till about 1850: they watched the advance of civilisation with the same regret as was felt by the pioneers of the American Far West, when the first locomotives came to trouble the poetic solitude of their prairies. Some of them had too much of their old outlook left in them for them not to be capable of appreciat-

ing artistically the picturesque quality of their strange life. One of them called Manning, an Irish adventurer who lived among a tribe of the island of Hokianga, has told his story with all the wit and vivacity of his race. His notes were recovered and published, no doubt with slight embellishments, by the Earl of Pembroke, under the name of "Old New Zealand," and this work forms to-day one of the classics of New Zealand literature.<sup>1</sup>

While the *pakehas* were entering into the savage life of the tribes, European civilisation, in its most rudimentary and brutal form, began to make itself felt on the shores of New Zealand. Since the early years of the nineteenth century, this region had become an important centre for whaling ships. The travellers who sailed these seas about 1825 tell of constant meetings with whalers. At first carried on by individuals, these enterprises fell little by little into the hands of the Sydney capitalists, to be conducted on such a scale that at the end of a generation this important source of wealth was almost exhausted. The behaviour of these fishermen, half pirates, half adventurers, was often far from admirable, but their influence on the development of the country was great. It was thanks to them that the first commercial relations were established with the natives; they paved the way for the more serious colonists. In fact, the fishery did not take up all their time. In the winter they cruised at large, fearless of storms and tempests; but with the summer they settled down at the stations which they founded on shore, and tried to create the rudiments of a home; indeed, these villages, where trade gradually sprang up, were actually the colonies of the future in embryo. The *pakehas* and

<sup>1</sup> *Old New Zealand, a tale of the good old times . . .* by a pakeha Maori; with an introduction by the Earl of Pembroke, London, 1884.

the whalers did not long remain the only white inhabitants of New Zealand. The Protestant missionary, whose influence can be felt in almost every English colony, soon appeared on the scene. In 1814, the Rev. Samuel Marsden founded the first mission at the Bay of the Islands: from then on, his example was followed by missionaries of various sects. They settled down in the English style, with their families, in the midst of the savages, held gatherings, translated the Bible, and busied themselves at the same time with teaching the Maori practical points of western civilisation. Their work in the early days was very hard, and for the first ten years there was scarcely a single conversion. Then success began, and by 1840 about a quarter of the population was converted—at least in the sense in which missionaries usually understand that word. The Catholics, meanwhile, in their turn, had appeared under the direction of the French bishop Pompallier and had founded a mission in 1838. A terrible rivalry began, traces of which abound in the histories which have been written of the colony's early days. Sometimes we are shown the Protestant missionaries as models of all the virtues; sometimes, on the contrary, we have them painted as churlish and greedy folk, hostile to the colonists, and anxious only to keep intact their authority in the country.

Whatever may be the truth their work was, at all events, considerable. In 1837 the translation of the New Testament was finished, as well as that of several books of the Old. Christianity then made rapid progress, and its influence soon penetrated even to the most distant tribes.

Thus the efforts, consciously or unconsciously combined, of adventurers, whale-fishers and missionaries

had in the 'thirties profoundly changed both the Maoris themselves and the nature of the relations which the whites had with them. To discontinuous and irregular dealings had succeeded a condition of greater stability and facilities for more regular exchange. More ships came from Sydney, and pirates tended to become traders. The Maoris on their side desired nothing so much as trade ; their forests produced excellent timber ; fish, potatoes and maize abounded ; their flax was very fine, and their strange wooden sculptures, their weapons and their ornaments were much sought after by the Europeans. All these things could be bought for next to nothing. A hatchet, a nail, or a piece of iron was taken like gold. In time the Maoris learnt the use of fire-arms. Despite the courageous efforts of the missionaries, the importation of these increased with startling rapidity. The old quarrels of the tribes turned into fearful and murderous wars. To keep their supremacy, chiefs even came to selling their finest lands for a few guns and some packets of gunpowder. The speculators of Sydney naturally availed themselves of this windfall to acquire vast territories at ridiculous prices. One of them had the courage to claim that he had bought the whole Southern Island ! On their side, the Maoris saw no harm in selling the same lots five or six times over to different buyers, and as these latter never came to examine their so-called acquisitions, it was often long before they discovered the fraud which vitiated their contract. In 1840, these "land sharks," as they were called, declared that they had legally acquired twelve million acres, that is to say one-third of New Zealand.

It was high time that a government was set up to establish order and respect for the law. Up till then, ignorance or indifference had been the chief note of

English public opinion in regard to these two little islands, lost in the confines of the Pacific. England had, it is true, several times stepped in to state her rights, but without ever supporting her claims by any show of force. In 1769 Cook had officially taken possession of New Zealand in the name of George III., and later the Government had implicitly recognised this annexation by including the two islands within the boundaries of New South Wales. But this was a mere theoretical step, and in reality the English ministers wished to do nothing. It was only against their wills that they sent there, in 1836, a shadowy and vague official, moneyless and with no clear instructions, who was the laughing-stock of everyone.

Still, the need of a regular administration made itself felt more and more; and yet annexation had many opponents. Apart from the Maoris, many of the colonists, half pirates, half fishermen, feared the advent of law and order. The missionaries on their side were not enthusiastic; they had built up a life apart, had bought land, and settled down in the country, and they were not far from thinking, Englishmen as they were, that annexation by England was a kind of foreign intervention. They had secured the beginnings of civil power, and it cost them much to give it up. Their dream was to set up in New Zealand a theocracy where they would have been in supreme control. It needed the threat of a French conquest to decide them to rally to their own Government. It was this, too, which alone decided the Government of England to intervene. For, while New Zealand was not anxious to have anything to do with England, England's attitude to her was much the same. The ruling opinion in official circles at this time was that the Empire was already big enough. The centralised

administration of colonies had proved very unsatisfactory. The ministers responsible had, as a rule, little knowledge of local affairs ; they gladly left things to their underlings, and these latter in turn to the governors of the colonies. The motto " Pas d'Affaires " might have been the instructions of the whole hierarchy of administrators—the policy of abstention was supreme. England would no doubt have long persevered in this policy of inaction had not France entered the lists. About 1834, a certain Baron de Thierry had proclaimed himself King of New Zealand. For an absurd price he had bought, or claimed to have bought, 20,000 acres from the inhabitants, and he settled down at Hokianga with a following of ninety persons. But when he proposed to survey his acquisition, he came up against the obstinate resistance of the Maoris. Without money, without credit, the wretched king collapsed amidst ridicule. And yet his enterprise was not without results. Other Frenchmen, drawn by the tidings of his exploits, arrived in the country. The first to recommence these fantastic purchases of land was Captain Langlois, who was able to interest a French Company, the " Nauto-Bordelaise," in the colonisation of the coast of Akaroa. Louis-Philippe himself took shares, which gave the company a sort of official character. In 1838, Pompallier and his priests arrived.

All this showed that France was not inactive, and it was enough to change completely the outlook of the colonists and the English missionaries. As soon as ever the golden age of liberty and caprice was doomed, they inclined to English annexation rather than to French. Yet it was but narrowly that they escaped losing half of New Zealand. At the end of the year 1839, the Queen's Government sent to New Zealand Captain



Hobson to act as consul with a "dormant commission" as lieutenant-governor. His instructions were to enter into negotiations with the natives and to obtain from them the grant of the sovereignty over the two islands: immediately afterwards he was to proclaim New Zealand a British Colony, and to assume the title and functions of lieutenant-governor. He acted promptly and with decision. On January 29, 1840, he landed at the Bay of the Islands, and at once issued a proclamation establishing the authority of the Queen over the English colonists. Then he gathered together the leading Maori chiefs of the Northern Island at Waitangi. After long discussions a treaty was signed, now known as the Treaty of Waitangi, in virtue of which the proprietary rights in the land were left in the hands of the Maoris, while the sovereignty passed to the Queen of England. The notion of sovereignty was a very vague one to those scarcely civilised folk, so that when they understood that the ownership of the land remained theirs, they seriously thought that they had tricked the whites; "the shadow," one of them said, "passes to the Queen, but we keep the substance."

All this occurred in the Northern Island. But at this period the settlements were so disconnected that Hobson knew nothing of what was going on in the Southern Island. He took so little note of it, in fact, that he was very nearly out-distanced by his rivals. In July, 1840, a French frigate, "L'Aube," dropped anchor in the Bay of the Islands. Her captain, who was given a great reception by Hobson, could not keep the secret of his mission. In the communicative warmth of a dinner, he let slip before his host that he was on his way to Akaroa to take possession, in the name of Louis-Philippe, of the Southern Island. The English governor did not

lose a moment ; he at once sent off one of his lieutenants, who thus gained a few hours on the captain of the "Aube." The latter, a beaten man, felt that nothing could be gained by negotiations, though he actually landed some emigrants who founded at Akaroa a little colony, the traces of which remain to this day. Henceforward the fate of New Zealand was settled. She slipped for ever from France, and fell under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ENGLISH CONQUEST.

THE annexation of New Zealand by England and the setting up some time later of a regular government at Auckland, mark the beginning of a new and decisive era in the history of the Colony. After a prologue of poetry and brilliance, the epic period of adventurers, *pakehas*, pirates and escaped convicts, comes to an end without leaving appreciable traces behind it, and from henceforth serious colonisation becomes the order of the day. From 1840 onward emigration, which up till then had been the spasmodic effort of individuals, became collective and continuous. England, once completely ignorant of New Zealand, began to follow and to be interested in her development. Nevertheless, it was to be nearly thirty years before the young Colony would know the calm of a civilised existence. The persistent enmity of the Maoris, the susceptibilities of little communities, often suspiciously jealous of their independence, the faults of an administration which was often clumsy and pedantic—all these causes helped to delay the approach of an orderly régime. But at the same time the Colony drew no slight advantage from its early hardships. They helped her to get rid of inferior colonists, whom the least difficulty sufficed to rebuff, and to grow up in the school of toil and danger.

From the very day of his arrival Governor Hobson was confronted with grave and difficult problems. The most urgent and delicate was the problem of the land. It was no question of setting up a system of government in a half-empty land, where everyone at his good pleasure was free to take all that he required. On the one hand, the Maoris possessed, occupied and cultivated large tracts of country ; on the other, the first colonists (if colonists is the right name for those land-sharks of whom we have spoken) claimed to have legally acquired vast estates. The Government could not seriously contemplate lending its authority to all the operations which had preceded the annexation ; it would have been to ratify direct robberies and to abandon to mere jobbers the finest lands in the country. And yet it could not be denied that to call in question past acquisitions would be to provoke every sort of discontent, and almost to encourage the outbreak of open revolt. Yet this second course was that which the governor chose. He first settled, by the Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the leading Maori chiefs, that the Government was to have the sole right of buying land from the natives. He then announced to the colonists that their title-deeds would only remain valid in so far as they were confirmed by a competent commission.

As might have been expected, this measure let loose a perfect tempest. There were very few whites who were not, or did not claim to be, property owners. Many of them certainly deserved no sympathy at all ; but there were others who were honestly entitled to feel their legitimate interests endangered by this decision of the governor's. What was needed was the immediate inauguration of a vigorous policy of territorial acquisition by the State. But for this money was necessary, and

the governor had little or none. The result was widespread discontent, and the loyalty of the Colony, never very vigorous, dwindled noticeably. The first New Zealanders, who had looked with no favourable eye on the arrival of official representatives from England, saw that all their fears were justified, and already regretted the good old times when, as Manning wittily puts it, "Justice, laws and governors were not invented, and gold pieces were of no use except to be pierced and hung on children's ears."<sup>1</sup> From this period dates New Zealand's distrust of the Colonial Office—a distrust which it took years to uproot.

It added to the difficulties of the early governors that they lacked any authority or prestige, at a time when the individual struggles of little settlements had been succeeded by colonisation on a large scale, with accumulations of capital in the hands of joint-stock companies almost powerful enough to form states within the State, or rather alongside of the State. New Zealand in 1840 was so little explored, communications were so imperfect, that there could be no semblance of unity. The Southern Island had all but fallen into the hands of the French. While Hobson was proclaiming at the Bay of the Islands the Queen's sovereignty, and while he was setting up his capital at Auckland, the New Zealand Company was founding elsewhere the settlement of Wellington.

Thus colonisation began in several quarters at once, and from the beginning of its history New Zealand took on that character of extreme decentralisation, of which half a century of civilised life has not yet robbed it—a fact which at this period was a source of great difficulties. To govern from Auckland the inhabitants of

<sup>1</sup> *Old New Zealand*, 1 and 2.

Wellington was simply impossible ; and yet the very dignity of the governor made it equally impossible for him to allow his authority to be ignored, and forced him to intervene from time to time, if only for the sake of principle. It is easy to understand that each of these interventions was a source of friction ; it was indeed disastrous that rivalry should arise between the two powers. The Government against the Company—this is, in fact, an epitome of the history of the Colony during its first six years.

The New Zealand Company had powerful friends in London. In spite of the indifference of English public opinion to the colonies, in spite of the policy of abstention adopted by the Colonial Office, still there were in England a few men who were interested in colonial politics—publicists, men of rank, prominent politicians. One of the most eager was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whom Imperialists acknowledge to-day to have been one of the chief “ makers of Empire.”

It was long believed, and many people still maintain, that it is enough to give grants of land to those who need them, to set them on their feet and start a colony on the right lines. Wakefield's great merit was that he looked at things from an entirely different standpoint. Nothing was more unsatisfactory, he thought, than to allow a colony to grow up in anarchy and disorder. Capital without labour is powerless, and so is labour without capital. The distribution of lands and immigration must be so regulated that a just proportion may be established between capital and labour. In pursuance of these principles, Wakefield elaborated a complete system. The prosperity of a colony required, according to him, that capitalists should find there sufficient labour. It was therefore essential to encourage immigration ; but

at the same time, to prevent the colonists from becoming property owners in too large numbers and thus ceasing to be at the disposal of the capitalist, the land must be sold at a high enough price to deter buyers without capital. The method of free concession must be absolutely abandoned. The whole revenue from the sale of the land must be devoted either to immigration or to public works, in such a way that the colony should finance her own development. It was to apply this system that Wakefield founded in 1830 the South Australian Company. At the end of five or six years of effort, and of every sort of vicissitude, he left his first field of experiment and turned to New Zealand. There followed two or three years of new efforts, new struggles, no longer against the difficulties of colonisation, but against the indifference of his fellow-citizens and the ill-will of the Government. At last he succeeded in founding the New Zealand Company. At the beginning of the year 1839, a ship-load of emigrants was ready to put to sea, and only awaited the permission of the Colonial Office. But, as negotiations continued interminably and threatened to come to no conclusion at all, Wakefield took upon himself to despatch the boat on his own authority. The "Tory" (such was the vessel's name), cast anchor at Port Nicholson on September 20th, 1839. Four months later, in January, 1840, the official representative of England disembarked beside her at the Bay of the Islands.

The New Zealand Company was more than an emigration company, and different from an ordinary colonising company. It was designed to carry out systematic colonisation, according to the ideas, or rather the gospel, of Wakefield. Its business was to buy lands from the natives and sell them again to the colonists, whom it

undertook to bring over itself. Nor was its part to end there ; it would organise the settlements with a view to the whole territory and would use the money obtained by the sale of the lands to finance new immigrants. The conditions under which the Company began its work were not promising. Relations with the Central Government were very strained, those with the local authorities were soon to become even more so. This rivalry covers the whole history of the first ten years of the Colony, and the historians of this period indulge in diatribes against either the Government or the Company. Both sides, in fact, made innumerable blunders. The Company sent Colonel Wakefield (brother of Gibbon Wakefield) with orders to buy lands ; in a few months he bought or claimed to have bought a territory as large as Ireland, for which he had paid to the natives a sum of £10,000. Nevertheless the Company in London, being completely ignorant of what was going on in the Colony, hurried off new colonists, and sold them rights in land for something like £80,000. The Government could not fail to look with disfavour on all these operations which were taking place outside its ken. It had carried out the annexation more or less unwillingly on the one condition that it should not be bothered, and it was inclined to revenge itself on the Company for all the worries which the latter caused it.

All this disorder did not prevent towns from springing up. Wanganui, New Plymouth, and Nelson came into being. The principles of Wakefield, mixed with errors as they were, bore fruit. At any rate, real colonists had been secured, serious, educated, active men : it was no case of adventurers, like those who had founded the first settlements of the Colony. The Company had succeeded in transporting in a body an English community



— the graft of an ancient society planted in new soil. Without doubt that quiet and sober character which New Zealand has preserved to this day is due in great measure to the spirit of this system of colonisation, which deliberately set aside amateurs and adventurers to accept only carefully selected colonists.

We may pass quickly over the endless quarrels between the governors resident at Auckland and the agents of the Company settled at Wellington. Such squabbles were fore-ordained, and it would have been absurd to hope that in so decentralised a land, especially at that period, the influence of a governor installed at one end of the country could possibly be of any weight. These troubles between governors and governed would not have been very dangerous if Europeans had been alone in the country. But they had at the gates of the villages a savage, cruel and vigorous population of Maoris, whose lands they had stolen and whom they could only have kept in check by prestige or fear. And the anarchy which the natives saw rampant at Auckland and Wellington was not designed to inspire that respect mingled with fear which was the one condition necessary for the maintenance of peace. They lost no time in rising, and then began that series of awful and murderous wars which was to hold so great a place in the history of New Zealand, and was only to end decisively in 1870.

As early as 1843 comes the massacre of Colonel Wakefield, the Company's agent; then, in 1844, the attack upon, in 1845 the sacking and destruction of, the settlement of Kororareka by the Maori Chief Heke. Panic reigned, and was increased by disorder. The villagers were daily at the mercy of an assault, and the defenceless colonists found no shadow of support from

the feeble successors of Hobson, governors like Shortland and Fitzroy. Seldom has a colony been in such a plight of destitution, anarchy and danger as was New Zealand in 1845. If the New Zealanders are lotus-eaters nowadays, if they are free from the delicate and difficult problems of diplomacy and war, their fathers at least have known the full severity of early struggles. The English Government at last woke up to the need for energetic action. They sent to New Zealand a man of proved experience in colonial administration, Captain Grey, then Governor of South Australia. He was the real founder of the Colony. In the course of his governorship, he directed the country with a firm and sometimes tyrannical hand. His great authority, his prestige, his decision of character made him the statesman for whom New Zealand had vainly waited since her earliest days. He arrived in 1845 to find things in the most lamentable state. Villages were attacked at every moment ; fires were continually springing up on every side ; the anxious colonists no longer knew (if they had ever known) what settled government was, and were cruelly conscious of its absence. The Maoris, excited by several years of pillage and war, only asked to be left to continue the work of destruction which they had begun with so much success. Happily the Government of London had realised the gravity of the situation. Grey came with wider powers than those of his predecessors. He had at his disposal more troops and more funds. Above all, he had more decision and more courage. The campaign against the Maoris, energetically conducted, at once bore fruit. In less than three years it ended in the complete pacification of the Northern Island, and for fourteen years peace reigned in New Zealand.

Grey, in recognition of his vigour and good sense, was knighted, and very soon found opportunity to show that his talents were as well adapted for peace as for war. With that behind him which his predecessors had always lacked, prestige, he succeeded in winning over thereby his former enemies the Maoris, for whom he had always felt a real sympathy. He interested them in the development of colonisation, and was able to make them such faithful allies that for some time it seemed as if war could never break out again.

The Colony was decidedly in good train. Peace was supreme in the North, roads were growing rapidly, and the Southern Island was filling up in its turn. There conditions were better, although the climate was rougher; there were no Maoris; it was a vast, silent, empty, but fertile land, laying itself open to the colonist; with none of Auckland's radiant and glowing colours, but with the more sombre hues of green England or grey Scotland.

It was in the extreme south of the island that the first pioneers of Otago landed. Rigid Scotsmen, zealous Presbyterians, they brought their pastors with them. Landing to the sound of hymns, they founded in 1848 Dunedin, the new Edinburgh, and immediately set to work with the perseverance and concentration of their race. They were not cheerful companions, but rough, patient men who were to give the Colony the benefit of their qualities of energy and resistance. Their early days were hard, and for the first few years progress was slow and scarcely perceptible. Happily there were no Maoris to trouble the peace of these first settlements. But the cold and violent winds, the snows and the storms of winter were foes against which the Scotsman himself often found the struggle a stern and difficult one.

Two years later, in 1850, the province of Canterbury was settled. The influence of Wakefield preponderated in the company which undertook to develop the rich plain where Christchurch now stands. He was strongly backed by the English Church, which lent him all its influence and gave the enterprise a distinctively denominational tone. The first colonists landed in December, 1850. They almost all belonged to the Established Church and enjoyed its protection.

Thus, about 1850, New Zealand was developing rapidly and in every direction. Everywhere were prosperous settlements; in less than ten years the appearance of the country had entirely changed. In the Southern Island the former silence and solitude had given way to the din of industry raised by several thousand members of a sturdy and industrious race, of a serious and trustworthy type. In the Northern Island the Maoris had been reduced to peace, leaving to the colonists of Wellington and Auckland the freedom from anxiety and the peace of mind essential for the task of developing the country. The separatist spirit of the various colonies remained vigorous as ever; the Scots of Dunedin and the Anglicans of Christchurch being particularly restive under the authority of Sir George Grey. Sprung from a free country, they found it irksome to live under an absolute régime. The New Zealand Company had closed in 1850 its stormy but useful existence. It left several prosperous colonies, eager, too, for self-government. The time had come to give to New Zealand, if not autonomy, at any rate a constitution better adapted to its already advanced stage of development than a mere dictatorship, even that of a man of the highest ability.

## CHAPTER IV.

### NEW ZEALAND TO 1890.

It is a very English desire—that of managing one's own affairs for oneself. To be governed, above all to be administered, from a distance by irresponsible officials, is what Englishmen have never cheerfully accepted. Thus it was that, from 1850 on, the New Zealanders impatiently endured the régime of authority under which they lived. It must be confessed that the squabbles of the Government and the New Zealand Company, and the too-dominating personality of Sir George Grey, with his inveterate inclination for personal power, had all helped to tighten overmuch the hand of the Government. Even the most peaceful colonists had found cause for complaint, and hence as soon as the immediate danger of war was removed, there appeared among the subjects of the powerful governor an "agitation" in favour of a more liberal régime.

The complete decentralisation which prevailed at this period made this desire very reasonable. The already prosperous cities of Auckland and Wellington, and those of Christchurch and Dunedin, which had only just risen from the soil, were so distant one from the other, so lacking in the means of communication, that they almost seemed to belong to different colonies. They had in

common only their British character, against which must be set the very marked shades of difference which have not yet ceased to separate English, Scotch and Irish. Add to all these grievances the fact that the capital, which by this time ought to have been moved to a central city like Wellington, remained at Auckland, in the far north, almost out of the ken of most of the colonists. How could the inhabitants of Christchurch or Dunedin regard with favour a governor who lived so far away that he was almost a foreigner to them? On their side the members of the settlement of Wellington did not forget the endless quarrels which the Company had had with the Government; and that was another element of discord and bitterness to add to this whole series of grievances.

The character of the New Zealanders of 1850 perfectly justified their claim to self-government. They were, for the most part, industrious, active folk who had stood the test and earned a large degree of confidence. British in origin, they were used to the enjoyment of certain liberties, and, on the other hand, the life that they had led since their arrival in the Colony, and the arduous creative work which they had accomplished, had accustomed them to the jealous independence of new countries. They were ripe, if not for independence, at any rate for a generous measure of liberty.

The English Government had not waited till this period to draw up for the use of New Zealand a form of constitution. Since 1846, the Imperial Parliament had adopted such a form, and in 1847, Earl Grey, then Colonial Secretary, sent it on to Sir George Grey. The Colony was to be divided into two provinces, at the head of which were to be placed two lieutenant-governors. A system of local assemblies, dominated by a central

parliament, represented the elective element in this constitution. Its intentions were excellent, but as a reform it was premature. In 1847 war had scarcely ceased, and at any moment the Maoris might rise again. As for the Southern Island, it was at this time, apart from the settlement of Nelson, only a vast solitude. With the great authority that his success had given him, Sir George Grey succeeded in making it clear to the minister that the time was not yet ripe for the change; it was therefore postponed, and the despotic governor was able to keep unquestioned supremacy for a few more years. Nevertheless, as we have explained, the situation soon changed. Peace restored, prosperity beginning, the Southern Island rapidly filling up—all these things soon made necessary the setting up of a constitution, even in the eyes of those who a few years before had dismissed the idea as premature. In 1850, a new project was put in hand, this time under the governor's own inspiration. The man who was accused of being a tyrant, who in any case deserved the name of autocrat, made a genuinely liberal move. According to his project, the Parliament was to be made up of two chambers: a chamber of representatives and a legislative council. The suffrage, if not universal, was at least very widely extended. The chamber was elected for five years and the legislative council nominated by the Government. Grey would have wished this second chamber to be chosen by the provincial councils, more or less in the same way as the American Senate, but he could not carry his point in London. As for the cabinet—and this was the great flaw in the constitution—it was to be responsible only to the governor—a provision which led straightway to conflicts and deadlocks. Nor did the complexity of the

system cease there. Understanding, in the light of experience, that decentralisation was, in great measure, established in New Zealand, the authors of the constitution had wished to give each province a separate representative assembly under the name of a provincial council. The idea was sound enough, but it had been needlessly complicated by the erection alongside of each council of an elected superintendent, chosen from the ministers to act as a sort of mock-governor. The thing might have suited a very populous country; it was simply absurd in a half-empty land, where political life was scarcely in existence.

This new constitution was accepted in June, 1852, by the Imperial Parliament, and in January, 1853, was promulgated in New Zealand. Sir George Grey, regarding his part as now played, and doubtless having no desire to continue to rule with curtailed powers, contented himself with inaugurating the provincial assemblies, and left to his successor the task of constituting the Central Parliament. He sailed from the Colony in December, 1853.

The drop from a stern but distinguished dictatorship to the feeblest and flattest form of parliamentarianism was a heavy fall, and no sooner was its former governor gone than the country sank, if not into anarchy, at any rate into serious disorder. The temporary successor of Sir George Grey, Colonel Wynyard, summoned the first Parliament to meet at Auckland in May, 1854. The first elective assembly of the Colony was not ill-constituted; it included men of talent and men of sense; but in the nature of things it was destined to slip into confusion and idle agitation. The first cabinet was composed half of officials, half of members of Parliament. Since the responsibility of ministers was not clearly de-



fined, the almost immediate result was the formation of rival cliques, the fall of ministries, and perpetual crises ; in a word, so much disorder that everyone recognised that the responsibility of ministers to Parliament had become inevitable. In 1856 the first responsible ministry was formed under the leadership of Mr. Sewell. A few months earlier, in September, 1855, Grey's official successor, Colonel Gore-Brown, had arrived. He loyally accepted the character of a constitutional governor which was imposed on him by the responsibility, henceforth complete, of the cabinet to Parliament. He retained no direct authority, except in relations with the Maoris, in accordance with the instructions of the Colonial Office. It was the last vestige of personal power which remained in New Zealand. All other questions came before the two Houses, who began their work by a series of petty squabbles which greatly affected the white man's prestige.

Indeed, as the memories of Sir George Grey's dictatorship wore off, the submission of the Maoris became more precarious. They were annoyed at the continual purchases of land which were made from them by the Government, and, in their ignorance of European politics, they interpreted as a diminution of strength the transformation of the governor into a mere arbiter without personal power. Soon they went so far as to refuse to sell, and attempts were made to dispense with that process. Hence quarrels and troubles, growing more and more frequent, till in 1860, less than seven years after Grey's departure, came a new outbreak of hostilities.

This time the home Government at once realised the danger of leaving power in feeble hands. They had recourse to the man who had already once saved New

Zealand. Sir George Grey answered the appeal, and set to work to repair, as he had done fifteen years before, the faults of his predecessors. He showed himself capable of suppressing his personal preferences, which inclined him to absolutism, and even while he gave a commanding lead to the policy of the day, frankly adapted himself to the presence of Parliament, and even consented (which Colonel Gore-Brown had not done) to submit to it anything concerning the relations with the Maoris. His second term was far from being as brilliant as the first. But, while the difficulties were as great, his powers were less. And yet he succeeded, by sheer force of energy and skill, in holding the revolt in check. He did not, however, see the end of it, for in 1868 he was recalled by the Colonial Office, leaving a country ready for peace, but not altogether tranquil, and still shaken by the terrible conflicts it had so lately experienced. Two years after the departure of Sir George Grey the war at last came to an end. Since then peace has never really been disturbed, and the Maoris have become the faithful subjects of England. Thus the year 1870 marks the beginning of a new period of peace and progress. From now on the memories both of war and of autocracy fade into the past. Prosperity reappears and continues uninterrupted. In 1861 gold had been discovered in the province of Otago, a little later on the west coast, and then in the north. As for the colonists, their character and courage had been tested in a stern and merciless struggle. Now the Colony had won its spurs, and could begin its career as a peaceful and civilised land. The problems which next presented themselves were no longer exclusively colonial; they became social and political. The heroic period was over, that of organisation begun.

Up to 1870 ministers had generally governed without having any political programme in the usual sense of the word. As long as the conflict with the Maoris lasted, that struggle had naturally absorbed most of the energies of the rulers, and prevented other problems from making a due impression on their minds. Government was carried on from hand to mouth, and there was little time to devote to questions of principle, or reforms of a wide scope. When the security of the State was no longer daily threatened, the rulers had leisure to give themselves up to distant hopes and wider schemes. It was then that Sir Julius Vogel, financial minister, first published his scheme of public loans and public works. Borrowing, it is true, was no new thing in the Colony, for the ten years of war through which she had just passed had had as their first and fatal result the creation of a public debt which rose in 1870 to £8,828,000. The debt was a dead-weight, since the money spent represented no real advantage to the country, except the troublesome acquisition of security. The great idea of Sir Julius Vogel was to borrow yet more, but to improve the Colony, to develop it, and to attract settlers. He was able to win over Parliament to his plans, and later to put them into practice. Behind the apparent vacillations of parties which followed 1870 he was really directing the country. He carried through his loans, and though under this system New Zealand ran heavily into debt, it is generally recognised to-day that the realisation of this programme brought prosperity.

It was about 1875 that political parties began to take on a definite character. The question of the suppression of the provinces was the occasion. The opposition of central and local powers had become accentuated from day to day, and the cause of the latter had rather lost

ground. In 1864 Wellington had become the seat of Government, and from the moment when the capital came to be within everyone's reach in the very heart of the Colony, most of the grievances of the decentralisation party against the Government were bound to collapse of themselves. Then, too, on several occasions the provincial assemblies had covered themselves with ridicule by discussing with altogether inappropriate pomp questions of the most minute importance. It was certainly time to suppress, or at any rate to simplify, all this complicated and useless machinery. But how to take drastic action without wounding numerous interests and irritating many little vanities was a difficult problem. Sir Julius Vogel did not hesitate to become the champion of centralisation, and in 1875 brought about the suppression of the provincial councils, in spite of the lively opposition of Sir George Grey, who had returned as a simple individual to his adopted country, and made on this subject his re-entry into public life. The real need of simplifying administrative machinery won the day over the former governor's prestige. The provincial councils were suppressed, and thenceforward the new régime, tacitly accepted by everyone, was never called in question. The return of Sir George Grey was a political event of great importance, for the presence of such a man could not fail to count in the country's life. He had not, it is true, preserved the remarkable talents which had once made him the undisputed autocrat of New Zealand. With the lapse of years the corners of his character had become more marked; many of his good qualities had been changed into defects, or rather his gifts of energy and command found no longer such full scope in the New Zealand of 1875, pacified and secured for a parlia-

mentary régime. He knew how to give orders, but he had never known how to debate. Born to rule a crown colony, he was not made to watch over the destinies of a self-governing territory. Yet his prestige was still so great that he was naturally drawn into public life, and for the third time he assumed the reins of government, this time as Premier. In spite of his age, he threw himself into the fight with the enthusiasm of youth. For the first time, he drew the attention of the New Zealand public to the need for really democratic reforms. Triennial Parliaments, the application of the principle of one man, one vote, a land policy favourable to the mass of the people—such were the chief articles in the programme with which he came into power in 1877.

His term of office was neither long nor particularly brilliant. After two years he left public life for ever. But his government had not been without results. For the simple policy of expediency which had hitherto prevailed, he had substituted a sort of European radicalism, and it was a distant preparation for the social ideas which were destined later to have so remarkable a development. From 1879 to 1890, Sir Harry Atkinson and Sir Robert Stout were alternately in power. Both continued in the paths which had been opened out so widely by Sir George Grey. In truth the differences between these two successors of the great man were very slight. Both were awake to the necessity of solving the political and social problems of the Colony, but they approached them with more or less breadth of mind, according to the nature of their characters and the views of their partisans. Atkinson was, above all, a man of action and courage. He had taken part in the Maori wars, and never forgot that he was a colonist and a soldier. He was always quick and bluff in his

decisions, plunging into problems as he would have plunged into the bush, careless of principles and of ideas. Chiefly surrounded by conservatives, he stood during this period for the so-called New Zealand conservatism ; but we shall see in the next chapter what is meant by this European word when transplanted to the Antipodes. As for Sir Robert Stout, he belonged to a learned profession ; he was a lawyer of great reputation who always remained, even in the thick of the parliamentary fight, a lawyer still. A convinced radical, he stopped on the threshold of socialism, and on the appearance of the social policy he remained in sympathy with its promoters, without ever identifying himself with them.

The fact is, indeed, that the change of direction, which occurred in 1890, and which we shall study in detail in the following chapters, was deep enough to require a complete change of political *personnel*. At this decisive turning-point in the history of New Zealand many men dropped behind, never again to take their place in the front rank of the people ; and many new ideas and fashions came into being, destined to change completely the political outlook of the country. In 1890 the historic period of New Zealand came to an end, and a new era began the course of which is not yet run.

*PART II.*

POLITICAL CONDITIONS.





## CHAPTER V.

### PRESENT CONDITIONS OF POLITICAL LIFE.

ALTHOUGH the New Zealander has preserved, after more than half a century of autonomy, a number of characteristics which make it possible to classify him without hesitation as a member of the great British family, he has not been able to carry with him to the Antipodes, as Aeneas did his Penates, a European atmosphere. Above all, he has not found in his new home the political and economic conditions of an old country like England, rich with accumulated capital and venerable traditions. Thus, much in his environment and much in his nature has undergone a change, and he has become a member of what is practically a new people.

Indeed, despite the British appearance which makes them seem much more English than the Canadians, the Australians or the South Africans, the inhabitants of New Zealand are nevertheless "colonials"; that is to say, a very different type from the islanders of Great Britain. One must hear the Englishman speak with his air of condescending patronage of the colonial, to realise that all the imperialistic ideas in the world will not prevent the citizen of the mother country from regarding the other citizens of the Empire as, in spite of everything, a slightly inferior class: unintellectual,

think the cultured ; rather rough, thinks the snob. One must hear the colonial speak in his turn of the " old country," to realise that with his filial affection, real and touching as it is, is mingled a contemptuous pity for those conservative and prejudiced Europeans, who are afraid of their own shadows when there is any question, as some philosopher has said, " of stirring something in the great reservoirs of the future." Yet, in spite of all, there is still a dormant Englishman under the noisy self-assertion of the New Zealander. Hence two traits in him which alternately get the upper hand. At times he becomes imaginative, expansive, eager for reforms and new ideas, recking little of vain respect for ancient prejudices. At times, on the other hand, he shows himself, to our great astonishment, a lover of ancient forms and established hierarchies, more than half a snob, and in his way almost a conservative. The real fact is that, according to circumstance or character, we see before us a man who is either predominantly English or a real colonial free from all European influence. About the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Colony began seriously to develop and the influential personages of this period undertook to give to the country a politically autonomous existence, they naturally appealed to their memories of England in the past, and borrowed from her her traditional institutions. Instead of making deliberate innovations in the constitutional sphere, as did the Americans, they carefully imitated, almost like children. Most of them were English themselves, and could conceive of nothing outside the forms which they had known in their former home. But soon new conditions and new needs prevailed. Faithful to the spirit of their race, which rarely tries to change at once the form and the

essence of things, the New Zealanders profoundly modified the spirit and working of their institutions, without leaving appreciable traces of the change in their outward appearance. So that at every step in New Zealand we find English forms, but we must not forget that they are almost always animated by a new spirit.

The power of traditions, and the respect with which they are universally surrounded, constitutes one of the most striking characteristics of English public life. We do not say that tradition is without its influence in New Zealand. On the contrary, it still plays a considerable part, but in a limited sphere, that of private or, again, of social and religious life. The strict observance of the Sabbath, the ordering of the domestic hearth, the popularity of sports, the orderliness of public meetings, are so many proofs that the customs of the mother country have not been abandoned. Life in a New Zealand city is not essentially different from what it is in a small British town. But there comes a point where the likeness ceases. In building up his "home," the colonial faithfully copied the "home" that he had known in England, and was happy in consequence. But in making his political constitution, he copied little more than the form; for, confronted with an entirely new situation he had, so to speak, no precedent on which he could rely.

The New Zealanders might have been attracted by the example of America, and looked thither for a model. In the Antipodes to be twenty days' journey distant by sea is to be relatively a close neighbour. Auckland is twice as near to San Francisco as it is to London. And yet American influence has scarcely made itself felt in Australasia. If Victoria has felt it to a certain degree, New Zealand has escaped it almost entirely. Thus,

neither England, nor more especially America, have provided the politicians of New Zealand with real guidance, and they have, little by little, lost the habit of seeking counsel from outside. The relative simplicity of their social organism, the more than insular isolation of their colony, have led them to persuade themselves that they are capable of solving their own problems, and that so far from being the disciples of Europe, they are intended to out-distance it in the path of progress and to give it advice and examples. Thus it is that the almost complete absence of conservative forces, the novelty of the problems to be solved, and the claim to be in the advance guard of civilisation, have brought it about that the little English Colony of the Antipodes has become the chosen land of the most daring experiments.

A first fact of capital importance in the political development of New Zealand is the absence of all aristocracy of birth, of title, or of wealth. The governor is, as a rule, the only aristocrat in the Dominion, for there is neither marquis, earl, nor baronet in the colonies: up to the present the species has been unknown. It is true that some honours have been scattered about; there are a few knights and "honourables"; but although these titles have their influence in social life, and give a certain stamp of good tone and respectability to their happy possessors, they confer absolutely no political influence. In fact, the aristocracy, the place of which is still a considerable one in England, plays no part at all in the public life of this new society.

The setting up of a landed aristocracy might have seemed more likely, and thirty years ago a rough forecast of such a thing did indeed appear. But the advance of democracy has swept the field clear of it. About the

middle of last century, the Government, which wished at all costs to increase the population, and for which the problem of settlement was much more pressing than that of social organisation, sold lands to all comers. Thus large estates were united in a few hands, and for several years the influence of the great landowners was the dominant one. They filled the Parliament; they were rich, and masters of the situation. But, from then on, their number and influence have considerably declined. Many of these gentlemen farmers, fresh from England, with luxurious habits and expensive tastes, were incapable of adapting themselves to a rustic colonial life. They became absentees, who passed half the year in the towns or even in England. They forgot that in the colonies it is a question not of *keeping*, but of *making*. A great number of them were ruined; others, mortgaging their property, only escaped ruin to fall into the straitened circumstances in which they are still to-day. It was not long indeed before they had other enemies besides themselves; the democracy grew used, little by little, to seeing in them its worst enemies, and the small holders, who form the bulk of the population, began to throw jealous glances on these *latifundia* which often lay undeveloped. Then legislation began to threaten them, and nowadays heavy taxes burden the great landowners, and rigid rules limit the amount of crown lands which a single man may purchase. Finally, not content with preventing the formation of new landed fortunes, the Government devotes large sums every year to buying back, sometimes by compulsion, large private domains, and dividing them up among small holders. More even than the manufacturers, the great landowners have been affected by the democratic evolution of recent years: they have against

them both public opinion and the existing law. They cannot therefore be expected to play any ruling part in public life.

In default of a non-existing nobility and an enfeebled landed aristocracy, it might seem likely that the leading commercial and industrial employers would hold a large place in public life. The power of money shows itself everywhere ; the great capitalist or the great employer holds many threads in his hands, and can, in certain circumstances, wield great influence over the plans of the Government. In the American democracy the controller of railways or the great business man disdains to become a senator or a representative, because he himself can make senators and representatives, and pull in the background the wires of the political game. In New Zealand nothing of the sort obtains. The real leaders of the country, those that is who hold the substance, as well as the appearance of power, are at the present time men of no wealth, while the rich, with very few exceptions, have been thrown into opposition, where their opinion counts for very little in the counsels of the Government. It has not always been so. For a long time it was the rich who ruled and governed ; the fashionable clubs were then only the adjuncts of Parliament and the cabinet ; political leaders and ministers were to be met there ; and, in spite of the sometimes advanced ideas of its leaders, the middle class was conscious that the preponderating influence was on its side.

Does this mean that money has lost its power ? Far from it. The Anglo-Saxon, whatever transformation he may undergo in different surroundings, always retains his respect for this unquestioned power. But the business man has in New Zealand found a rival who is richer and stronger than he : the State is the greatest

employer in the country ; it owns the great railways, the postal and telegraph services, the greater part of the land ; it directs the administration, and has under its influence a large body of officials. How can the people fail to attach themselves to the fortunes of this new patron whom they themselves elect and control ? The employer is still his own master, in spite of the daily increasing restrictions by which the law limits his independence. But the Government has nothing to refuse the voter who supports it ; and the voter knows this, and knows too, as between the State and the rich man, in which direction to seek a protector. Hence the gradual decline of the aristocracy of wealth. Several men of eminence have ceased to be members of Parliament ; a rift has appeared between society and the people. The clubs have become the centres of opposition, where the members of the Government rarely run the risk of setting foot, the homes of discouraged Casandras complaining that the democracy is carrying all before it, and predicting for the Colony the direst cataclysm.

Thus the different aristocracies of land, of rank, or of wealth have not succeeded in acquiring or retaining political preponderance. Hence the field is open to the masses, to the city workers, to the small holders, to employees of every sort. Modern democratic institutions being based on the power of numbers, it was fated that in a colony like New Zealand, these classes should, in the end, gain the real power. The people finally discovered what enormous influence their voting-papers gave them, and instead of neglecting or disdaining this influence, they use it with a cleverness which makes them masters of the country.

In a great nation where the voters are many and the

problems complicated and apparently insoluble, the elector tends to lose sight of the importance of his vote, because he does not see its immediate effect on the legislation and development of the country. In New Zealand this is by no means the case. A colony, isolated in the middle of the Pacific and only containing 800,000 inhabitants, is like a sealed vase in which the play of cause and effect can be easily observed. A law is soon made there, and its effects soon felt. Thus the people realised, more clearly than elsewhere, the efficacy of the weapon which was in its hands ; it soon began to ask itself why it should not make laws at its own good pleasure, and it has naturally succumbed to the temptation of appealing to the State.

The moment has come to ask ourselves what is the New Zealander's conception of the State. Up to our day, or nearly so, England has been regarded as the stronghold of doctrinaire individualism, and the English as a people of initiative, whose strength is in their self-reliance. The second proposition has remained correct, but the first is rapidly becoming untrue, for every day the English show themselves prepared to accept some new intervention of the public authority, and, under the compulsion of self-interest, to sacrifice some part of their liberty. For long the colonials have led the way along this path, and it is a curious spectacle to see the sons of the men of the Manchester School becoming the most stalwart disciples of State intervention.

Let us try to see what could lead the New Zealanders to this perfect mania for appealing to the State, which has become one of the characteristics of their public life. To begin with, New Zealand, as we have said above, is a land fundamentally and exclusively democratic ; reactionary influences do not exist there ; con-



servative tendencies are very feeble, and it is a very brief past which throws its shadow over the present generation. The structure of society is simple, and there is no place for the inextricable tangle of interests, traditions and prejudices which so complicates the solution of European political problems.

The colonials, moreover, are generally men of mingled strength and simplicity. Their strength makes them unconscious of obstacles, and they attack the most delicate questions much as one opens a path through a virgin forest with an axe. Their outlook, not too carefully reasoned, and no doubt rather scornful of scientific thought, makes them incapable of self-distrust. They have, like almost all men of action, a contempt for theories ; yet they are often captured by the first theory which turns up, if it is demonstrated to them with an appearance of logic sufficient to impose upon them. In most cases they do not seem to see difficulties, and they propose simple solutions for the most complex problems with an astonishing audacity. At heart they are probably convinced that politics are not as complicated as they have been made out to be, and that a little courage and decision are all that is required to accomplish the reforms of which Europe is so afraid.

This outlook is easily explained. Why should the New Zealanders be alarmed at political difficulties ? It is true that the Maori wars were a terrible test, but in a field which did not prepare them for parliamentary subtleties. And apart from these wars, the Australasians are like spoilt children. England has solved for them all the most difficult questions of foreign, military and financial policy. They still have only to concern themselves with their internal affairs, unless they choose

to do otherwise, and before anything fatal can happen to them there are still many mistakes which they can safely make. Their autonomy may be as complete as possible, but they feel vaguely, without admitting it to themselves, that behind them stands watching a powerful protector, who will be there at the moment of danger, and who, if necessary, will be ready to repair their blunders. In fact, their period of tutelage is not as completely closed as they imagine, and under these conditions it is but natural that obstacles have fewer terrors for them than for others. The individualism of the Manchester School implies a certain degree of modesty. According to it, in the struggle between man and the laws of nature it is not man who will prove, in the end, stronger ; instead, then, of attempting to correct these laws, he would do better to adapt himself to them. *Naturæ non nisi parendo imperatur.* But this is a point of view which these colonials have long ago abandoned ; those among them who still cling to it are usually regarded with distrust or pity. To doubt the power of the State is very rare in the Colonies, and when a colonial finds himself face to face with some difficulty, it is almost always to the State that he first appeals. To what else indeed should he turn ? In the early days of a colony there is usually little co-operation between the immigrants ; the Government is often the only bond which unites them, and some time is necessary before natural groupings are formed. The Government is thus brought by the force of circumstances to perform functions, which in the old countries would lie within the province of private initiative. As the Government is at the service of all, it is generally difficult to decline its services : little by little it is brought to concern itself with everything, and the

people soon begin to consider the State as a special providence which is *bound* to help it. What will you do for us, what will you do for me? This is the classic question of the voter to the candidate. The New Zealander asks it with an ingenuousness which is almost cynical. And henceforward the claim of these new peoples to set an example of a society in which "man from his childhood learns to rely only on himself," can no longer be looked on as anything but a legend to be thrown on the rubbish heap.

But let us try to state the question more precisely. The temptation to appeal to the State exists in every country, and it does not characterise the New Zealander very distinctively to say that he is disposed towards State intervention. To a greater or less extent everyone is so disposed. What constitutes the chief difference between the different nations is the greater or less resistance which the central power meets with from individuals, or from societies, companies, or institutions of all sorts. In New Zealand, there are, so to speak, no obstacles, and as a wave spreads easily over a sandy beach, the influence of the State makes itself felt up to the very doors of private life.

Let us see what leading men in the Colony think of this question. Sir Robert Stout, who is no extremist, but whose opinions are nevertheless advanced, thus describes the conception of the State which his fellow-citizens hold :

"Individualism, in the old English Liberal sense, is at a discount in our Colony. The Government is no longer deemed an enemy of the people, but, on the contrary, it is believed to be the benign father and mother whose every care is for the people, who are not considered capable of regulating their affairs without such

assistance. The action of a political party, or a ministry, may be condemned or denounced, but the *Government* can be guilty of no wrong, and whenever or wherever a social evil is discovered, an appeal is at once made to the Government to redress it. The omnipotence of the Government is never doubted. What the effect of this change in the attitude of the people to the Government will be we do not know, and few of us have cared to enquire. If we did, and were we to issue any warnings, our warnings would be ignored.”<sup>1</sup>

Sir Robert Stout goes on to say :

“Government is, to us, a powerful institution—as powerful as the Tsar appears to be to his subjects—and it is considered to be benign. The socialistic wave has reached us, and has affected us. And, although we have not any socialistic societies, nor any community-settlements, we appeal to the Government, whenever a social wrong is proved to exist, to redress it. Is there anything, we ask, which the State cannot set right? And the reply to our query is, Nothing. Our labour laws are a product of this feeling. They have not sprung into being during the last ten years. They have grown as we have grown, and are the product of prevailing sentiment as to the duty and powers of the State to remedy grievances and to promote general happiness.”<sup>1</sup>

These few lines are an excellent presentation of the New Zealander's attitude. Their land is small, the Government is close at hand; it seems that one has only to stretch out one's hand to grasp it, and to dictate to it laws and regulations. With us the State always remains a distant and rather mysterious institution,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Stout, “New Zealand,” *Contemporary Review*, October, 1899.

which excludes all idea of personality. We laugh at the story which tells of the misadventures of the citizen who wanted to see the State. In New Zealand, nothing is easier. It is enough to find the Prime Minister. If you are an influential elector he can refuse you nothing. I shall surprise no one if I say that the people have quickly understood the situation, and use and abuse it without recking much of the results.

Let us here recall a typical phrase of Sir Robert Stout, quoted above : " What the effect of this change in the attitude of the people to the Government will be we do not know, and few of us have cared to enquire." This is very Anglo-Saxon. To investigate what will happen twenty years hence is to theorise, and the Anglo-Saxons never theorise. What they want is immediate and practical results ; even expedients do not frighten them, if they bring a measure of relief or progress. Let us never forget that we are dealing with the most practical of men, and that idealism takes a very small place in their thoughts. The working classes are past masters in this game of legislation. The laws regulating industry have been made by and for them. Nor have the small cultivators lagged behind, or failed to secure exemptions from taxes and other considerable advantages. Thus when the crisis of 1893 reached the small-holders, it seemed only natural to them that the Government should become their banker and should make them advances on particularly favourable terms. Nor did the movement stop there : every class of employee has had its special measures. Those who have not secured an Act have had a grant or an office. The New Zealand democracy has quickly come to resemble in this respect certain European democracies rather than the aristocracy of England.

Under these conditions political contests are very lively—the Government has so many favours to bestow. The Opposition have their philippics ready to their hand, for they can always accuse ministers, and not without reason, of governing only for their friends and of filling all official positions with their own partisans. But the Government can laugh at these attacks, for it has many means of self-defence. All the benefits of the State are distributed through its hands, and that is enough to smooth down much opposition.

The self-interest of classes, parties, and cliques would nevertheless not suffice to explain the extraordinary legislation which has flourished in New Zealand for the last ten years. There has been a perfect debauch of laws, measures and experiments, which cannot have been produced solely by the demands of the electors. Sentiment always ends by reasserting itself when one is most anxious to exclude it. With the New Zealanders we shall see it reappearing in the end, but under a form curiously crossed with the spirit of practical self-interest. What we mean is a certain sense of apostolic mission, which excludes neither vanity nor self-advertisement, and is common enough in very new countries. Many New Zealanders are honestly convinced that the attention of the whole world is concentrated upon them, waiting with curiosity and even with anxiety to see what they will say and do next. They have certainly been a little spoilt by being always spoken of as the most *advanced* people in the world; they have been blamed by some, and by others been praised to the sky; they have seldom been laughed at, and above all, they have been everywhere discussed. In this way they have become so accustomed to being taken seriously that they have become conscious of a mission to humanity.

Europe struggles painfully in social and political crises from which she cannot extricate herself. She yearns for a passport or a guide to show her the way—something to lift her out of the rut into which she has sunk. Poor Europe, bound by her own traditions and prejudices ! Poor European Continent, victim of its own unbelief ! Well, say the New Zealanders, New Zealand will be her guide. To qualify herself she will make the necessary experiments. She may well suffer from them herself, but no matter, it is her duty, and she will not shirk it. As we said above, this species of vanity is not rare in new countries. America, as one knows, is not exempt. Japan, which has achieved an artificial youth, leaves no one ignorant of its high opinion of itself. When one lives so far away, how can one avoid the sense of being the centre of the world ? Like provincial celebrities who, coming to Paris, feel that everyone is looking at them, the New Zealanders, in their distant insular isolation, think that they fill a great place in the world.

Europe is little known to them ; they certainly visit England, but know nothing of “ the Continent,” the importance of which tends to be depreciated by the colonial journals. The result is that they have no very clear idea of their own capacity for influence. Let us hear them speak for themselves. This is an extract from a speech by Sir Robert Stout, to whose moderation we have drawn attention above :

“A noble opportunity offers itself to us. In many respects we stand erect in the advance guard of the nations ; the reason is that we are not encumbered with privileges ; nor are we encumbered with prejudices, and in consequence of this, we can make experiments freely. I ask the House to make experiments.

I ask the House to believe that these experiments can be made. I ask the House to believe that, even if these experiments fail, it is our duty to make them."

Let us now quote the opinion of another man who has played a considerable part in the history of these last years, and of whom we shall often have occasion to speak—Mr. Reeves, the former Minister of Labour :

"It is the wish of the Democracy of New Zealand that its leaders should not be afraid to lead the way. Far from being afraid of seeing their country in advance of all others on the path of social and political progress, they believe, rightly or wrongly, that their country is a guide for others. Their aim is not to remain prudently and quietly on a level with all, in however good company they may find themselves, but to raise their country and the conditions of their people higher, even though it be only a little higher, than their neighbours."

Such is the enthusiasm of the leaders, and the criticisms of the sceptics only serve to accentuate the general attitude of mind. The former leader of the conservative opposition, Captain Russell, once painted in striking fashion the vanity of these tireless reformers. "It seems to me that there is a perfect craze—I would almost say a vulgar craze—for saying that we in New Zealand must lead the world in the matter of legislation. They tell us incessantly that the whole world has its eyes fixed on this colony, that the social legislation, of which we are engaged in laying the foundations, is an object of extraordinary interest to the rest of the world, that the whole world is watching what we do in astonishment or admiration." This is what is said, and this is what many people are thoroughly convinced of.

Can it be said, then, that this sense of a mission to society is absolutely pure of all self-interest or mixture



of motives? It would be very rash to claim anything of the sort when dealing with British colonies. It is true that in making social and political experiments one does a service to the world; but, in return, the world talks of one, and that gets New Zealand known, interests people in her products, and in the end helps the sale of these products. A people can advertise itself, just as a merchant or a manufacturer can. The New Zealanders are quite aware of it; and if their object has been to get talked about, they have not chosen the worst means, for, since the passing of such measures as those for compulsory arbitration and woman suffrage, everybody has heard of the little antipodean colony, of whose very existence people were once scarcely aware.

This method of carrying forward a people, by appealing to its vanity, without letting it lose sight of the advantage of clever self-advertisement, is very efficacious. For more than ten years the New Zealanders have been won over to a policy which both serves their interests and flatters their pride. They are proud of their innovations and their trials of what has been tried nowhere else; they enjoy being able to smile at the timidity of old countries and to believe that they are giving them lessons. Votes for Women? Why not? It is new: it is something to try. Is not New Zealand peculiarly fitted to undertake it? Is it a matter of old-age pensions or some other reform of the sort? The same temptation is at hand, that of out-distancing others. And it is the same with all kinds of measures. For this strange rage for novelty lies at the inception of most of their laws.

Such are the motives on which the citizens of this too new country usually act—a country where the most advanced ideas do not meet with the necessary, though

often galling, check of tradition and of the past. What the New Zealanders most need, in fact, is principles, convictions, reasoned beliefs. Parties are based much less on ideas than one might at first argue from their pretentious legislation, and much more on the interests of sections, classes and groups. As for the influence of imagination and sentiment, it shows itself under the curious form of a patriotic vanity, which makes the New Zealanders believe that the world expects much of them, and that they must not be false to their destiny. This blend of a too practical outlook with a too exalted sense of apostleship will meet us over and over again in our study of New Zealand.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF NEW ZEALAND.

IN the course of the preceding chapter we remarked that the Anglo-Saxons are seldom prepared to change at once the form and the spirit of things. The New Zealand Constitution is the most curious illustration of this. In this particular case the form has changed more slowly than the spirit, and a series of Acts of a bold, not to say revolutionary, nature has proceeded from institutions which, though liberal enough, have nevertheless no distinctly democratic character. The fact is that the colonials, despite their pretensions to being *enfants terribles*, have a real respect for the old English forms, and do not feel it necessary to do away with them. We have shown how the country passed from an autocratic to a parliamentary form of government, and how easy that passage was; had she cared to go further, it is hard to see what could have stopped her. The truth is that the democracy of New Zealand was eager for more solid victories than the revision of constitutions could give. It asked itself what could be the use of changing constitutional forms, since the existing régime, despite its imperfections, allowed it to pass a series of laws which made it the envy of many democracies. Let us therefore study, as an expression of the

will of the people, this system, which in form is less liberal than that of Switzerland or even of France, and which shows clear traces of the ideas of another time and another society. Let us not think of admiring or condemning it in itself; this would be to misunderstand its true character. Let us content ourselves with remembering that the New Zealanders have been able to use institutions, often antiquated, to perform new tasks, and that, after all, this is one of the happiest secrets of the English spirit.

The New Zealand constitution belongs to the classic type of 'the constitutions of the British Empire. It is liberal and even democratic, since the real sovereignty is in the people's hands, but it is not a republican constitution in the strict sense of the word, for neither the governor nor the Upper House are elected. We shall study in this chapter the governor and the Parliament, leaving for those that follow the study of the political parties and the executive.

The governor is the representative of the Crown, and plays in the Colony the part of a constitutional monarch, or more exactly of the president of a republic. He is usually a highly decorative nobleman, whose personal position is a great one, but whose political influence is severely limited. He is naturally bound to choose his ministers from the majority, and the premier is already selected for him by public opinion, precisely as in England, so that his freedom of choice is greatly restricted. And though, again, he has nominally the right to refuse his signature to a bill, tradition compels him always to bow to the wishes of Parliament; should he resist he would doubtless be censured by the Colonial Office. Since 1856, in fact, New Zealand has been absolute mistress of her internal affairs, and the gover-

nor, who is after all very much of a stranger, would do ill to intervene otherwise than in a friendly and almost amateurish fashion.

Under these conditions it is clear that the man makes the office. If a statesman of great reputation were sent, he would serve to represent England, and would bring to a country with no history the counsels of experience and of the past. New Zealand has neither aristocracy nor political tradition; the Legislative Council, that pale copy of the House of Lords, represents neither land, wealth nor rank. The governor might be himself the equivalent of a senate, the great consultant and adviser of the Colony. The influence of a superior man would doubtless be powerful in a colonial society, in which politicians often lack experience, and have, in spite of themselves, a certain respect for the representative of the mother country.

This conception of the part of a governor is that neither of the English nor of the New Zealander. The English, very cautious, very much alive to the Dominion's jealous passion for independence, make no attempt to interfere in its affairs, and simply expect of the governor that he should be a bond between New Zealand and England, the living symbol of the two countries' union. The most imperialistic statesmen have upheld this view. Mr. Chamberlain himself, asked by Queensland and Newfoundland to intervene in their private concerns, answered this request by an unconditional refusal. It is a tradition now firmly established, and from it there will doubtless be no departure. The governor will limit himself to intervening if a colonial Act in its working should prove to be to the detriment of the general interests of the Empire, or of its relations with other countries. We shall have

the opportunity of studying an example of this in the case of the Acts passed by New Zealand against the immigration of the yellow races. And even in this case it took England a great deal of trouble to overcome the obstinacy of her colony.

The New Zealanders have grown accustomed to this negative part played by the English representative, and are opposed to any change which would have the effect of increasing his authority. Neither, on the other hand, do they wish to lessen it still more, or to change its character. There was a project mooted thirty years ago to have the governor elected by universal suffrage, and from year to year some advanced members have renewed the proposal in Parliament. But it cannot be said as yet to have met with much favour. The actual system works, after all, most excellently. The nominated governor is quite aware that he does not represent public opinion ; this makes him cautious in making a stand, for he knows he has only himself to rely on, and is by no means sure of being supported even by the home Government. An elected governor would have neither this neutrality nor these scruples. And would he have the prestige of a European aristocrat ? It is very unlikely. All this the New Zealanders have considered, and it is the question of prestige which has no doubt influenced them most. For them, in fact, the political functions of the governor are of little importance, as they regard him as something very different from the first officer of a republic.

The New Zealander, like the Englishman, is often a snob. He looks instinctively above himself to imitate the class which he considers his immediate superior ; the working classes try to be like the middle class, and the middle class tries to copy the aristocracy. As

we have already explained, there is no aristocracy in Australasia. From a political standpoint the New Zealanders are very glad of it; from a social standpoint they are inconsolable. The English are made that way, and such contradictions do not trouble them. The English socialist, for example, cannot imagine England without a King, a Prince of Wales, and various aristocrats. The radicals of the London County Council are very proud of having half a dozen lords sitting among them. The Australasians have indeed lived at large in the free air of a virgin country, but they have never been able to rid themselves of this archaic form of fetish worship, in which a wise respect for order is blended with the pettiest snobbery.

It is easy then to understand the respect which surrounds a governor who is the only nobleman in the Colony, and in some sort a king in society. As a rule this envoy from England is also a man of distinction. But in the eyes of the colonials the main thing is that he should be a lord. Unhappily it is not always easy to persuade an earl or a marquis to give up his comfortable English life to go off and spend five years in the Antipodes, playing the kinglet of a provincial society. It is a thing which has to be paid for, and very well paid for, —a real lord is much in demand over the whole British Empire, as also in America. In fact, it is really a question of money; if Parliament should only offer a sum of £2000 or £2500 a year, the Imperial Government would very soon make it clear that for such a figure as that only a baronet or something even less could be had. The reasoning of the New Zealander in such a case is typical of him, and very English too. "Shall we New Zealanders," he thinks, "be governed by a mere baronet, or even a plain mister? Impossible. We must

have a baron or an earl, and pay what is necessary to get him." So Parliament votes every year for this object a sum of £7000, and nobody dreams of saying it is too much. The jealous desire for universal equality is so rare among the colonials that they feel almost raised in their own estimation by having a rich and magnificent lord at the head of the State. It is the same feeling which makes some people plume themselves when they can address someone as " My Lord " or " Your Grace ! "

It would be a mistake to think that the middle class is alone in this attitude. The working classes, too, set much store by the governor's prestige. The opening of Parliament takes place in the midst of archaic ceremonies, imitated from Westminster, which may pass muster in England, the home of tradition, but become frankly ridiculous in the Colonies. And yet the labour members consider these forms of great importance, and would be the first to regret their suppression. They cannot get rid of the feeling that a lord is no ordinary man and that he alone can do certain things well. To disregard this ingenuous respect for nobility and wealth would be to risk making a very false judgment of Australasian democracy.

England never loses sight, in making her choice, of this attitude of mind. She thus follows a rule which is almost traditional in the Colonial Office, for this love of titles is not peculiar to New Zealand. When a colony has just been granted self-government, when it is, so to speak, in its first youth, it is given a knight or at the most a baronet as governor. When it grows, becomes older and more important, its progress is marked by sending it a baron or an earl. Thus it was that Western Australia, at the moment of federation, had not yet arrived at a level of prosperity which earned it a " lord."



As for New Zealand, she is long past this stage, and England sends her the most genuine aristocrats. The Earl of Onslow, appointed in 1889, the Earl of Glasgow, who arrived in 1892, the Earl of Ranfurly, who came in 1897, were great British noblemen, who had all the prestige necessary, and they were very successful. Only Lord Onslow attempted to veto a measure, of which we shall speak later; and he did not carry his point, nor even secure the backing of the Colonial Office. The other governors remained invariably true to their part of constitutional abstention. The most radical legislation has been carried without their doing anything to oppose it; protective tariffs have been set up against England herself without their making the least protest. They were quite aware that all such protest would be vain. Their wisdom in the face of accomplished facts and necessary movements of evolution has allowed their office to remain universally popular in the Colony.

In a country like New Zealand the governor alone could act as the equivalent of the upper chamber, which the theory of parliamentary institutions demands. He alone stands for tradition, for that spirit of conservatism which a senate is acknowledged to represent, to temper the enthusiasm and impulses of an assembly which is the product of Universal Suffrage. New Zealand certainly possesses a second chamber. But it is a wretched assembly, quite without influence, which the progress of democracy has almost succeeded in transforming into a mere council of registration.

This Legislative Council (such is its official title) has no resemblance either to the House of Lords, or to the French Senate. How could it be a House of Lords when the Colony has no aristocracy? Hereditary peers would be an anachronism in the Antipodes. Again, how could

it perform the function of the senate when it is not elective ?

Following the constitution of 1852, the Legislative Council was composed of an indefinite number of members, nominated for life by the Government. It was understood that seats were reserved for the principal citizens of the Colony, for the members who had distinguished themselves in the Elective House, and for rich business men. *Mutatis mutandis* men were raised to the Legislative Council as they were raised to the House of Lords. The honour was not an extraordinary one, and meant chiefly entering upon that serene condition which obtains in upper chambers, and does little to increase the influence of politicians. Their irremovability assured these second-class "peers" a certain independence, but at the same time the fact that they were men of assured position tended to make them conservative. The only means by which the Government could influence this assembly was by the classic device of the creation of peers.

Up to 1891 the Upper Chamber was completely under the influence of the conservative or radical middle class. It was a conservative assembly which represented the rich and was afraid of an adventurous policy and of new experiments. Thus it happened that when the liberal-labour ministry, of which we shall speak in the following chapter, came into power, it was faced with a most difficult situation in regard to the Second Chamber. It had a large majority in the House of Representatives, but in the Legislative Council only six supporters out of thirty-four members. This meant that it was absolutely impossible to carry out the big programme of reforms which was on hand. The minority saw all its bills stopped by its adversaries and, as it had

no exaggerated respect for these conservative senators, it was naturally led to the idea of a reform, or rather of a transformation of the troublesome assembly. Its members were irremovable; the Government therefore decided to reduce their term of office to seven years. This was to put them at the mercy of the Government, who would thus hold them on a very short leash. The Bill passed the Lower House, but the members of the Legislative Council rejected a measure so clearly designed to lessen their dignity. The "creation of peers" was the only expedient left, and the Government requested the governor, Lord Onslow, to sanction it. He refused his signature. It was a rare example of a governor's interference. Lord Onslow feared to see the Upper Chamber practically abolished; he thought that the members of the Legislative Council could no longer offer anything but a suspensive opposition. A conservative himself, he could not look forward with equanimity to the probable omnipotence of a single chamber.<sup>1</sup> A conflict resulted, and the matter was referred to London. The Colonial Secretary, faithful to the principle of non-intervention, disavowed the governor's action. Lord Onslow left New Zealand and was succeeded by Lord Glasgow, who gave the radical Government an absolutely free hand. The creation of peers took place; the Legislative Council grew from thirty-four to forty-five members, and permanency of tenure was replaced by a seven-year period of office.

The democracy now carried all before it. Four of the new peers were working men: two composers, a shop-keeper, and a boiler-maker. The story is that the telegram which announced his nomination found the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Onslow's view of the crisis can be seen in a pamphlet which he wrote on New Zealand, called *State Socialism and Labour*.

last-mentioned at the bottom of a boiler. At first he could not believe that the telegram was for him ; he had never before received one. But giving way to the evidence, he told the telegraph boy to throw him down the paper into the boiler, and thus learnt that in future he would have the right, over the whole of the British Empire, to the much appreciated title of "honourable."<sup>1</sup>

The old members of the Legislative Council did not much like this little *coup d'état*. Their hands had been forced ; still, they resolved to put a good face on the matter, though not without concealing a few thorns in the roses of their welcome to the newcomers. One of the fathers of the assembly, Sir George Whitmore, spoke on the first day of the session, and addressing the new members said : " We are here as members of the Second Chamber of Parliament, and none of us is regarded as representing a class or a locality. Whatever we do, we do for the good of the Colony, and I hope that we shall never hear of labour members of this House."

They were not heard of indeed, for the Legislative Council became steadily more spiritless and feeble. The creation of peers had not at first given the Government a majority, but at each vacancy, it replaced an adversary by an ally, so that at the end of a few years, it was supreme in the Upper as in the Lower Chamber. The new peers gave themselves for some time the satisfaction of being independent and of voting as they wished. But they soon grew tired of it. How indeed could one expect any independence from members nominated for seven years with the title of "honourable," and paid by the session ? Never in any country has such an assembly been able to resist the suggestions

<sup>1</sup> This story is told by Lord Onslow in the pamphlet mentioned above.

of its great elector, the Government. New Zealand can therefore be considered as a single-chamber country. Its senate, which once had some pretensions to aristocracy and independence, is now a mere council for the automatic registration of laws.

We now come to the chief assembly, the House of Representatives. It is composed of 80 members, 76 whites and 4 Maoris, elected every three years by a ballot which allows no representation to the minority.<sup>1</sup> The Maoris are elected by their own people, New Zealand being for this purpose divided into four large districts. This method gives good results, and, as the Maoris can only choose a member of their own race, the liberty of the natives is completely safeguarded. The seventy-six white deputies are elected by universal suffrage, which, since 1893, has been added to by the women's vote. When we study the feminist movement we shall see how this change was effected, and what have been its political consequences.

It is useless to explain in detail the powers of the representative chamber. They are those of the ordinary elective assembly which holds the purse-strings, and to which the executive is responsible. What is noteworthy is the English influence which is everywhere conspicuous in matters of form, and the rather vulgarising influence of colonial life on the tone and spirit of the debates.

The organisation, the procedure and the traditions of the Assembly all recall the House of Commons. The spirit may have changed, but the forms have remained entirely English. The House of Parliament is a large rectangular hall in the Gothic style, which looks more like a Church than a House of Representatives. It is

<sup>1</sup> Representation Act, 1900.

the House of Commons adapted to colonial simplicity. On one side are the seats of the majority ; opposite, those of the opposition ; between the two, against the wall, is the speaker's chair.

As at Westminster, there is no rostrum, and everyone speaks from his seat, the speeches being limited to half an hour, and in certain cases to an hour in length. Sometimes this limit is relaxed, but very rarely, for the New Zealanders have no mercy on those who cannot be brief. It frequently happens that the orator can scarcely finish his sentence when the " time is up " of the speaker intervenes to cut him short. But he revenges himself in his reply, and this system by no means prevents all-night sittings. There was one (which is indeed famous), which lasted without a stop for 92 hours. The lobbies consist of a great hall which joins the Legislative Council Chamber to the House of Representatives. As the sessions take place in the evening, a restaurant and a bar provide additional meeting places. It is all very simple, as is fitting in the Parliament of a little democratic country.

The parties are organised in the English fashion. The premier is the leader of the majority, while the opposition elects its leader, whose business it is to speak officially in its name in Parliament and before the country. The session lasts about three or four months, during which the members are obliged to reside at Wellington. There is in New Zealand no rich unoccupied class which can devote its leisure to politics. Thus it is, above all, practical men, farmers, business men, lawyers, working men who compose the representative body. They do not make a profession of doing so, and as during the session they cannot attend to their own affairs, payment of members becomes a necessity. Thus

the aristocratic English tradition which once consecrated the gratuitous performance of parliamentary duties has here long been abandoned, and the members of Parliament receive a salary of £240 a year.

Such are the chief characteristics of this Elective Chamber. It appears that for some years its level has been getting lower. In the first place, the system of long-lived has replaced that of rapidly-changing administration. The Seddon Government and the Ballance Government which preceded it are no doubt the strongest that New Zealand has known. With a leader like Seddon, the House had to go forward rapidly and obediently. And this it did, losing consequence in proportion as the premier gained it. Between the people and the cabinet it seems that Parliament has found its position a great deal reduced.

We may add that the general tone of the debates has become rather vulgar. Mr. Sidney Webb, at the time of his visit to New Zealand in 1898, was struck by this fact, and said so without hesitation. "The great reproach which can be made against the New Zealand Government is without doubt its complete vulgarity. It is a failing common to all New Zealanders, although it appears under different forms with different people. With few exceptions, and without distinction of parties, there is a vulgarity of ideas and an absence of refinement among politicians which is the result of the pioneer life that they have led. What is more serious is the absence throughout the Colony of serious economic study, of scientific investigation of those industrial and social problems which the politicians themselves attempt to solve." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Sidney Webb is certainly a little severe, but we

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sidney Webb. Interview at Dunedin, 29th August, 1898.

must recognise with him that the sessions of the New Zealand Parliament are not always edifying. It is not that they are particularly turbulent, but personal allusions are very frequent, and the debates rarely reach a high level. It is clear that the members know each other at too close quarters, and personal quarrels thus have a tendency to take a prominent place, which often gives the House of Representatives of Wellington the appearance of a municipal council, rather than of a Parliament.

It will be enough, in closing this chapter, to say that the parliamentary system seems firmly planted in New Zealand, and that it works with efficient regularity. In the midst of the difficult social questions which have been raised in the Antipodes, the constitutional question seems to have dropped to the second place; and this is really because it has been settled to everyone's satisfaction.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE POLITICAL PARTIES.

IN the course of the preceding pages we have been able to see the small place which the governor and the Upper Chamber hold in the public life of New Zealand. We have also noted a certain decline in the influence of the House of Representatives, and this brings us naturally to the conclusion that the chief power is in the hands of the cabinet, which is strongly supported by a majority in the country.

Let us first investigate the origin and constitution of the existing political parties ; we will afterwards describe the cabinet which proceeds from them. That stability of administration which has long been characteristic of the Colony will make this task far easier, and the very typical examples of the Ballance-Seddon and the Seddon Cabinets will give us an opportunity of studying very closely the political life of New Zealand. Our summary of the historical development of the country has brought us to 1890. This date is, in fact, the end of an epoch, and marks the beginning of that era of politics in which the Colony still is. The year 1890 saw the coming of new ideas and methods, and also of an almost entirely new personnel. Atkinson and Grey disappeared ; Stout passed into semi-retirement.

Society, in the worldly sense of the word, ceased to exercise a preponderating influence, while the poorer classes secured political power and established themselves in a commanding position.

There is a striking difference between the two generations of leaders. Stout, Atkinson and Grey, despite their relatively advanced ideas, remained middle-class types, members of the New Zealand aristocracy, whom society claimed as her own. They were either lawyers of great reputation, or descendants of English families of age and respectability, in the narrow and conventional sense in which the English generally use the word. Ballance, Seddon and their colleagues (with the exception of Reeves) came, on the contrary, from a very different class. None of them were rich, none belonged to the fashionable world of the clubs. They were men of the people, small farmers, journalists, middle class too, but lower rather than upper middle class. They relied on the people, and took up an attitude of open opposition to the rich. They have now governed New Zealand for a number of years, and the direction in which they have driven the country seems bound to be a lasting one, for the majority on which they have relied is made up of a solid and judicious grouping of interests.

Before the advent of the Ballance-Seddon ministry, there were no strongly marked political tendencies. It was a see-saw which carried to power now the liberals and now the conservatives, always the middle-class men, for the working classes voluntarily held back from parliamentary contests. Stout was more advanced than Atkinson, Atkinson than Vogel; but if Vogel's conservatism had a strong tinge of radicalism, Stout's radicalism was of a kind which could not alarm the well-

to-do. Truth to tell, the problems of labour were not yet stated. They interested a small group of superior politicians, but these took them up from inclination, not in response to the pressure of public opinion.

New Zealand was, at this period, already a democracy ; but the worthy figure of Demos had nevertheless not yet appeared on the stage. He was busy in the wings, and seemed careless enough of politics. The workers in the big industries had built up strong trade unions with large reserve funds, but they affected a contempt for Parliament. They were evidently under the influence of the English trade unions of the old school ; they were opposed to action at the polls ; for all practical purposes they recognised the established order of society, and devoted themselves above all, either by strikes or by agreements with employers, to the raising of wages and the improvement of conditions of work. They voted with the liberals—they were liberals themselves, as have been certain labour members of the British House of Commons. Their English inheritance showed itself strongly in them.

All this is ancient history to-day. Since the historic strike of 1890 the working classes have become the pivot of the whole political system. It is the how and the why of this transformation that we must now investigate.

The general strike, which was the occasion, and, to a certain extent the cause, of this complete change, was the indirect result of the terrible strikes which were then desolating Australia. The principle at stake at Melbourne and at Sydney was the right of workmen to combine. Like a fire the agitation spread from point to point. Yet New Zealand seemed destined to remain immune. The United Steamship Company, which,

through its over-sea connection with Australia, was peculiarly liable to contagion, had dutiful employees who did not wish to stop work. Yet a spark was enough to fire the powder, and this is how, according to Sir Robert Stout, the event occurred :

“ There is, in New Zealand, a Maritime Council, which is nothing but a branch of the Australian unions. Its most earnest desire was to avoid a strike. The first difficulty arose over the steamer ‘ Waihora ’ ; the dockers of Sydney refused to work at the unloading of this vessel, under the pretext that its owners were members of the shipowners’ association. The company appealed to the Maritime Council, which at once allowed the union seamen of the ‘ Waihora ’ to discharge the ship. Meanwhile, two other vessels of the company arrived at Sydney, and once again the dockers refused their services. Without waiting for the intervention of the Maritime Council, the company’s agent employed non-union men ”—and this was the beginning of the struggle. It is not to be thought, however, that public opinion in New Zealand supported the strikers. On the contrary, most people could not forgive them for having drawn the Colony into a quarrel with which they wished to have nothing to do. Volunteers came forward to work in the ports, but they could not prevent the movement from spreading to the railway men, and to most of the other trades.

The trade unions had accumulated large sums, and had established strict discipline among their members. The war was carried on by the workers with admirable perseverance and co-operation. It soon appeared, however, that they were the weaker side, and would lose the day. Their funds were steadily drained ; the premier, Atkinson, fought them openly, and the em-

ployers made an obstinate resistance. When the unions saw that defeat was imminent, they tried to have recourse to arbitration. But the employers, now sure of victory, absolutely refused, and the strike ended with the complete defeat of the men.

The workers were conquered ; but by a curious coincidence, this disaster was the very beginning of their triumph. The agitation of 1890 had been the culminating point of the strike policy, and it marked the end of that policy. Taught by defeat, the unions completely changed their tactics.

After the crisis of 1890, the trade unions found themselves ruined by their fight against capital ; their funds were gone, wages had not risen ; they were absolutely incapable of beginning, for a long time to come, such a conflict as they had just experienced. Their leaders' faith in the value of the strike was profoundly shaken, and they soon came to regard it as an expensive, difficult and seldom efficacious form of strife. Another field of action opened before them, that of politics ; they deliberately threw themselves into it. The recent troubles had shown them clearly that in New Zealand the working classes, the employees of all sorts, were in the majority, while the employers formed only a small minority. As in a land of universal suffrage it is numbers which make laws, the leaders of the labour party held, with reason, that instead of wearing themselves out in costly strikes, the working class would do better to appeal to legislation ; not to existing legislation, but to that which it would inspire if it was clever enough to secure a parliamentary majority. Such were the new tactics ; to conquer power by the vote, and control the drafting of laws.

Alone, the workers would no doubt have failed. They

had to find supporters in other ranks of society ; they had to create an atmosphere favourable to their ambitions. This is just what happened : the noisy and semi-tragic outburst of Australian strikes had not impressed the workers alone. A genuinely new spirit was awakening in New Zealand.

The general elections fell at the end of the same year : all these events affected them. Everyone was conscious that great issues had been raised, and were not to be escaped. An indefinable sense of revolution was abroad in the land. Mr. Reeves thus describes the state of opinion at this period : " Everybody felt that something must be done. What ? No one exactly knew. It seemed that strikes and lock-outs had become daily events, and much more attention was paid to them than before. The timid were alarmed, sensible people saddened, men of action hampered in their business, and even the indifferent annoyed."

Political opinions were variously affected according to temperament, occupation, or fortune. The semi-revolutionary state of the country during the several months of the conflict had upset many vested interests. Although the Anglo-Saxon middle class is not so easily alarmed as the French, many rich men, employers and landowners, took fright at the tendencies which were appearing among the workers. More than one middle-class man, who thought himself a liberal or a radical, became conscious for the first time that he was really a conservative. Since the question between labour and capital seemed to be coming to a head, the conservative party, which up till then had had no very definite principles, became a party for the defence of society.

The liberals were also in their turn transformed.

They were no cowards, and they had always upheld Sir George Grey, who could justly be called a man of advanced views. Nevertheless their programme was rather thin, and an infusion of new blood was wanted. The members of the party were ripe for the change. There were among them some bold men who were determined to act, and who firmly believed in State action. There were also politicians who foresaw a new ordering of parliamentary forces, and who, conscious of the appearance of a new power, turned to the rising sun of the proletariat. Thus the liberal party held out its hand to the workers. The latter never thought for a moment of refusing the proffered help. They were no ferocious upholders of the class war, ready to consider all alliance with the middle classes as treachery. The conquest of the central power interested them more than socialist theories, and hence there arose the liberal-labour coalition which high-handedly carried the election of 1890, and for twenty years without a break ruled the fortunes of the Colony.

As the elections of 1893, 1896, 1899 and 1902 only slightly changed the grouping and the spirit of the parties, we can now resume our study of those parties and of their programmes, as they emerged from the general election of 1890. Twenty years ago it was hard enough to describe accurately the difference between a liberal and a conservative. Individual sympathies and the chances of social life led men to attach themselves to one side or the other. But the appearance of the labour party has fixed a gulf between the two sides of the House, so that to-day it is easy enough to make the distinction. The conservatives represent the class which has possessions, the vested interest, the defence of existing society. The liberal-labour coalition, on the

other hand, is occupied above all with the lot of the poor, ready to sacrifice to them the interests and the future of the more favoured classes. Still it is not right to represent the conservatives as the fierce opponents of all progress. It is not their principles which hamper them and would drive them to a resistance which their pity would otherwise reprobate. They have no antipathy for the workers, and more than once they have lent their votes to the majority to give the Colony some Act to protect the operative. But they cannot help disapproving of the tendencies of a Government which openly proclaims itself the enemy of the big land-owners and employers. They consider this Government infinitely more dangerous for them than a Government of sham revolutionaries which would always talk about things and never do anything. They have, moreover, nothing but pessimism with which to greet those laws of social amelioration of which each year produces an ample harvest. They know that these laws can harm *them*, and claim that in the end they harm the mass of the workers. Is there in them some remnant of the ideas of the Manchester School? I think not, but were it to their direct interest, they would appeal to the State as well as their adversaries; but it goes without saying that, when the State is not, in fact, at their service, they have no desire to enlarge its scope. Let us add that they are conservatives of the English type, by no means reactionary. They resign themselves to the accomplished fact, and do not try to put back the clock. Still they regret the past; they remember with bitterness the time when they were the masters of the Colony, when the Club was an annex of the House and the House itself a rendezvous of social fashion. To-day, when they walk through the parliamentary lobbies, they



elbow people who are not of their world, and their colonial exclusiveness, terrible as only provincial exclusiveness can be, takes refuge in the clubs of the big cities, where it is rare to see a member of the other side. Once at Wellington every member of Parliament was, *ipso facto*, a member of the Wellington Club. After 1890 this rule was abrogated. Of definite programme, the conservatives had very little. In their speeches, the leaders confined themselves to demanding a better administration and more order in the finances: they made no allusion to any of those elaborate reforms with which the advanced party was cunning enough to emblazon its manifestoes. In fact, what they found most inexcusable in the Government was that it was in power, and they often allowed their annoyance to be seen, rather ill-naturedly, in their papers and in the House. It would probably not be far wrong to lend to the former opposition the words that an Australian once used to M. Métin, pointing at the Government benches, "My programme: to turn out those people." <sup>1</sup>

As we remarked just now, the liberal party in 1890 had itself no distinctive programme. When it allied itself with the labour party, it appropriated their programme and fused itself with them so thoroughly that liberals and working men now form one and the same party. The composition of the liberal ranks, in so far as it could be distinguished from that of labour, was always much less homogeneous than that of the conservatives. There was first the mass of employees and the poor; next, there was a great number of smallholders, who upheld the Government on account of its agrarian policy; there were even advanced middle-

<sup>1</sup> Métin. *Le Socialisme sans Doctrines*, p. 73.

class people, whose convictions or whose socialistic, or rather egoistic, interests made them supporters of Mr. Seddon. There were, lastly, a number of politicians, who saw in the new policy assured power for a long period.

As for the labour party, it is much more difficult to disentangle its individuality, which it lost more or less on entering into the new fusion. Thus, there is not in Parliament a labour party properly so-called, and the fortunes of the workers are absolutely one with those of the liberals. It is a curious fact that the New Zealand working man is little interested in the choice of a representative: he wants one, but it matters little to him whether it be a middle-class man or not, so long as this representative will give him sufficient guarantees. Mr. Reeves, who is anything but a working man, was long the most popular representative of the working classes of Christchurch. As for the number of working men members, it is infinitesimal, as can be seen by the way in which the majority was composed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Composition of the majority in the House, 1890-1893, by professions:

12 farmers.	2 contractors.	1 photographer.	1 professor.
6 shopkeepers.	2 shoemakers.	1 saw manufacturer.	1 tailor.
5 journalists.	1 banker.	1 plumber.	1 boatswain.
4 lawyers.	1 merchant.	1 mason.	1 carpenter.
2 printers.	1 lawyer.	1 corn factor.	1 chauffeur.
2 auctioneers.	1 miner.	1 commission agent.	1 electrician.

Composition of the Chamber in 1896, 1899 and 1902, by professions:

	1896	1899	1902
Lawyers - - -	5	9	10
Journalists - -	9	8	5
Professors - -	3	4	1
Chemists - - -	—	—	1
Hotel-keepers -	—	—	1
Real Estate agents -	—	—	2
Company promoters	—	1	1
Maori agents - -	—	—	1
Small traders - -	3	6	5

This absorption of the labour party by no means points to the enfeeblement of its influence. On the contrary, the labour element seems to be all-powerful in the Colony. We must not be deceived by the middle-class majority in Parliament, for it is a fact of little significance. In the country there are workers' associations, the political power of which is considerable, and without which the Government would not long have survived. They are far from embracing all or even most of the workers. But the action of isolated individuals, however numerous, cannot be compared with that of organised bodies working in concert, with order and discipline. The trade unions are, in fact, very active, but not in the same way as formerly. Since the law of 1894, which sets up a procedure of conciliation and compulsory arbitration, they have lost one of their essential functions—the preparation and conduct of strikes. But at the same time they have been saved from the necessity of meeting the expenses, often very heavy, of these economic wars, and thus they consider that they have after all done very well. To-day politics are their

	1896	1899	1902
Merchants - - -	3	2	4
Shopkeepers - - -	3	6	5
Clerks - - -	3	2	3
Coachmakers - - -	—	—	1
Tailors and shoemakers -	2	2	3
Manufacturers - - -	4	2	2
Chimney sweeps - - -	—	—	1
Printers - - -	—	—	2
Farmers - - -	11	13	12
Stockbreeders - - -	14	7	9
Planters - - -	3	3	3
Smallholders - - -	8	7	5

In the General Election of November 25, 1902, the Seddon Ministry had a majority of 24 :

Government,	49 members.	Independents, 4.
Opposition,	23 „	Maoris, 4—3 of them Government supporters.

chief concern. They employ their leisure in preparing bills which the cabinet is very happy to take charge of and to present to Parliament. The influence of the workers' organisations on decisions of the Government is undeniable, although the members of the cabinet do not openly admit it. It would no doubt be stronger still, if the trade unions were federated, and if a central committee held the right of speaking and negotiating in the name of all the workers of the Colony. Under the present conditions of political life in New Zealand, such a committee, representing all working-class associations, would be a Commission for the preparation of parliamentary business. It is curious that with their instinct for organisation the trade unions have not yet come to setting up such a committee. There certainly does exist a federation of trade unions, but it is incomplete. A certain number of them meet to form in each town "Trades and Labour Councils," whose delegates form every year a central congress. This congress claims to speak in the name of all the workers, but it only represents them very inadequately. Still, its influence is great, and its debates are followed with attention. Its enemies even complain that too much attention is paid to them. This is how one of them gave, with some bitterness, his opinion on this subject in the *New Zealand Herald* of April, 1899. "The Trades and Labour Councils make and direct legislation more than any other corporate body in the Colony. Municipal and county councils, chambers of commerce—who pays any attention to them? For some years the Trades and Labour Councils have made our laws; they represent that class of working man who has proved his omnipotence in Parliament. Their number is not formidable, but they have got possession of the

political machine, and it is they who, through the ministers, rule the Colony." Putting aside the natural bitterness of a member of the opposition, who has waited in vain for years for the fall of the Government, let us put at their true value the strictures which he makes on it, and we shall find that his account is not at bottom at all inexact. That an active and determined minority should direct the country is a very familiar situation ; it has recurred once again in New Zealand.

We have now seen enough of the New Zealand working man to guess his attitude of mind. There are three things which sharply distinguish him from the worker of the European Continent : he has scarcely any or no class hatred ; he is not a revolutionary ; he is only vaguely socialistic. Class hatred is a thing that can be found in Australia ; it is very rare in New Zealand, where the working man has retained a certain curious innate admiration for money and for the man who lives in the grand style. Nor has he any greater passion than to be like a middle-class man, and in his private life, in his dress, in his habits, to imitate those who are more fortunate than himself. Jealousy is a feeling which, among Anglo-Saxons, usually has a very restricted growth, and the public life of New Zealand rarely gives us occasion to notice it.

The absence of revolutionary ideas is striking : it is enough to prove it to remember with what ease the working man allied with the middle class. This delicate question, which elsewhere has roused tempests of feeling, has not even been discussed in New Zealand, and the workers there have always found it of great value to have a foothold in the Government. As for the idea of revolution, the New Zealander has little sympathy

with it. The word does not seem to be part of his political vocabulary, and, like a good Anglo-Saxon, he has little faith in sudden changes. His egoism prevents him, too, from working for the whole human race, and the word "opportunist" might have been invented specially to describe him.

As for socialism, it must be confessed that the New Zealanders have pushed the application of it further, without doubt, than any other people. But it is not socialistic doctrines which inspire them.<sup>1</sup> The English, and *a fortiori* the New Zealanders, have nothing of the theorising of the French, or the dreaminess of the German. They reckon little of general ideas and great principles. It is true that occasionally, when talking for effect, they will invoke pompous formulæ, but without attaching much importance to them, and simply because they make a good show on programmes and speeches. The truth is that they have not enough vigour of mind to draw up for their party a reasoned and coherent basis. Even if they could, they perhaps would not do it, for they do not feel the need. More than anyone, they have the art of taking questions successively, and they are only interested in solving them as they arise. Under such conditions there is little room for socialistic doctrines. This is the opinion of M. Métin, who, in his book *Le Socialisme sans Doctrines en Australie et Nouvelle Zélande*, thus expresses it: "Socialism has not seduced the Australasians; the word itself has retained for them the disparaging sense which it had for the opponents of the doctrine. 'We certainly have socialists,' the secretary of the Labour Department of Melbourne told me, 'but we do not agree with them;

<sup>1</sup> M. Métin has very justly called his book on Australasia *Le Socialisme sans Doctrines*.

they are extremists, and we are, above all, practical.' ”

Cynically practical and opportunist the New Zealanders certainly are, and the traveller who comes from France must accustom himself to this way of looking at things, under penalty of being perpetually misunderstood. When he rises to abstract generalisations, he very soon sees that he is becoming incomprehensible, and that his point of view is altogether wrong : he is talking “ duty ” and is answered in terms of “ interest,” he talks of “ principles ” and is answered with “ utility ” ; he is afraid of the distant and possible consequences of an action, and is answered that the immediate results are excellent, and that it is of little consequence what may happen fifty years hence. The employers have this outlook and the employees agree with them. It would therefore be of little use to spend time investigating whether the New Zealand working classes are socialists, communists, collectivists, or anything else. They have recourse to the State, not in virtue of a conscious creed of State intervention, but because, being masters of a parliamentary majority, they can do exactly as they like with the State. They surround themselves with laws protecting labour, not for the pleasure of the thing, but because they desire to get for themselves as good a place in the sun as possible.

Now that they are partially satisfied, one must not be surprised to find no bloodthirsty and insatiable revolutionaries nor apostles dreaming of serving the new humanity. No ! like practical men they have become almost conservative, since according to the classic phrase they have been given “ something to conserve.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SEDDON GOVERNMENT.

THE Ballance-Seddon Government, to which the country four times in succession gave its confidence,<sup>1</sup> very closely represented the majority, the elements of which we have analysed. We shall try later on to find for it a political definition as exact as our European phrases, when applied to Antipodean things, will allow. Let us say at once that it included not a single working man, and that nevertheless it was especially representative of the labour section of the liberal party. The members who composed it were chiefly lower middle-class opponents of the great employers and of the large landowners, but, like their electors, they were miracles of opportunism. The best way to arrive at the spirit which inspired them would be to describe their leaders and to examine the characters of those leaders, to analyse their programmes, and finally to study the conception which they formed of politics.

Ballance governed New Zealand for two years, and died in harness. Since then Seddon and Reeves are without doubt the men who have left the deepest mark on the history of the Colony.

Mr. R. J. Seddon was the true type of colonial

<sup>1</sup> In 1893, 1896, 1899 and 1902.



premier ; a self-made man, without early education, full of energy and personality, and, in his way, a real statesman. He did not find his political career ready-made for him from his cradle ; he had none of those powerful protectors who have thrust into public life so many young men in England. He began at the bottom, and raised himself by his own worth to the top.

Son of a Lancashire schoolmaster, he emigrated as a youth to Australia in search of gold. Thence he passed to New Zealand, and settled down as a miner on the West Coast of the Southern Island, then still rougher and wilder than it is now. Then he set up as a hotel-keeper, say his friends ; as a shop-keeper, say his enemies. Many people on the West Coast still remember the Seddon of those early days, greeting his customers at the door of his house, touching his hat, and not hesitating to busy himself with the smallest details of his trade.

Then came a political opportunity. In 1879 he was returned to Parliament. Without oratorical powers, rough and harsh in speech, it was long before he attracted any notice. What was needed to bring him to the fore was action, not speech. Few suspected the resources of this big, hairy, rather churlish man, whose quick, cunning eye nevertheless revealed intelligence and cleverness. Ballance picked him out and made him Minister of Mines in 1890. Three years later Ballance died, and meanwhile Seddon's authority had so increased that he was recognised as leader of the liberal-labour party. During his years of power his influence steadily increased, and he really rose to the level of the position which he held. Enemies and friends alike paid homage to the remarkable natural qualities of this man, who, with no early culture, grasped with the greatest

facility the most difficult questions of finance and politics.

He cannot be reproached with any lack of character or personality. On the contrary, he was accused of having become a perfect dictator. When one spoke of the New Zealand cabinet, it was understood that one meant the premier, for he was himself the whole cabinet ; he had some colleagues for form's sake, but he did and directed everything himself, was the real master of the country, the " King Dick," as he was called, of the Colony. Rarely, indeed, has personal power been carried so far. When the colonists of Fiji were discussing the question of their federation with New Zealand, one of their speakers made a typical remark in reference to Mr. Seddon. " We have been approached by Mr. Seddon, that is by New Zealand." There was no difference between the two expressions, for his experience had taught him that what " King Dick " wanted, New Zealand always ended by wanting too. The fact is that Mr. Seddon bore a burden which would have frightened more than one European statesman. Not content with being premier, he took charge of finance, the customs, posts and telegraphs, Maori affairs, and the labour department, not to speak of the other offices of which he was the real head. Like many radicals who have attained power, he was a perfect autocrat ; insisted on seeing and deciding everything himself, and did not easily brook resistance to his determination. When he was in his place in the House with his docile majority well in hand, it was no easy matter to invalidate by disingenuous amendments the Bill which he brought forward. He was a past-master of his business ; his capacity for work was vast, and it was wonderful that he contrived to speak with good sense on such varied

questions as those with which he would deal in a single session. Often he spent whole days over new schemes ; often his nights were given up to debates in the House ; often, too, he journeyed over the Colony, to see everything with his own eyes, and not to allow himself to be forgotten by the worthy electors on whom his power depended. I see him still, as he received me in his study at Wellington. A rose in his button-hole, very comfortably and suitably dressed in the ample frock-coat of the successful man, he was almost invisible behind a vast pile of papers which covered his table. I was struck by his air of health, of optimism, and of enthusiasm. " See," he said, " I came back yesterday from a journey, and here I find this accumulation of papers ; I shall run through them and then set out again to get an idea of what the Colony thinks, so as not to lose touch with public opinion."

Mr. Seddon was indeed no ordinary political tactician. He had a marvellous knowledge of the New Zealand people, whence he can claim to have sprung, and he knew well with what speeches and measures to satisfy them. And here his opportunism reappeared to take the lead. The good of the country was certainly his first care ; but the fate of the Seddon Government was by no means indifferent to him, and he spared neither work nor trouble to prolong its life. It was not difficult to see this in him, and though many held him to be a statesman, others dubbed him more readily a politician.

Whatever may be thought of him and his work, he could not be reproached with wasting time. Rarely was a Government more fertile than his in every sort of legislation and change. Carried to power by the growing influence of the working classes, he did not

forget that he had among them numerous and powerful partisans who expected much of him. It was under his inspiration, and in part under his direction, that the much-discussed labour legislation was passed, which has raised so much enthusiasm and antagonism in New Zealand. But he busied himself with finding other backing than that of the operatives of the towns, who are, after all, only a minority. Ballance had left him the tradition of his agrarian policy, essential in a colony where the majority of the population is composed of small cultivators. He did not forget them ; war on the great landowners and ceaseless attentions shown to the smallholders won him for a time a number of faithful supporters. The rich certainly complained ; but Mr. Seddon, secure in the double and solid basis of his majority of smallholders and working men, took no notice, and enjoyed in happy security the advantages of power.

His reputation, purely local at first, ended by reaching the limits of the Empire. We shall see later on by what process, strange at first sight, but at bottom easily explicable in a man so essentially practical and opportunist, he became the most zealous and boisterous imperialist. The King of tiny New Zealand, a frog who wished to swell to the size of an ox, created out for himself a fine rôle of high repute in the Colonies. The new British demagogy has no more typical representative than this fortunate individual who united round his head the double halo of noisy jingoism and of social democracy.

If Mr. Seddon was a very typical colonial, the same cannot be said of Mr. Reeves, former Minister of Education and Labour, and later Agent-General of the Colony in London. Still, the influence of this latter was for a

long period strong enough to make it necessary to study him, if one wishes to understand the tendencies and the policy of the Seddon Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. William Pember Reeves is very different from Mr. Seddon, from his colleagues in the Government, and in a general way from his New Zealand fellow-citizens. He is a university man of the middle class, a society man, who at once found himself very much at his ease in the most cultured circles in London.

The elegance of his person and of his mind never made with him for moderation, and although he is thoroughly English, that is to say, above all opportunist and practical, there is in him something of the French Jacobin, with his devotion to principles and to closely reasoned deductions.

Beginning as a lawyer, he continued his career as a journalist, as proprietor and director of the *Lyttelton Times*, till the moment when he entered Parliament as the representative of the workmen of Christchurch, to become almost at once Minister of Education and Labour in the Ballance-Seddon Government. He is a brilliant and easy writer, a talented man of letters, and an occasional poet. His speech is clear, incisive, often eloquent; his party soon recognised his gifts as a debater, and he became the usual introducer of Government Bills. Leader of the Labour Party, he showed by his example how great an ascendancy a member of the middle classes can acquire over working men, when once he has been able to win their confidence. The conservatives, indeed, made him suffer for his popularity. They never forgave him for belonging to their class and yet having his own political views. The most

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Reeves is the author of the most complete book published on political and social questions in Australia. *State experiments in Australia and New Zealand*. London, 1902.

bigoted of them still speak of him as an outcast wire-puller. As for him, he has never cared to please the rich, or to disguise his ill-will towards wealth. Some of his speeches are models of stern Jacobinism, and the great landowners have not forgotten the day when, in full Parliament, he called large estates "social pests."<sup>1</sup> These things are not pleasant to hear, especially from a cool and thoughtful man. Mr. Seddon often spoke, sometimes rather confusedly, but he has rarely made a declaration of principle, and in that he was typically English. Mr. Reeves, on the contrary, was devoted to theories, and was perpetually asking whence he came, whither he was tending, in virtue of what principles he was acting. This is not at all colonial, but it is very interesting, and will allow us to investigate what were, according to him, the political ideals of the party to which he belonged for so long.

While the premier never willingly bound himself to a political definition, Mr. Reeves was never tired of repeating that the Seddon Government was radical and socialist. This alone supplies a useful clue, since, according to an almost classic saying, a radical socialist is very seldom a socialistic radical. Another time he said that his policy had as its object the increase, expansion and multiplication of the functions of the State. This is the avowal of a State socialist; it agrees very well with the title of a radical socialist. Again, he wrote, "I believe I know the direction of my policy; I know whither I am tending and by what path." Sometimes he went a little further. At Sydney, in an interview, he called himself a "straight-out socialist," and more than once in his speeches in the House he called his own measures mere palliatives, adding that none of them would prove

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by H. de R. Walker. *Australasian Democracy*, p. 91.

satisfactory so long as mankind clung to its existing system of production and exchange.

And yet Mr. Reeves never nationalised the land, did not buy, expropriate, or take by force private industries for the benefit of the State : he aimed at the reform of the actual social order, rather than at its destruction. In a word, once in power, he did not show himself a "straight-out socialist." When I remarked this to him in the course of a conversation, he explained to me in a few very clear words, the character and spirit of his policy. "I define myself as a socialist, or rather as a State socialist, in the sense that I accept with joy every increase in the powers of the State, and I have a rooted distrust of financiers and capitalists. But please understand that my socialism is experimental and practical. I have never done anything for the mere pleasure of applying a principle, without seeing at the same time some real and immediate advantage which would proceed from it. I am not like one of the German dreamers who work for a century hence. I consider that I found myself, when I was in the cabinet, in conditions exceptionally suited for action, and I have tried to work for the present moment, or for the immediate future. If I have never attempted the nationalisation of an industry, it is primarily because I have never had the time, and then because I have never thought that sort of reform sufficiently ripe. In New Zealand we have passed the period of grand phrases ; what our voters want is action, and what they incessantly ask of us is what we will *do* for them. For all these reasons I have always refused to associate myself with any sort of socialistic organisation."

In brief, the ideas expressed by Mr. Reeves are very like those of the Fabians. One of their pamphlets

called the *Functions of the State* is from his pen, and if one were determined to find a classification for this New Zealand statesman one could fairly appropriately call him a Fabian himself. We have now defined, more or less precisely, the position of Mr. Reeves. But is it possible to judge the whole cabinet from him as a type? Clearly it is not, for the former Minister of Labour was never anything but an exception in New Zealand. His superior education, his qualifications as a journalist and a man of letters, his connection with London, gave him preoccupations which he shared with very few people in the Colony. Was Mr. Seddon a radical, a Fabian, a socialist, or a socialist-radical? This was a question which doubtless never troubled either him or his electors much. Like a good colonial, he faced his problems one by one, and found for each of them a separate solution, taking every care to generalise as little as possible. He would no doubt have agreed with Gambetta's epigram: "There is no social question; there are social questions." His type of mind, utterly divorced from theoretical conceptions, was always ignorant or scornful of them. If a measure gave good and quick results, he never wasted his time in searching for the general principles which it might affirm or modify.

It would, perhaps, be as well then to give up the attempt to fix the political character of the Seddon Government. Still, with no pretence to exactitude, it is perhaps possible to make some approach to such a definition. Mr. Seddon and his friends were doubtless in one sense the foes of capital. And yet, nevertheless, they recognised capital, property, the employer and the wage-earner. They were in power for thirteen years, and at the end of this term there were still in New Zealand



employers and employees, property owners and capitalists, the initiative, the competition and the responsibility of private individuals. Did they hope for the eventual transformation of the social order? Perhaps they did—undoubtedly even. Still, they made little attempt to destroy it; they tried above all to do the best they could with it. There will still be employers in New Zealand, but the law will have its hand and its eye upon them. There will be employees and wage-earners of every description, but the law will protect them unreservedly. Thus with acute practical sense the New Zealanders have emphasised the distinction between the desirable and the possible. The possible they have boldly put into practice. The desirable they have relegated, with Utopias and general principles, to the collections of beautiful and useless treasures which they have no time to talk about.



*PART III.*

THE WORK OF THE SEDDON GOVERNMENT.



## CHAPTER IX.

### LAWS PROTECTING WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES.

THE legislative activity which the Seddon Government displayed during its first ten years of power was really astonishing. The English philosopher who has dealt so hardly with the sins of legislators would no doubt consider that such incessant legal intervention into every form of a country's activities was pure folly. But this is not England of the mid-Victorian era. We have explained, on the contrary, how easily the colonist adapts himself to State interference, as long as he gains thereby some definite and immediate advantage. We have shown, too, that the policy of the Government of New Zealand tends not to upset the social order, but rather to regulate it minutely, in order to protect the weak against any possible injury from the strong. That is why the labour legislation of New Zealand is of such imposing bulk. Every case has been provided for, every type of worker has secured his own form of legal protection.

The Seddon Government gathered into convenient form this legislative achievement, and issued a book of about 300 pages called *The Labour Laws of New Zealand*, and a summary of about a hundred pages under the title of *Handbook to the Labour Laws of New Zealand*.

On the front page of this handbook is a very interesting document—the list of all the laws to which the reader is referred. This list must be quoted in full, for it gives the clearest idea of the multiplicity of questions which have been dealt with by the New Zealand legislators.

#### LIST OF LABOUR LAWS.<sup>1</sup>

The Bankruptcy Act, 1892.

The Coal-mines Act, 1891.

The Companies Acts Amendment Act, 1893.

The Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Act, 1892.

The Deaths by Accidents Compensation Act, 1880.

The Employers Liability Act, 1882 (amended 1891 and 1892).

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts, 1900 (amended 1901).

Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1882, 1883 (amended 1894, 1896, 1900, 1901).

The Kauri-gum Industry Act, 1898 (amended 1899).

Accidents Compensation Act, 1901.

Licensing Act, 1881.

Mining Act, 1898.

Servants' Registry Offices Act, 1895.

Shearers' Accommodation Act, 1898.

Shops and Shop-Assistants Act, 1894 (amended 1895, 1896, 1901).

Trade-Union Act, 1878 (amended 1896).

Truck Act, 1891.

Wages Attachment Act, 1895.

Workmen's Wages Act, 1893.

<sup>1</sup> *The Labour Laws of New Zealand*, compiled by the direction of the Hon. the Minister of Labour, Wellington, 1902. *Handbook to the Labour Laws of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900.

It will be noticed that several of the laws quoted date from before the advent of the Ballance-Seddon Government, but they form a very small minority, and moreover have been repealed, revised and considerably enlarged by the leaders of the liberal-labour party. The Seddon Government can thus justly lay claim to the parentage of New Zealand labour legislation.

We shall not attempt to summarise or to study each of these laws in turn. Several of them possess no special originality, and enter into very technical details. It will be enough to examine their principles and to investigate their spirit, their tendency and their results.

One of the first questions to attract the attention of the reforming ministry was that of the legal protection of workers in factories. Capitalised production had already made its appearance in the Colony, and its cities already possessed, like the cities of the West, their smoking chimneys and their humming workshops. But this was still all on a small scale, and the legislator had rather to anticipate than to cure the classic evils of the factory system. Though their number increased every year, large factories were still the exception, and businesses of a moderate size were, and still are, the rule in New Zealand.

There is in this fact a danger of another sort. Scattered workshops easily escape inspection, and abuses can grow up in them with little risk of detection. The Government saw in this only another reason for intervention and control. This is what Mr. Tregear, Secretary of the Labour Department, and chief Labour Inspector, explains with great clearness :

“ Men so widely scattered as are the New Zealand workers, need legal protection against the dangers and

inconveniences to which their position exposes them. This wide dispersion of the industries needs, not only an extensive system of supervision, but also legislative measures of a special character, elastic enough to deal with the great variety in conditions, and severe enough to put an immediate stop to any abuse.”<sup>1</sup>

New Zealand has never had much mercy for the large industry. From the date of the advent of the Seddon Ministry, they tolerated it, but were never disposed to sacrifice, for its benefit, either their jealousy or their interests. Labour wanted efficient protection, and, in fact, desired rather the improvement than the destruction of the capitalist régime. As for the politicians, they saw with alarm the development of great industrial enterprises, which they frankly regarded as an evil. Mr. Reeves never concealed his ideas on this subject. We know his innate distrust of financiers and capitalists. This is his judgment, in one of the numerous articles which he has published on labour questions, on New Zealand's opportunity to become in her turn the home of production on a large scale. “If industries,” he says, “cannot prosper without the sweating of women, children and men, and without bringing in their train the evils of the Old World, well, we should do better to get on without them. I would rather that New Zealand had a million inhabitants, happy, prosperous and satisfied, than two million living many of them in dirty streets of black hovels, in the midst of dreary poverty.”

Here is the whole matter concisely defined. The liberal-labour leaders never regarded it as a weighty objection to their policy that it might eventually retard

<sup>1</sup> Edward Tregear, *Preface to the Labour Laws of New Zealand*, pp. 3 and 4.



the economic development of the country. There are, in their eyes, questions of greater importance. So they were willing to tolerate industry, but they were not prepared for any concessions to it, and were determined to keep the employer under strict surveillance. Such was the spirit in which the Seddon Ministry took up their task.

It did not, however, find a *tabula rasa*. In this Colony, where everyone is a democrat, where even the conservatives are fearless, the work had already commenced. In 1873 the Vogel Ministry had secured the passage of an Act, which forbade women to work at night, and reduced their day's work to eight hours. They were to get Sundays off, and also Saturday afternoons ; and a short article required the proper ventilation of workshops. An amendment of 1874 extended these provisions to piece-work. It is apparent that, in order to get round the Act, employers had substituted this kind of work for the former. A new amendment in 1875 provided that no child of ten to fourteen, no young person of fourteen to eighteen, and no woman of any age, were to be employed for more than four and a half hours without a half-hour's rest, and that no child should work more than a half-day or more often than every other day.

As will have been seen, the statesmen of that epoch went forward slowly, feeling their way, as it were, and without any broad governing principles. Public opinion, still indifferent to these questions, was not urging them in any direction, and it was rather a case of their educating the people than of their being led by it. In 1881 the Acts passed in 1873, 1874 and 1875 were renewed in a revised and enlarged form. The minimum age for the employment of children in factories was

raised to twelve years; the inspection of labour was made more effective, and overtime work was regulated.

The public attention aroused by this labour legislation increased from year to year. In 1890 a Commission of nine was appointed to make an exhaustive enquiry into the position of the workmen. The Commission set to work actively in the four large towns of New Zealand, and handed in its report at the end of a few months. It is on this report that much of the present legislation is based.

In the last years of his administration, Atkinson had introduced into Parliament a new Bill on the conditions of labour, but he was unable to get it through. In 1891 the Ballance Ministry came into power, supported by a strong liberal and labour majority. Mr. Reeves, the Minister for Labour, brought forward a new Bill, which, passed in the same year, amended in 1892, and redrafted in 1894 and 1901, is now the Factories Act.

This Factories Act bears a very general title; and, in fact, it deals with numerous and varied problems. In the first place, it deals with organising the inspection of the conditions of health and of safety in the factories, then with the question of home work, and the repression of sweating, finally with limiting the hours of work for women and children. It is a kind of codification, a consolidation as they call it, of preceding legislation on these points.

The first condition for the efficacy of such a law is that all forms of paid work should fall within its scope. And this was, in fact, the first care of the legislator, who, by the definition that he gave of the words "factory" and "workroom," brought the whole trade of New

Zealand under the supervision of the State. Factory and workroom are taken to mean "any office, building, or place whatsoever in which two or more persons are employed, directly or indirectly."<sup>1</sup> As inspectors are empowered to visit every factory and workroom, practically nowhere where work is going on escapes their supervision.

To facilitate inspection, New Zealand is divided into industrial districts. A chief inspector and a hundred and fifty local inspectors are charged with the supervision of conditions of labour. They are authorised to enter any place where work is going on, and at any time,<sup>2</sup> and the employer must always have ready a list of his employees, showing the ages of those under twenty, and the weekly wage of everyone.<sup>3</sup> Notices, posted in every workroom, show the workers the hours for work and for rest and holidays, as well as the inspector's address, so that anyone can get into communication with him.<sup>4</sup>

The inspector's duties are then no sinecure; and at the same time their powers are not merely apparent. Backed by the trade unions, by the Government, and often by public opinion, they find it easy to get their advice taken and their decisions carried into effect, for the whole power of the State is behind them.

After regulating the conditions of inspection, the law proceeds to deal with the hygiene of the workroom. Cleanliness, ventilation and space are the objects of clauses drawn up with meticulous care. Similarly with precautions against fire and accident. If more than six women or children are working in a single factory, a

<sup>1</sup> Factories Act, Art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Factories Act, Art. 6, §1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 17, §1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 17, §2.

room with chairs and tables for their meals must be provided.<sup>1</sup>

These provisions, and other more special ones, which there is no need to quote at length, make the New Zealand workman one of the best protected operatives in the world. The law we are now discussing is not, however, anything peculiarly original, for at the present day almost every civilised country has some similar measure. New Zealand's originality lies rather in the way in which this Act is applied. When the workman has anything to complain about he is not afraid to do it ; on the contrary, he does it as if he were exercising a right, and with the conviction that he is appealing to judges who are well-disposed towards him. The employer, closely watched, can hope for no indulgence from the inspectors, and he can be sure that the slightest infringement of the Act on his part will be severely dealt with. The dark, gloomy factories of Europe seem to have left a strong impression on New Zealand statesmen, and their main idea seems to be to avoid the growth of that form of manufacturing on a large scale. That was the reason why they undertook the supervision of every wage-earner's conditions throughout the whole Colony.

Even in a thinly populated country like New Zealand such control is very difficult. There is no doubt that it would be an easy matter to inspect a factory where several hundred workers were employed. But how was home work to be supervised, with its scandalously low wages and its unhealthy conditions ? How were they to put an end to the sweating system, which is the inevitable result of poverty and the exaggerated increase of competition ? At the time when the Act of

<sup>1</sup> Factories Act, Art. 40 *et seq.*

1894 was passed sweating existed in New Zealand, not, it is true, to the same extent as at Melbourne, but to an extent which justified the fears of the legislators. Thanks to a high protective tariff the trade in ready-made clothes had considerably developed, and many employers got women and young girls to work at home for wages which competition tended to make lower and lower. State intervention was necessary to prevent unhealthy labour, which had been made impossible in the factory, from taking refuge in isolated rooms where no control would come to regulate it.

Called to the solution of a similar problem, the members of the Melbourne Parliament attempted to combat sweating by establishing a minimum wage which was to prevent any exploitation of human labour. The Act of 1896, voted for this purpose, set up special boards, whose members were elected, half by employers and half by workmen, and whose duty it was to fix a minimum wage in each trade.

New Zealand did not adopt this method. It approached the question not from the standpoint of wages, but from that of the work, and its aim was to prevent people from being overworked in unhealthy conditions. The total suppression of home work was impossible, though most of the legislators would have desired it. But they soon realised the chimerical nature of such a hope, and, being unable to prevent sweating, they devoted their attention to limiting it, to supervising it and restricting it as far as possible.

A first measure puts inspectors on the track of work done at home. Every employer is obliged to keep a list of the work done for him outside of his workshop.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, every article made at home must be so

<sup>1</sup> Factories Act, Art. 28, § 1.

labelled. Here is the exact form prescribed by the law :

Made by M.....  
 Street..... No.....  
 (In a private house or in an unregistered workroom.)

---

Affixed in virtue of the Factories Act.

---

Any person removing or tearing this ticket will be prosecuted.<sup>1</sup>

In these circumstances it is easy for the inspectors to discover the origin of work done outside of a registered workroom. And that is the really important point, for once this has been discovered the inspector has full powers given him by the Act. For, we must remember, any room in which two persons (including the employer) are working is a workroom as defined by the Act, and consequently must conform to all the provisions of the Factories Act.

We must now pass on to the conditions of labour in factories. No child (and "child" is defined by the Act as a boy or girl less than fourteen years old) may be employed in a workroom containing less than three workers ; and in any case a child can only be employed in a larger room with the special consent of the inspector.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, no one less than sixteen years old may be employed without a certificate that he is fit for the work ; and the inspector has to satisfy himself that the young person's education has been carried far enough.<sup>3</sup>

The Act of 1894 did not regulate the number of hours each day for which men could be employed, and

<sup>1</sup> Factories Act, Schedule 2.

<sup>2</sup> Factories Act, Art. 25, §§ 1 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 27, § 6.

this remained the private concern of the employers, subject only to the awards of the Court of Arbitration. The Act of 1901 filled up this gap, and fixed the maximum time for men's work at forty-eight hours a week (eight and three-quarters hours a day, with at most five hours on end).<sup>1</sup> As for women and children, no woman and no person of either sex less than sixteen years of age may be employed more than forty-five hours a week, nor after six in the evening or before five in the morning.<sup>2</sup> Overtime work is only allowed for women and children on special permission from the inspector and under the following conditions: it must not be more than three hours a day, nor take place on two consecutive days in one week, nor on more than thirty days a year.<sup>3</sup> The rate of wages for overtime work must be at least one quarter higher than the normal rate. The minimum per hour must be sixpence for salaries below ten shillings a week and ninepence for higher salaries.<sup>4</sup> As holidays, the employer must allow women and young persons under eighteen to get off on Saturdays at one o'clock, on Sundays, and on a certain number of other specified public holidays.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in certain unhealthy industries the employment of women and children is altogether prohibited.

These provisions have been applied with the utmost rigour, and no employer would dare to run the risk of violating them. In any case he can count on no mercy being shown him, for neither the Government nor public opinion would be with him.

The most divergent views have been held as to the results of this Act, as was only natural. The working

<sup>1</sup> Factories Act, Art. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 22, § 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 22, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 22, § 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 33.

men have nothing but praise for it. Abuses of any sort, as a matter of fact, have become almost impossible, for with the ideas at present dominant in New Zealand, and the wide publicity that is given to the most trivial events, the inspectors feel that they have all the authority necessary, and would never tolerate any contravention of the Act.

The inspectors, too, approve of the Act which it is their duty to carry into effect. This is how, in a pamphlet written on the subject,<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Grace Neill, an Inspectress of Labour, states her opinion of the Act: "People often ask me if my duties as an inspectress are not very disagreeable; surely, they say, the employers must think you a nuisance. I have only one answer to make, and that is, that in visiting places in the towns and country of the Northern Island, I have found employers not only courteous in their personal relations, but even quite prepared to accept any suggestions that might result in improving the conditions and comfort of the women and girls in their employ. As for the young working women of New Zealand, I can say that it is a pleasure to see them in the workrooms, well protected, well nourished, bright and happy. Workroom legislation is but the elder sister of free and compulsory education. They ought to work together, and their happy co-operation in New Zealand augurs well for the future development of the race."

We may, however, have our doubts about the employers' pleasure at seeing an inspector, or even an inspectress. And for that matter, they do not keep their grievances to themselves, and a journey through New Zealand is enough to give some idea of these grievances. The fact is that they are a little exasperated,

<sup>1</sup> Grace Neill, *Factory Laws in New Zealand*.



because State intervention entails some annoyance. It is quite a business to keep a workman later than the regular time for stopping work, and if the employer does not strictly conform with the law on the point he may find himself in serious trouble. But there can be no doubt the employers are exaggerating in saying that the Factories Act prevents them from developing their business. This protection of the health and hygienic conditions of the labourer is nowadays a kind of minimum duty of the State in civilised nations, and in New Zealand, as everywhere else, it is not the larger industries that suffer most. In most cases rich employers, of their own free will, comply in advance with the requirements of the law. This was what happened in the Colony, and the most crying abuses came from small, isolated and old-fashioned factories. Besides, the Anglo-Saxon has a deep appreciation of the respect due to existing things, simply because they exist. Little by little, the New Zealanders are growing accustomed to this Act, and, if the conservatives should come back to power, it is more than probable that they would justify their name by conserving it.

In its solicitude for all classes of workers the Government did not leave out shop employees, to whom the provisions of the Factories Act could hardly have applied. Leaving out of account a short and incomplete section in the Act of 1885 in Victoria, New Zealand must be credited with the first coherent attempt which was made in Australasia to regulate labour in shops. Since the New Zealand Act of 1894,<sup>1</sup> several other Colonies have dealt with this question—Victoria, in an Act of 1896, New South Wales in 1899, and Queensland in 1900.

<sup>1</sup> The Shops and Shop Assistants Act, 1894. Amendment Acts, 1895, 1896, 1901.

Reform in shops is peculiarly thorny ground. Everyone is affected by it, not only the workmen and the employers, but also the general public. Whatever was done, then, was certain to make someone discontented, without being certain of satisfying those in whose interest the action was taken. We must add, moreover, that the number of shopkeepers or shopowners is relatively much larger than that of manufacturers, and that therefore the legislation has to take them into account. This is what a clever politician thought of the relative influence of shopkeepers and manufacturers: "Politically speaking, factory owners count for much less in the Colony than their employees. Their number is relatively small, and their money has much less power at the Antipodes than in England. . . . When he sides with his workmen the colonial employer has great power; witness the Customs Tariffs. But when he disagrees with his employees, he is a man with few friends. . . . The shopkeepers are in a totally different position. . . . It is true that their personal position can never be as great as that of the manufacturers. But they are much more numerous. They are as numerous as their employees, sometimes more so. Let us add that they are all adults and all have votes, in some cases their wives also. They are so strong as a class that if they solidly opposed legal intervention there would doubtless be no Shops Act."<sup>1</sup>

These few lines show that in a democracy like that of New Zealand, shopkeepers cannot be treated in the same way as mere employers. On the other hand, the shop employees are not at all inclined to be forgotten, and they also mean to get the benefits which State

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, "Shops and Shopping Laws in Australia and New Zealand," *Empire Review*, July, 1901.

protection can give them. These are the reasons why the laws concerning them have aroused much more excitement than even the most thorough-going measures relative to arbitration, or to the agrarian question.

In 1891 an attempt was made to pass an Act for early closing. The Lower House was in its favour, but the Legislative Council was strongly opposed to it. As public opinion was, on the whole, against it, the Ministry dropped that point, and entirely redrafted the Bill, leaving out the clause which fixed the time for closing shops.

The main point in the new scheme was to ensure to the employees one afternoon's holiday a week. After a three years' fight the Act of 1894 was passed; but it touched so many vested interests and aroused such opposition from all quarters, that on two occasions, in 1895 and in 1896, it had to be touched up again, in order to do justice to innumerable claims.

This reform, apparently so simple, of a weekly afternoon off, was, in fact, a fertile source of disputes and conflicts. The principle of a holiday was pretty generally admitted; but what day was to be chosen? Shopkeepers could hardly be compelled to close on Saturday afternoons, for that is the very day when everybody is about and buying. Therefore, as it was a question of local preferences, it was left to the local councils to decide what day they wanted their shops closed. The Act merely laid down the principle that early closing should take place at least once a week, and at one o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup> The choice has to be made in January, and holds good for one year, unless it is modified by a meeting held before the 31st of March.<sup>2</sup>

The disputes that arose over the application of this

<sup>1</sup> The Shops and Shop Assistants Act, 1894, Art. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Amendment Act . . . 1895, Art. 3.

Act may be imagined. It was a Homeric struggle, for in small towns decisions on points such as this assume much more importance than the weightiest political measures. Each person had his private view, and no one was prepared to come to any agreement with his neighbour. In spite of the great decentralisation of the Act it seemed that no agreement would ever be reached. The first result of the vote was curious. Of 77 urban districts, 2 chose Tuesday, 40 Wednesday, 26 Thursday, 2 Friday and 7 Saturday. As might have been expected, many of them thought better of it at once, and asked for an alteration. In general, public sentiment would not be against Saturday closing ; but on this point the shopowners have remained intractable, and their opposition to it has carried the day. Wednesday is, then, the second holiday in New Zealand. In the end people grew accustomed to the change. Colonials are not, as a rule, ferocious workers, and we may believe that the weekly half-holiday has now become a permanent institution.

This weekly holiday is not the only important provision in the Act of 1894. The sanitation and cleanliness of shops, and their inspection, are also dealt with. Work for men over 18 years of age has no fixed time-limit ; but the employment of women and children is limited to 52 hours a week and nine and a half hours a day, excluding meal times. If this disposition were to be carried out in the spirit in which it was voted, it would in fact put an end to the late closing of shops ; for, supposing that a woman's work begins at 8 a.m., for example, and she gets an hour for lunch, it must end at 6.30 p.m. at the latest. But human ingenuity is infinite when there is question of getting round a law. Many employers got the idea of employing a double number of young women. The first batch works from

8 to 11, from 1 to 5, and from 7 to 9; the second, from 11 to 1, from 3 to 6, and from 7 to 9. That is certainly legal, but it is contrary to the intention of the legislator, for work thus cut up has the double effect of retarding the closing time and of keeping employees away from their homes up to 9 o'clock in the evening. The inspectors have on many occasions reported against this expedient, and they have asked for an additional clause to the Act forbidding work after 6 p.m., *i.e.* they wanted the scheme that was thrown out in 1891 to be brought up again. On the whole, it seems that since then the idea has been gaining ground, being backed by public opinion. Thus an amendment of 1895 authorised a majority of three-fifths of the shopkeepers in a district to require all shops to close at 9 or 10 p.m. When such a majority is reached the minister issues a proclamation to this effect.

Small shops, in which the owner has no employee besides himself and his children, do not fall within the scope of this Act. If they did it would be an almost intolerable interference on the part of the State, and a flagrant violation of that English "home," which the English everywhere defend as a sanctuary. But although the Act has not dealt very hardly with them, it could not leave them entirely free. It does not compel them to close on the day chosen by the local council, but it obliges them to close at least one afternoon a week.

And the Government takes care that the Act is strongly enforced. Many shops which would probably wish to remain open, in spite of the regulation, dare not do so, for fear of a fine which may amount to £5 for a single offence. In certain small towns it is impossible to get anything at all that one wants on a Wednesday

afternoon, for, except the chemist's, every shop is closed. One day I was in an hotel in the small town of Queens-town, when the waiter broke the lamp-glass in the dining-room. He might swear and curse at the Government, but it was quite impossible for him to get another chimney that day. The shop which kept them was not far away, and its proprietor would have been quite willing to do business, for he was actually inside of his closed shop, but he dared not open his door for fear of breaking the law. The Act is, however, popular, except among employers, who protest against the tyranny of it. But public sentiment has grown so accustomed to regulations everywhere that it thinks of nothing but new spheres for intervention.

Each class of workers wanted special legislation. Working men and employees having got satisfaction, one fine day the domestic servants came forward and wanted Parliament to legislate for them. A large deputation of maids and cooks turned up to see the Prime Minister to ask him to consider a Bill which should give them the half holiday already classic in New Zealand. These good ladies had no doubts on any point, and wanted inspectors of labour to be authorised to enter private houses at any time and to see that the domestics there were getting proper treatment. Maids and cooks are voters, and not the least powerful voters ; but for all that, what they wanted was a little too much, and Mr. Seddon, who feared nothing, but whom a sound common sense never abandoned, refused their demands with firmness and courtesy. He received them with all the respect due to such important citizens, and showed them much of that courtly grace which is always effective, whatever the country or the latitude. Maid-servants, then, have not officially secured their half-

holiday (which in practice most of them have) ; but it is quite possible that this last measure may take its place in the labour legislation of New Zealand. At the present day State intervention is such an accepted fact that we must be prepared to see it developing to its most distant and most radical consequences.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE LAW OF COMPULSORY CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION.

AT once the most important and the most original of the labour regulations passed in New Zealand since the political changes of 1890, was beyond doubt the " Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act " of 1894, which was amended in 1896 and 1898, and re-drafted and consolidated in 1900. It was an attempt to prevent strikes and to settle economic troubles generally by conciliation and arbitration.

To see in it nothing but a network of measures for the prevention and settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, would be entirely to misunderstand the real bearing of this law. Whether its authors wished it or not, its sphere of influence has been gradually increasing ; and now the name it bears throws but little light on its real character and importance. Writing in the *Lyttelton Times* in August, 1901, a journalist said : " It is not so much a law of Conciliation and Arbitration as a law for the regulation of wages, a ' fair wages ' Act." It has since developed into something even more comprehensive than this ; and, in fact, the activities of the Arbitration Court have become so manifold that there are few problems



connected with labour which are left untouched. In New Zealand there is no Minimum Wage Act ; till 1901 there was not even any regulation of the hours of labour ; and many other questions of vital importance to workmen have not been dealt with in legislation. The reason of this is that no need has been felt for such legislation, as these problems have been settled in another way—the Arbitration Court has given an authoritative solution to each particular case as it arose. This Court has, in fact, established itself as a new power, neither legislative nor judicial ; and it is strange that the Parliament of New Zealand has not shown more jealousy towards it.

Conciliation, of course, is not a new method, and has been practised, more or less successfully, in a great many countries. In making use of it the Australasians were not original, and they did little more than copy it as it existed in England and America.

But compulsory arbitration was, on the contrary, a completely original idea. Before 1890 it was absolutely unknown in New Zealand. About that time a large employer of labour stated that he could not think of a single case in which arbitration had been employed in the Colony. As was the case everywhere else, strikes were customary, and, as we have shown, the trade unions of that time saw in strikes the best method of ameliorating the lot of the working man. But, as we saw, the events of 1890 completely changed their outlook, and, ruined by strikes, the workmen would hear nothing more of them. It was necessary to find other means ; and on his accession to power Mr. Reeves, the Minister for Labour, set himself to this task.

He wished at any price to avoid a recurrence of the troubles of 1890, and consequently he thought that the

remedy lay in conciliation and arbitration. Although he had great confidence in conciliation, it seemed to him to be perfectly useless by itself. He would probably have endorsed the dictum of a member that "Conciliation without arbitration was all humbug." He even thought that, by itself, it was a positive evil. "Everywhere," he said, "optional conciliation has been tried, and everywhere it has failed. And when it has become a dead letter I regret to say it is worse than a dead letter, for it stands in the way of other reforms."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Reeves, then, categorically refused to accept conciliation without arbitration. State intervention did not alarm him, and he was prepared to see it become a common thing. In his remark that "There are three parties who are vitally interested in every industrial conflict: Labour, Capital, and the State,"<sup>2</sup> Mr. Lloyd merely sums up, in a concise and striking sentence, the opinion of the New Zealand Minister. Mr. Reeves claims for State intervention, somewhat in the Jacobin style, that "It is not a palliative: it is not the benevolent offer of a polite Government to settle disputes between two parties who are well-meaning enough to wish for a solution and calm enough to accept peaceably the verdict of arbitration. It is the assumption by the State of the right and of the power to settle differences between capital and organised labour."

Such was the opinion of the author of the measure. The point of view of the working men around him was more commonplace. They were tired of strikes, and they had great hopes that the results of arbitration would in every case be favourable to them. But, in

<sup>1</sup> Reeves' words, quoted by Barclay in *Four Years of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act* (Dunedin Fabian Society).

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, *Newest England*, p. 260.

spite of this, they were a little suspicious; and it needed all of Mr. Reeves' energy and determination to pass a measure which was not supported by any popular feeling. The "Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act" may, without exaggeration, be said to have been the work of the ex-Minister of Labour.

The Bill was brought into the House in 1891, and at first met with a decidedly cold reception. We have mentioned the distrust of the labour party; but the conservatives viewed it with actual indignation. The employers could not admit the principle of regular State intervention in economic disputes. Mr. Reeves very justly answered them: "In our time it is futile to oppose a measure for the sole reason that it involves State intervention. We have got beyond that."<sup>1</sup> But they remained unconvinced, and kept all their prejudices against the ideas set forth by Mr. Reeves, whom they regarded as a dangerous idealist. In 1891 a meeting of employers, who pretended also to voice the feelings of the working men, made the protest that "Both employees and employers claim to be protected against the theoretical measures of social reformers and idealist doctrinaires whose actions, in spite of their sincerity, which is beyond question, may yet be dangerous."<sup>2</sup>

But though the conservatives were alarmed, the general public showed a strange indifference. The scheme aroused no enthusiasm, and seems hardly to have been noticed. Much more attention was paid to the law concerning shop employees and the weekly half-day's holiday, and more feeling arose in connection with it. It is true that such questions of local interest

<sup>1</sup> Speech of 30th June, 1893, in the House.

<sup>2</sup> This resolution was mentioned to me by Mr. Reeves.

are the ones that provoke most discussion. A principle like that of arbitration can become of vital interest to but few people.

The Bill, then, had by no means a brilliant début. It lingered on for three years in the two Houses. The opposition demanded, time after time, that the two principles of conciliation and of arbitration should be separated from one another—which was one way of admitting that by itself conciliation was of small importance. The Government was resolute, and stated clearly that it would have all or nothing, and that it would prefer to abandon the scheme rather than have it mutilated. In the election of 1893 the issue was placed before the people, and, though no great popular enthusiasm was aroused, the success of the Ministry was sufficient to ensure the passing of the Bill. It was retouched on several occasions, and acquired its final shape in the Consolidation Act of October, 1900.

The full title of the Act of 1894 was: "A Law to encourage the formation of Industrial Unions and Associations, and to facilitate the settlement of economic disputes by Conciliation and Arbitration." This title was not kept in the re-draft of 1900, but it is nevertheless interesting to quote it because it clearly shows the double purpose, which the authors of the reform had in view—the encouragement of trade unions and the suppression of strikes.

In the first place, the favour shown to trade unions is shown in the fact that individuals, so long as they remained apart, could not claim the assistance of the law: an association of at least two employers, or a union of not less than seven men, properly registered as such, were the only parties who could bring a case before the Conciliation and Arbitration authorities;

and only such associations and unions could take part in the election of those members of the boards who were not nominated by Government. But it must be observed that the strict right to strike was not completely removed ; the isolated labourer retained his powers of appealing to the old method of ceasing work. But in practice he cannot make use of this method, because no serious strike is possible for isolated individuals. So that every working man who wished to avail himself of the advantages given by this law, was compelled by force of circumstances to join one of the associations which already existed. These associations were not necessarily identical with trade unions. The law distinguished trade unions from industrial unions, and it was necessary for a trade union to be constituted an industrial union in order to obtain the benefits of conciliation and arbitration. But, in point of fact, the distinction was a purely formal one ; and the protection given to trade unions was none the less remarkable. The Seddon Ministry did not establish compulsory trade unions ; but measures such as these now under discussion were singularly close to it.

On many occasions Mr. Reeves and his colleagues expressed their sympathy towards organised labour and their indifference to the lot of the non-union man, and their policy consisted in deliberately ignoring the latter. It was in this spirit that Mr. Reeves defined an industrial conflict as " a dispute between an employer and a trade union." The law of 1894 gave a similar definition, though in a less direct form. This distinction between unionists and non-unionists gave rise to bitter criticism from the conservative side, to which the Minister for Labour replied : " My reason for not extending the benefits of the law to all workmen is simple and

practical. There has been a series of disputes with regard to which public opinion has demanded that the State should intervene, namely, disputes between organised labour and employers. As for the disputes between employers and non-organised labour, they have never alarmed the public, paralysed trade, half-ruined the employers or reduced the workers, their wives and their children to misery. . . . Why should we intervene in disputes in which public opinion has never demanded that we should intervene? ”<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere Mr. Reeves’ thought took an even more direct form: “Quarrels between employers and unorganised labour will not be subject to State intervention; in this Colony the unorganised labour is presumed to be content. If it becomes dissatisfied, let it form a union, and then the State will protect it.” It would be impossible to have a clearer statement than this; and therefore the policy of the Government towards trade unions was sharply defined in such a way as to explain unequivocally the sub-title of the Act of 1894.

But, though, according to the ideas of the Government, association was essential to the workmen, it was much less important among employers. The law of 1894 had required the associations of employers to comprise not less than seven members, but in 1900 this figure was reduced to two.

For, in fact, such optional arrangements are of small importance among the leaders of industry. Whether the employer wishes it or not, he will be seized upon by the law. And this is how all the expedients, to which the manufacturers might have resorted, were foreseen and dealt with in advance. For example, employers who were neither associated nor registered could not

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Speech of 16th September, 1892, in the House.

bring any action under the law ; and it would have been logical if, in these circumstances, they had been altogether exempt. But then it would really have been too easy for them to avoid the worries of conciliation and arbitration by simply neglecting to register themselves. The Act foresaw this, and the Tribunal and the Court were given the necessary powers, whether the conditions of association and registration had been fulfilled or not.

There was yet another way for the employers to remain free and masters of themselves, which was to employ only non-union labour. When the first difficulty arose, their reply to the Government was simple : " You yourselves have declared that non-unionists did not interest you. I am then free, as employer, to arrange with them as seems to me best, without the State having any say in the matter." The argument was excellent. The only way to meet it was to make an exception, and this was what the Arbitration Court did, in declaring itself a competent authority, even in cases where not a single unionist was employed.

So we see that the net closed round the manufacturers, and, whether they wished it or not, in the end they became parties to conciliation and arbitration. Immediately after the passing of the Act, they deliberately stood aside, so as not to appear tacitly to accept the new methods by making use of them. But they soon realised that this attitude could be of no service to them, and would merely deprive them of their right to have some say in the composition of the Conciliation Tribunal and of the Arbitration Court. Many of them formed associations and ended by resigning themselves in despair to the trend of events.

The workmen also maintained for a few months a

certain attitude of distrust which showed itself at first in a cautious abstention. But soon the unions decided to enrol themselves, and from that moment they have been the most faithful supporters of the law of 1894. Can it be said that the number of union men has considerably increased? Strange as it may appear, this is not the case. The last figures given by Mr. Tregear show that at the 31st of March, 1900, out of a total of 48,938 workmen only 26,067 were members of industrial unions.<sup>1</sup> There is still, therefore, a large number of workers who have not deemed it expedient to become associated. They are, however, indifferent rather than hostile, for they have never shown any disposition to agitate against the law.

What is, then, the regular procedure now in use for conciliation and arbitration?

When a dispute<sup>2</sup> arises between an employer and his workmen, in the conditions mentioned above, the two parties must, in the first instance, refer it to the Board of Conciliation. For this purpose the Colony is divided into seven industrial districts, in each of which there is a Conciliation Board of at most five members, including the chairman. The actual number is determined by the Government, but should be odd. The members are elected for three years, half by the employers' associa-

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, "Report of the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Working of Compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Laws," Sydney, 1901. This report, made, after a searching investigation, by Judge Backhouse, of Sydney, for the information of the New South Wales Parliament, is beyond doubt the most careful and impartial study that has been made of the question. We shall have frequent occasion to quote it.

<sup>2</sup> The word "dispute" must be taken in its widest sense. As defined by the law, "Industrial dispute" signifies "every dispute arising between one or more employers, or between one or more industrial unions or associations of employers, and, on the other part, one or more industrial unions or associations of workmen, with regard to an industrial question" (Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, 1900, Art. 2).



tions and half by the workers' unions. In their turn these members elect an outside person as chairman. If they are unable to agree, the Government nominates.<sup>1</sup> Workmen and employers may appear in person or through representatives ; but they cannot employ counsel unless the other side agrees. If a dispute involves the discussion of peculiarly technical questions, the parties may require a Special Board to be constituted with the necessary qualifications.<sup>2</sup> After an enquiry the Board suggests a solution which binds neither party, and which they need only accept if they are satisfied by it. But if, in the course of a month, no appeal has been made to the Arbitration Court, the decision of the Conciliators becomes law.<sup>3</sup> This provision, which was not in the original Act, and which was only added in 1900, makes the Conciliation Board a real Court of first instance.

There is nothing original in the Act up to this point, except that the appeal to conciliation is not optional and is always, in New Zealand, the first stage in an economic dispute. The really original characteristic of this legislation is compulsory arbitration. When the effort for conciliation has come to nothing (which happens in most cases), the parties are bound to appear before the Arbitration Court.

There is only one such Court for the whole Colony, and it is composed of three members. Two are nominated by the Government, one on the recommendation of the employers' associations, and one on that of the workers' unions. The third, who is the President of the Court, and who must be a judge, is also appointed by the Government, but is not put forward by any

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, Art. 35, 36, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 50 and 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 58.

party. These three members are appointed for three years only.<sup>1</sup>

The Arbitration Court naturally possesses the most extensive powers ; its decisions are binding, and there is no appeal from them. The New Zealanders, as usual, dealt with the difficulty arising from this in a practical way, without attempting a theoretical solution. The New Zealand Parliament never had the power to decree that no appeal should lie beyond one of the Courts of the Colony. For there is always the appeal to the Privy Council, which is one of the fundamental rights of every English subject. The New Zealanders have simply disregarded this appeal, and, luckily for them, the question has never aroused much interest ; in practice, the judgments of the Arbitration Court are final, even though in theory they are not. I questioned Mr. Reeves on the point, and found that he held this view ; but he added that *as a matter of fact*, the Privy Council would refuse to hear an appeal of such a nature. It is remarkable how English this method of dealing with problems is—and it is also remarkable to what extent this system of compromise gets rid of vexatious difficulties.

The Arbitration Court not only gives judgment, but also determines the period within which this judgment should hold good. This period may in no case exceed three years.<sup>2</sup> But the judgment remains in force until such time as the parties again come to the Court to obtain a new decision.

Whatever the decision may be, the parties concerned are bound to submit to it in the same way as they would

<sup>1</sup> The President receives a salary of £2 2s. a day, with travelling expenses. The two other members of the Court receive 30s. a day, with an additional 12s. a day for travelling expenses.

<sup>2</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, 1900, Art. 86.

be bound by the judgments of an ordinary Court of Justice. Naturally strikes and lock-outs are forbidden<sup>1</sup> under penalty of a severe fine (£50).<sup>2</sup> Any other violation of the judgment of the Court is punished no less severely by a fine which, however, must not exceed £500.<sup>3</sup> In this the law is equally severe on workmen and on employers. If a trade union has disregarded the provisions of an arbitration judgment, each of its members may be sued in person to the extent of £10.<sup>4</sup>

Such, briefly set forth, is the mechanism of the act on compulsory conciliation and arbitration. Its provisions, which are in no way of a revolutionary nature, form one of the strongest restraints that have ever been applied to the natural working of supply and demand. We must make no mistake as to the extent of the powers given to the judges of the Arbitration Court. They have arbitrary authority to fix the rate of wages, and to regulate the conditions of labour in New Zealand. There are few questions affecting labour with which they cannot deal. To make this clear, we quote the definition of "industrial matters," given by the act of 1900—a phrase which comprehends all questions that may be submitted to conciliation and arbitration :

"*Industrial matters* signifies all questions concerning or relevant to work done or to be done by workmen, or the privileges, rights and duties of employers and employees in any industry whatsoever. . . ." The general nature of the above definition remaining intact, the

<sup>1</sup> Though workmen not in unions or in associations not registered as industrial unions still retain the right to strike.

<sup>2</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, 1900, Art. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 9.

term *industrial matters* comprehends all questions concerning :

- (a) Wages.
- (b) The hours and conditions of labour.
- (c) Child labour.
- (d) The employers' claim to hire non-union men in preference to union men.
- (e) The claim put forward by union men that they should be employed in preference to non-union men.
- (f) Any custom or usage in any industry whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

If we add that the terms *industry*<sup>2</sup> and *worker* are to be understood in their widest sense, it is evident that we can safely say that there is no dispute between employers and employees with which the conciliation and arbitration authorities are not competent to deal.

In these circumstances we may say without exaggeration that the judge who presides over the Court of Arbitration has become, next to the Prime Minister, the most important person in the Colony. No labour question can be dealt with without reference to him, and his decisions, which are rapidly becoming a system of jurisprudence, form, as it were, a new labour legislation of infinite variety, complexity and originality.

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, 1900, Art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, Art. 2. The original definition in the law of 1894 was not nearly so wide. The term *industry* was then limited to enterprises of an *industrial character*. The result was that the Court of Arbitration had, for example, refused to take cognisance of grocery clerks, grooms, and shop-employees. But at the present time, in virtue of the definition given in the law of 1900, all these classes of workers fall under its authority. A few of the classes mentioned by Mr. Reeves, who have benefited by the law are: shoemakers, miners, tailors, carpenters, painters, grooms, grocers, dress-makers, mechanics, furniture makers, printers, spinners, plumbers, plasterers, saddlers, workers in saw-mills, metallurgists, bakers, butchers, etc.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE COMPULSORY CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT : ITS APPLICATION.

THE Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, whose origin and character we saw in the foregoing chapter, has been in force for ten years. We are, then, already in a position to form an idea which will be adequate, if not final, of the method and results of its application.

To begin at the beginning, we must realise that, as everyone admits, conciliation has almost everywhere been a failure. Mr. Reeves was clearly right when he said that conciliation without arbitration was perfectly useless. But his scepticism did not, in fact, reach far enough, for he hoped that recourse to arbitration would be an exceptional procedure. As a matter of fact, the very opposite has been the case, as the author of the law himself confessed : " In general," he wrote, " the decisions of the Conciliation Boards have not been accepted." It is easy to understand that the side which has lost its case is never willing to acknowledge itself beaten ; and hence the constant appeals to the Court of Arbitration.

But this does not imply that the decisions of the Conciliation Boards are, as a rule, inadequate or pre-

judiced. In many cases the Court merely accepts and makes binding the suggestions which were made by the Board, and which were not accepted by the parties concerned. This depends to a great extent on the personal character of the members of the Board. Thus the Boards of Otago and of Southland are universally respected ;<sup>1</sup> but this cannot be said of all the Boards.

Far from being pacificators, certain members of the Conciliation Boards seem really to apply themselves to fomenting disputes, in order afterwards to try them and to feel their own authority.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately this is the exception. But even when they are sincere, the conciliators do not always fulfil their duties with intelligence and impartiality. In the first place, the employers often do not elect an authorised representative whose opinion carries any weight ; and sometimes they do not trouble themselves to make any election at all, and the appointment is made by Government. The natural result of this is that their interests are not properly looked after. With regard to the men's delegates, they sometimes find it difficult to understand the part of a conciliator ; they regard themselves as fighting men, and in faithfulness to their electors they proceed in a spirit of open partisanship. So, at least, must be understood this cynical or naïve declaration made by one of the labour members of the Conciliation Board at Auckland in March, 1901 : " I am here as a member of a Party, and I do not regard myself as an impartial judge. I represent one of the disputants, and I firmly intend to maintain this attitude on every occasion." <sup>3</sup>

But this is not all. Even when they are sincere and

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 2.

well-meaning, the conciliators are not always able enough. Mr. E. Tregear says of them, in his *Report on the Labour Department for 1900*: "How much time is lost in cases where a tailor, a baker, a butcher, a carman, presided over by a clergyman or a barrister, have to decide on the most technical points in a dispute involving shoemakers, dockers, or printers! They know absolutely nothing beyond the A B C of these trades, and if they have recourse to costly expert evidence, there follows great waste of time and money."<sup>1</sup>

The several inconveniences which we have just indicated have resulted in making the Conciliation Boards extremely unpopular. Even when they are not thought to be harmful, they are reproached with being futile. In the course of a meeting of the Wellington Industrial Association a member asked the president bluntly whether he did not regard conciliation as a farce. The president replied, more gracefully, but no less frankly, "I realise that these Boards are superfluous. The employers consider that they merely waste time, because, under the most futile pretexts, the workmen may force them to appear and explain themselves by the hour, without any good coming of it." But it is not only the opponents of the act that complain of this. Its warmest partisans are obliged to admit that if the workmen continue to disturb traders on trivial points and force them to waste whole days in vain discussions, they will end by killing the Act. This is the opinion expressed to me on one occasion by one of the supporters of the Government, whose name I am not at liberty to disclose, in a confidential letter: "Speaking as a faithful supporter of the law," he wrote, "I can assure you that this system of continually dragging

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Department of Labour, 1900, p. 4.

employers before the Conciliation Boards forms a serious danger to the efficacy of this legislation."

The Premier, Mr. Seddon, was of the same opinion, and he had occasion, in August, 1901, to state his views frankly to a deputation from several of the trade unions in the Colony: "I assure you," he told them, "that if things continue to go on as they have been going on, there will be a break-down." The leader of the deputation was compelled to adopt the same line, replying: "That is what we are afraid of." Continuing his reproaches, Mr. Seddon alluded to one case in which there was a ridiculous abuse of the conciliation procedure: "The other day, at Auckland, 400 people were summoned to give evidence! This is simply riding the thing to death. During this period business is at a standstill—a fact which affects workmen as well as employers. . . . The result is that both sides are disgusted. It is certainly important that these questions should be settled, but for heaven's sake let us have something like rest!"<sup>1</sup>

Everyone, then, seems to have been somewhat dissatisfied with the Conciliation Boards. Many petitions were presented asking for their abolition, on the ground that they did nothing but waste time. Notwithstanding this, the most influential people in the Colony were in favour of keeping these Boards in existence, though they recognised that some modifications were necessary. Mr. Seddon said on many occasions that conciliation had at least the one advantage of letting each side hear the other's case, and so of softening the shock when the opponents came before the Arbitration Court. Again, Judge Cooper, who is now President of the Arbitration Court, and whose opinion is consequently of some

<sup>1</sup> In an interview reported in the Wellington papers in August, 1901.



weight, on more than one occasion made a tribute to the assistance rendered to him as judge by the Conciliation Boards. In a speech at Christchurch, he said : " I very much regret that public opinion should regard conciliation as a superfluous part of the Act. In my opinion, it is necessary." <sup>1</sup>

This moderate point of view was the one that prevailed when the Act was re-drafted in 1900. Conciliation was retained, with a few modifications in detail, which left the position much as it was. Just as before, conciliation is merely a prelude to arbitration, and arbitration is the essential factor in the Act.

The conciliators propose, the Arbitration Court disposes ; and in practice its power turns out to be much greater than appears at first sight. We would expect to see it regulating particular points in particular disputes ; but we find that, in fact, its decisions come to be applied to a whole range of problems, and that as a rule their application is general.

The authors of the law no doubt foresaw this consequence, but it has really come about quite in the natural course of events. For the Arbitration Court has, after all, to be consistent, and, though not a slave to its own jurisprudence, is at least dependent on it. If it decrees a rise in wages for one class of labour, or for the employees of one particular company, it cannot next day refuse this rise to other men who work in similar conditions, and who do not fail to demand it. If the workers in Dunedin obtain a certain benefit, those in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch soon bestir themselves to get it also. This has so often been the case, that a campaign was started in favour of giving the Court authority to make decrees applicable through-

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 12.

out the whole Colony. In 1900 an amendment to this effect was passed, and now the Court can, in certain circumstances, give a "Colonial award," *i.e.* an award applicable to the whole of New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> This measure naturally gave rise to numerous objections from the employers, who urged, with a great deal of reason, that the conditions of labour in the different towns were very dissimilar, and that there was absolutely no need for them to be unified in this manner. These objections received no definite answer, but, as a matter of fact, there was no reason why they should be answered. The Court certainly has the power to make its awards general, but it is only a general faculty, so that the importance of the amendment under discussion entirely depends on the judges who have to put it into practice.

And we must remember that this is an English colony, and that therefore a question of this sort is infinitely less delicate than it would be in a land of radical theorists, of people with a craze for logic. The New Zealanders, as good Anglo-Saxons, are above all empiricists, who care little for general laws and who carefully reserve the right of contradicting themselves whenever it seems to them useful. This fact considerably lessens the danger of an amendment such as this. And, in fact, but little use has been made of it, and, as a rule, the judges are sufficiently intelligent to realise that the same conditions of labour cannot be applied to dissimilar provinces.

What, then, are the principal points on which the Arbitration Court has to give awards? We have already had occasion to lay stress on the fact that, as a rule, there is no question of disputes bearing on a

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Conc. and Arb. Act, Art. 87.

special and carefully limited case, but rather of the general regulation of the conditions of labour in a certain factory, sometimes in a whole industry. The true nature of the law and its immense importance is apparent. To realise this, it is only necessary to look through a list of the awards made by the Court, as given in the Annual Report of the Department of Labour.<sup>1</sup>

The judgments occur with a fatiguing monotony, and the solutions are so precise and detailed that one can gain from them a complete idea of the system in force in any particular trade. Let us take as an example, chosen at random, the award made by the Court of Arbitration on July 10th, 1899, with reference to the furniture-makers of Wellington. As usual, the employees are plaintiffs. We give a summary of the judgment drawn up by the Court : <sup>2</sup>

*Wage minimum* : all cabinet-makers and upholsterers to receive a minimum wage of 9s. a day. Floor-polishers to be paid a minimum of 8s. a day. Here, then, we have the minimum wage applied in New Zealand, not by legislation, but by the arbiter's decision. The results of this system are well known : the most immediate and the most brutal consequence is that the workman who through age, weakness, or lack of skill is incapable of earning 8 or 9 shillings a day, but who might, in this case, earn possibly 4 or 5, is deprived of his opportunities. But this event was taken account of in the award, and it goes on, after establishing the rule, to make way for the exception. Thus, the man who knows that he is incapable of earning the 8s. or 9s. minimum mentioned above is authorised to enter

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Department of Labour, 1900, pp. 9-60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 20 and 21.

into a contract for a smaller wage, provided always that he first consults the secretary of the trade union.

*Overtime* : The normal working day being taken as eight hours, overtime work is to be paid on the basis of an extra quarter for the first four hours ; after that, an extra half.<sup>1</sup>

*Piece-Work* : Piece-work is allowed, provided that the amount earned should not be less than the equivalent of the minimum wage.

*Apprentices* : There shall not be more than one apprentice to every three workmen.

*Union men* : Employers are not to make any distinction between union men and free labourers.

The judgment given above is an ordinary example of the awards made by the Arbitration Court. It bears, not on some special point in dispute, but on the general conditions of labour in a particular trade. The Court is thus seen to legislate, as it were, almost in the same way as Parliament, but with the difference that its decision is binding only on a certain class of employers and employees, and even on them only for a limited period. Notwithstanding these two restrictions, however, the judges are in process of setting up a kind of new labour legislation, alongside of that legislation which Parliament reserves to itself. The problems with which the Court deals and which it settles are, in fact, numerous and important. The boldness and originality of many of the awards made by it are such as to deserve notice.

Let us first consider the employment of union men, a problem which is only lightly touched upon in the judgment given above. The relations between organ-

<sup>1</sup> In a revision of the Factories Act in 1901, Parliament limited the total week's work for men to 48 hours. Factories Act, art. 18.

ised and free labour form one of the most delicate questions that exist. The Arbitration Court has had it under consideration on many occasions, and it is in process of establishing a most interesting code on the point ; though most of the judgments are tentative rather than general. It reserves to itself the right of making exceptions, even at the cost of contradicting its principles ; and this method of procedure does seem in practice infinitely better than the uniform rigour of a law.

We saw in the last chapter with what care the Government planned to protect organised labour. From the first years of its existence the Arbitration Court showed the same favour to it. As a general rule the Court decides that, on equivalent terms, the employer should hire the union man in preference to the free labourer. But this is by no means a rigid formula which does not admit of modification. On the contrary, we shall see how prudently and how reservedly the principle has been applied. It was in 1896, with reference to a dispute between shoe manufacturers and their employees, that the principle of preferential treatment to union men was first laid down, by Judge Williams. Speaking as President of the Court, he observed that, for the three years preceding, only union men had actually been employed by shoemakers ; that the Court would maintain things as they were ; and that in future it would be careful to follow what seemed to be the customary usage in each particular trade.<sup>1</sup>

It is apparent with what caution the Court proceeds. In point of fact, it has on many occasions refused to protect organised labour. Thus, in dealing with a case involving the employment of sailors, it refused to show

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *State Experiments*, p.3.

any preference for union men, on the ground that the discipline on ships might suffer. On another occasion the number of mechanics in Christchurch was considered insufficient to justify any special preferential treatment.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the occasions on which the Court deals severely with trade unions are exceptional ; and nowadays the principle is admitted that union men should be employed in preference to others. This is a great advantage, but one which has another side to it, for it has led to a much stricter supervision of the trade unions by the Arbitration Court. From the moment at which they receive such a privilege it becomes important that they should not develop into closed and exclusive bodies ; on the contrary, it must be possible for every intelligent labourer to become a member and to share in their advantages. For this reason the Court has established the practice, whenever it gives any preference to a union, of imposing at the same time the condition that every workman of good character should be admitted to membership without a ballot or any other form of election, as soon as he pays the usual subscription.

The employment of the union labourer does not, however, proceed in a regular manner. Judge Martin, when President of the Court, expressed himself very clearly on this point : " The right of deciding whether a certain man shall be employed or not belongs to the employer. No judgment can force an employer to retain a labourer whom he feels obliged to discharge. It is when new men are being engaged that the union is given the advantage. If an employer, in an urgent case, hires a free labourer, he is not afterwards obliged

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 20.

to discharge him and give his place to a union man. If two men come at the same time to look for employment, one a free labourer who is of the first rank, and the other a union man who is merely competent, the employer may, for example, try them both and retain the services of the better one.”<sup>1</sup>

The interesting thing in this kind of legislation is that it is continually being modified, and that it is formed more or less in accordance with the public opinion then ruling in the vicinity. Thus, the extremely open-minded principle just quoted has since then been replaced by an award made in April, 1901, with reference to the position of shoemakers' employees. This is the later decision of the Court: “When a free labourer is engaged by an employer because the union is unable to provide an equally skilled man, the union shall have the right to substitute, in the course of the next three months, a new man to take the place of the free labourer chosen by the employer, if this latter man has refused to join the union. This provision shall also be applied in the case of all the non-union labourers already in employment.”<sup>2</sup> As is evident, such judgments come very near to establishing compulsory unionism. It is true, however, that in these circumstances the union ceases to be the club that it sometimes is, and becomes so open an association that it loses much of its traditional character.

There is, moreover, one factor in the application of this system which must not be lightly valued, and that factor is the common sense of the President of the Court and of his two assessors. Here, for example, is a decision which few employers could oppose: “If the coal in the mines of a certain district becomes scarce,

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 20.

the employers should endeavour to distribute the work among all their employees, diminishing each man's share rather than putting anyone out of work. These employers are requested to fill vacancies, as far as possible, with local rather than with imported labour." We also cite another judgment which, though not demagogic, must compel even the workmen to admit its justice. It deals with the wool trade. "The President admits that the conditions of labour are not satisfactory, but he does not feel able to decree any change until the wool trade has recovered from its present depression. The rate of wages is naturally directly dependent on the price of wool, and at present the industry seems unable to bear a higher scale. In consequence of this, the Court makes no award." <sup>1</sup>

We see the variety of the questions with which the Arbitration Court deals. There is almost no case which is beyond its reach, and, as a rule, its judgments are given on the merits of the case, and do not have to depend on legal precedent. In this lies the enormous and, we might say, the dangerous power of the President of the Court. After the explanation we have given it will seem no exaggeration to say that he is one of the two or three most important people in the Colony. The Government has very properly felt that only men of the first rank could fill such an important post, and those who have been appointed Presidents of the Court have always been judges who were greatly and universally respected. It would most certainly never occur to anyone to suspect their uprightness and good faith.

They have, on the whole, been inclined to favour the side of the workmen, and the latter seldom leave the Court empty-handed. Not through fear, nor out of

<sup>1</sup> These two instances were mentioned to me by Mr. Reeves.



kindness, but from a very natural sentiment which many people would feel in their place, the judges' attitude is that the workmen are, after all, poor, and that something may always be given to them without any harm coming of it. The result of this is that the men are never afraid to appear before the Court, and that they drag their adversaries there on the most futile pretexts. The expenses are not as heavy as those of a strike, and the results of a case falling through cannot be compared with the miseries of a long period of unemployment. There are, then, always agitators to see that the Court does not remain idle. In fact, it is overworked from one end of the year to the other; the presiding judge cannot undertake any other work, and in 1900 it was even necessary to appoint an additional judge for the Supreme Court, who was to take the place of the President of the Arbitration Court, in an office the latter no longer had time to fulfil.

We have still to see in what conditions the awards of the Arbitration Court are applied. As for the employers, they are bound to submit, because there are a thousand ways of forcing them to respect the judgments. If they are unwilling to accept the conditions of the Arbitration, they can do nothing but close down, for they are not allowed to resume work on any other basis than that ordered by the Court. On their side at least it is absolutely certain that the law will always be obeyed. But it is much more difficult to compel the men. As a matter of fact, up to the present the difficulty has not proved insurmountable; but New Zealand is not quite the "Country without Strikes"<sup>1</sup> spoken of by Mr. Lloyd.

<sup>1</sup>H. D. Lloyd, *A Country without Strikes: A Visit to the Compulsory Arbitration Court of New Zealand*, New York, 1900.

For, first, we must remember that the free labourers have the absolute right to strike work. And as for the others, who have not this right, it is sometimes difficult to keep them within the law. In his Report, Judge Backhouse mentions a certain number of strikes which took place in the following trades: founders, masons, miners, porters, etc. But these strikes were not very serious, and gave little trouble. On the whole, compulsory arbitration has taken the place of the old method of the strike. The Court has some powerful means of ensuring compliance with its awards. If workmen abandon their work and refuse to submit to the terms of an arbitration, the only thing they can do is to change their trade, for they would only be able to resume work in their old trade under the conditions prescribed by the Court. There are, moreover, pecuniary sanctions, as Mr. Reeves explains: "If there were a judgment to which the trades unions refused to submit, the Court would sentence the heads of the unions to a fine of £10 sterling each. Do you think that this would not be a lesson?"<sup>1</sup>

We shall soon see whether these results can be regarded as final. All that we can say now is that the law of compulsory arbitration has practically suppressed strikes, and that it has been loyally applied and obeyed. We shall see in the next chapter what effect it has had on the general development of the country.

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Speech of 30th June, 1893, in the House.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE COMPULSORY CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT : ITS GENERAL RESULTS.

TEN years' experience of the Compulsory Conciliation and Arbitration Act has proved that it is likely to live, or rather that it is capable of working regularly in the present prosperous condition of New Zealand. We have seen that though the findings of the Conciliation Board have been in general but little regarded, yet the awards of the Arbitration Court have always or almost always been obeyed. In a word, up to the present, the New Zealand statesmen who brought in this legislation have attained the end at which they aimed : strikes have, in practice, been abolished, and economic disputes have been peaceably settled.

We must now look at the question from a wider point of view, and ask what the general results of arbitration are or may be with regard to the ultimate development of New Zealand. We shall first consider the opinions of workers and of employers on this point, and we shall then inquire to what extent this new legislation affects and may in the future affect the progress of industry and commerce.

The workers are unanimous in praising the law and in rejoicing over its results—the free labourers no less

than the members of trade unions. They both, indeed, have excellent reasons for this attitude. Arbitration has in almost every case been beneficial to them, and they have obtained easily and without expense advantages which costly and difficult strikes might perhaps have failed to secure. What they approve of in the new legislation is, in fact, not the principle, but the result. For many reasons they know that they can count on the goodwill (to call it partiality would be unjust) of the Arbitration Court. At the same time they know that they are supported by the Government, and, in most cases, by public opinion. They therefore feel at present that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and they show no regret for the old days of strikes—in no sense “good old days” to them.

It cannot, however, be proved that this attitude of the workmen is final. If there were to be a revulsion in public opinion, if the Government were to change, or if the Court were to adopt the custom of finding judgment against them and in favour of the employers, or if the Court were to be forced by events to do this, then it is very likely that the principle of arbitration would cease to be nearly so popular. From the labour point of view, to put it in a straightforward way, arbitration was an excellent thing when Seddon was in power and when there was question of raising wages and of shortening the hours of labour. But if the day should come when things are different, who knows whether the strike will not once again find its supporters and apostles? As these critical times are very likely to occur, it is safer not to regard arbitration as finally accepted.

On the side of the employers, opinion is almost as unanimous, but in the opposite direction. I have met hardly any of them who are not violent opponents of

arbitration. The supporters of the law like to think that a gradual conversion is taking place; they give instances which we shall mention below. But it is necessary to search carefully in order to find these converts, for the great majority of the employers remain as hostile as they have always been.

Their grievances are many, and easily discovered, for they do not hesitate to set them forth. State interference in their affairs is evidently what is most intolerable to them. Formerly they dealt directly with their workmen, and no one else had anything to say in the matter. Nowadays, conciliators and arbitrators come in, examine their books, question their staff, and finally act as judges in the most delicate questions, deciding, beyond any appeal, that such and such an employer has a sufficient income, that he can very well afford to raise wages, and that, in fact, he must do it or close his factory. All this is intolerable to the pride and suspicious independence of certain manufacturers, who regard interference of this kind as an iniquitous and hateful abuse.

Moreover, from the accession to power of the Seddon ministry, and especially from the passing of the Compulsory Arbitration Act, the workers have become infinitely more independent. Strengthened by the support they receive from high quarters they do not hesitate to make large demands on their employers, and these latter bitterly complain that they have lost most of their authority. This is how an eminent barrister in Wellington, writing to me on this subject, summed up the grievances of the employers: "The Act has destroyed all discipline in the workshop. Nowadays the worker is master, and in every contract the employer must take account of the possibility of

disputes arising from the caprice of his employees. One of the principal provisions of the Act favours the trade unions by recommending the employment of their members in preference to free labourers. These unions are for the most part dependent on their leaders, president, secretary and treasurer, and these latter are generally agitators who realise that their position depends on their zeal, and who consequently seize every occasion they can find of redressing the slightest wrongs that capital can inflict on their comrades. The Act has thus developed an absolutely unbearable class of people, who are continually striving to impede the progress of trade, and who have found in it an excellent opportunity of developing their talents as ringleaders. Before arbitration was passed, the trade union leaders were restrained by fear of the grave consequences that a strike might have, if it went against them. Then nothing short of ruin was at stake. To-day, if the appeal to the Arbitration Court is not decided in their favour, they always find an excuse: they lose nothing but their own time (which is paid for by the union), the compensation, which is purely nominal, and the time of a few witnesses, who are generally agitators like themselves, and consequently have nothing else to do. If they are not successful in Court, they let it be understood that there has been error or corruption. They have only to make a new effort later on. On the other hand, the head of some large industry may be summoned over a most trivial matter. He is not allowed, unless his opponent agrees, to employ counsel to represent him, and he must pay for all his witnesses. In this way he stands to lose whole weeks at a time. The result is that whenever his business is prosperous enough to allow it, the employer prefers to give in on every point rather than to expose

himself to the loss of time and money which legal proceedings would involve. If New Zealand had not been exceptionally prosperous since the passing of the Act in 1894, you may be sure that this Act would already have been repealed or in any case profoundly modified."

The opinion expressed in this letter represents accurately enough the point of view of the largest employers in the Colony. But there are nevertheless some employers who have pronounced in favour of arbitration, and we must also hear what they have to say. This, for example, was what a most influential person, Mr. Mills, manager of the New Zealand Steamship Company, said to a reporter of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*: "What do I think of the Arbitration Act? I believe that this method of settling economic disputes is on the whole satisfactory. Under the rules of this Act, the parties concerned can meet, and after a short discussion gain a pretty clear idea of their mutual position. Formerly it was very difficult for them to hear and understand each other."<sup>1</sup>

Being asked, in the same interview, whether the New Zealand employers were generally in favour of the Act, Mr. Mills replied: "In a general way, I think I can say yes. Of course many employers complain that they are being treated unfairly. But the reason why many of them have been adjudicated against is, I think, because they come before the Board or the Court insufficiently prepared. I think that in time the Act will end by being accepted."

This statement sounds somewhat strange to anyone who knows the New Zealand employers. In the New South Wales Parliament, Mr. Wise, who alluded to it,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in a speech given in the Legislative Council of New South Wales by the Hon. B. R. Wise, 31st Oct., 1900.

was questioned about the statement, and asked if he was quite sure of its authenticity. He gave a satisfactory reply, so that these words of Mr. Mills may be considered as authentic.

But, indeed, there are few employers who share his opinion and definitely praise the Act. In general there is a strong prejudice against it. The most that can be said is that people are gradually becoming accustomed to it, as they would to anything else, and that opposition to the Act is not so violently expressed as it was before. The Englishman is so conservative, in the proper sense of the word, that he will end by maintaining, in the name of social order, and simply because they exist, measures which he once most strongly opposed. In this sense the Arbitration Act has gained ground ; it is hated, but people are growing accustomed to it. They go on complaining of it, but in practice they are resigned. This is the opinion of a New Zealander, Dr. Newman : " Public opinion relative to compulsory arbitration has changed in a very remarkable way. When the Act was passed, it was regarded as dreadful, heterodox, and destined to turn the world upside down. Now it has been put into practice ; the sun continues to shine as it used to, and everything is as orderly as before." <sup>1</sup>

So that compulsory arbitration has not had the extreme results which its adversaries were pleased to predict. But we cannot rest content with such a vague and obvious conclusion. We must inquire in more detail what the influences of the Act of 1894 have been on the industrial development of New Zealand.

For some years the Colony has been passing through

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by A. R. Barclay, *Four Years of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act* (Dunedin Fabian Society).



a period of great prosperity. This is an undoubted fact. The opponents of the Act cannot, therefore, attempt to say that it has killed the trade of New Zealand. On the other hand, its advocates would be no less unjustified in attributing this prosperity to the policy of the Seddon ministry. The most they are entitled to say in praise of this ministry's legislation is that it has not retarded the development of economic progress. This is, in fact, the only point of view from which we can study the consequences of the Act of 1894. It has been in force only during a period of prosperity. We do not know, therefore, and we cannot know, what its results would be in less favourable circumstances. The only question which we can ask at present is whether the Arbitration Act has retarded the development of certain industries, and whether it has placed New Zealand at a serious disadvantage with its competitors.

No definite instances can be given of any concerns that have been reduced to bankruptcy through the annoyances caused by the Act. It is, of course, possible to suppose, and with some justification, that many capitalists have been kept from the Colony by the fear of difficulties which labour might have caused them. But this is nothing more than a supposition, against which it is possible to quote instances of new concerns being started, or of the development of existing industries. Thus, the Kaiapoi Woollen Company recently provided the sum of £30,000 for the erection of a new factory. The New Zealand Coal and Oil Company has similarly laid out £90,000 in developments. There are, then, some capitalists who are not afraid to enter into new enterprises, and who prove thereby that New Zealand is still a country where money can earn a respectable dividend.

Most industries are in a similarly successful position. Building, cloth manufacture and navigation companies have nothing to complain of, and furthermore do not complain. There is, however, one industry which seems to have suffered from the conditions of production which the labour legislation has imposed on it, and that is the manufacture of shoes. The Customs duties which protect it are important ; they raise the cost of the article about 30 per cent. ; but, notwithstanding this considerable protection, New Zealand is scarcely able to defend itself against the importation of shoes from other countries, which is increasing from year to year.

In general, however, the protective tariffs are large enough to allow the New Zealanders to settle for themselves the conditions of production without paying much attention to outsiders. To effect this they have to resign themselves more or less not to attempt to develop the exportation of their goods ; but once they have made this sacrifice they are masters of their own market. We must be clear on this point : what we have just said is the key to the whole system. A free-trade New Zealand could not long afford the luxury of its social legislation, nor, doubtless, of an Arbitration Act. The Draconian laws of international competition would but too soon remind manufacturers and politicians that, at whatever sacrifice, goods must be produced cheaply. But under the shelter of a well-formed tariff the question has quite another side to it, and interior consumption becomes the paramount consideration. There is always a certain limit which must not be passed, because beyond that limit the products of other countries would break through the barrier. This is at present what has happened to the shoe

trade ; but it is quite an exceptional case, for the tariff system in force is of such a kind as to satisfy the most exacting protectionist.

Who pays the costs of this policy ? First of all the employer, whose profits are in general less than they used to be ; but chiefly the consumer. Judge Backhouse writes, in his Report, " The owners of coal mines agreed to raise prices, when the cost of labour increased. The owners of flour mills did the same. Building has become more costly, and those engaged in the trade, who at first thought that they could afford the rise in wages, are now of opinion that the awards of the Arbitration Court are going to result in reducing the volume of their business. So they resolutely oppose the new demands of their employees." <sup>1</sup>

With their social legislation and their tariff system, New Zealanders evidently cannot count on very economical conditions of labour. But they themselves have chosen this policy, and, following Mr. Reeves, their attitude has been : We prefer a New Zealand with a small but happy population to a New Zealand which would be a prey to all the abuses of industry, and where the worker would suffer.<sup>2</sup>

Public opinion has for ten years remained faithful to its choice. It has remained firmly attached to the social legislation which the country has been given, and to the tariffs which are presupposed by this legislation. To abolish these tariffs would, in fact, be to make it difficult to work the labour laws or seriously to compromise trade. This is realised by everyone, and this is the reason why the New Zealanders cling so firmly to their isolation. If one were to hold before their eyes the prospect of a smaller cost of living, or of the

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ch. ix. p. 94.

development of their export trade, under a new regime, they would reply with their leaders that "a protective tariff is not too high a price for a nation to pay to ensure the comfort and prosperity of its workers."

Although the results of the Arbitration Act on the development of trade may be doubtful, it cannot be denied that it has had beneficial results on the peace of society. New Zealand no longer knows those terrible strikes which even after their close left behind them so much misery and bitterness. It is true that the number of disputes has increased. But there is much less bitterness in the relations between employers and men than there used to be. The state of war has given place to the state of peace, and the effect of this is felt everywhere. Inquiries are close and detailed; the employers are often driven into a corner, and complain that too much forbearance is expected of them. But all this proceeds in an orderly way and is certainly an advance on the old method of the strike and the lock-out.

Furthermore, the awards are carried out without disturbance. It was feared that it would be impossible to make the men obey; but up to the present events have shown that this fear was vain. It is true that the problem has hardly arisen, as the men have almost always won their case, and there is not much merit in accepting a decision which is favourable to them. We cannot, then, regard past experience as final; more especially as some disquieting symptoms have appeared—symptoms which may lead us to reflect. For instance, a printers' union, finding itself under sentence of the Court, had no hesitation in declaring that it would withdraw its name from the register and from the benefits of the Act, which practically amounted to resuming

once more their old right to strike. On another occasion the shoemakers, whose wages had been reduced, let it be understood that they would indeed accept the judgment, but that they intended to do less work because of it.

Awards unfavourable to the men, such as these just mentioned, are at present very exceptional. But the day may come when they will be the general rule. Economic life is built of ups and downs. There are certain to be periods when trade will contract instead of developing ; when men will be discharged instead of being engaged, and when wages will diminish instead of increasing. It will then be necessary for the Arbitration Court to adapt itself to circumstances, for it does not pretend to ignore the necessary character of certain economic laws. It will have then in many cases to give judgment against the men, and perhaps even to take back from them some of the benefits which it has given.

In these altered conditions, will the men be disposed to submit ? Will they not prefer again to have recourse to the old method of the strike ? It is at such a time that the fate of this Act will be decided. Then and only then shall we be able to gain a real idea of the extent to which it is accepted by public opinion. It will be an interesting and trying period, for, as Judge Backhouse writes in closing his Report, " if the awards are only to be accepted when they favour a certain class, if they are to be turned into a laughing-stock when they are adverse to this class, the Act might as well be torn out of the Statute Book." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Backhouse, Report, p. 26.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### OLD AGE PENSIONS.

THE charge which the New Zealander usually makes against the Europeans is that they will go on discussing a problem interminably, but will never be bold enough to take any definite action in the attempt to solve it. To give them their due, the New Zealanders do not let questions hang fire, and with them the most difficult political problems, once they are placed before the public, stand a great chance of receiving a solution, which, if not always the best possible, is at least quick and practical. Such was the case with Old Age Pensions : at a time when, in almost every country in Europe, they were still in the projected stage, New Zealand brought them into real existence by an Act of 1898. The pension scheme set up by the Seddon ministry is not entirely, nor even for the most part, applied to workmen. But it is none the less an integral part in the labour and social policy which we are now examining.

A Frenchman's first care would be to inquire in virtue of what principle such a momentous reform as the establishment of old age pensions was introduced. Are its characteristics socialistic, philanthropic and humanitarian or merely electoral? This is a question

which doubtless did not much concern the authors of the law now before us. Like good Anglo-Saxons they were more interested in doing the thing than in reasoning about it, and they acted empirically, without theory or principles; without prejudice, we might even say, being ready to alter or even to repeal the law if it failed to give the results expected of it, and not worrying themselves in the least about the results that the law might have in fifty or a hundred years. Of such a type is the English politician: without affectation he does something definite, wishing to produce something that will work, and looking no further.

Mr. Reeves, who is undoubtedly the theorist of his party, nevertheless tried to define the spirit of the Old Age Pensions Act and to determine its true political character, more perhaps for the information of outsiders than for that of his fellow-citizens. He comes to the conclusion that it is not socialistic but humanitarian, and that it belongs to that class of "measures, humble, yet not ungenerous, whose aim it is to soften the hardships of poverty for the aged, who, while unfortunate, are not always wholly undeserving." <sup>1</sup>

To this apparent philanthropic motive which Mr. Reeves alludes to we should do well to add the desire, so frequent with the governors of new countries, to do something which has nowhere else been attempted, and the wish, common to all statesmen in every country, to exert themselves for the humble and the weak, who are nowadays at once the majority and the strength of the country.

The question of pensions was raised for the first time in New Zealand about 1892. At that time public opinion was pretty closely divided. Though no one dared openly

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *State Experiments*, v. ii. p. 250.

to oppose the reform, there were many conservatives who kept their objections for the means of carrying out the scheme. Nevertheless, the greater number of people had been gradually won over by the idea that society should guarantee to its members the right to exist. The notion of charity appeared to many offensive and unworthy of a democracy. Mr. Duncan M'Gregor, who was in charge of the charitable institutions in New Zealand, gave an adequate expression to the general feeling on the point in the following lines: "Our unjust system of the distribution of the products of labour must compel society to face the duty of making such provision for deserving old age as shall not involve any sacrifice of self-respect in accepting it."<sup>1</sup>

The Government, which was hardly affected by arguments taken from the orthodox political economy, and which was already trained to recognise nothing but the politics of results, assumed the direction of the movement. After some attempts, which were unfruitful, and, for that matter, of secondary importance, the question was placed before the people in the election of 1897; and, at the return of Parliament, was carefully taken in hand.

The conservative opposition, seeing that it could not reject without ceremony a popular scheme such as this, made efforts to deprive it as far as possible of its radical characteristics. Their chief aim was to exact subscriptions from those who were to benefit, and, if they won this point, they were prepared to go so far as to admit the principle of compulsion.

But the ministry and its supporters had a much more daring scheme. They wished to do away with the principle of subscriptions, and to pay the pensions out

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by H. D. Lloyd, *Newest England*, p. 341.



of general revenue ; in a word, to lay the cost of this reform on the community at large, or rather on the moneyed class, which would have to pay, as no one attempted to deny. One of the chief supporters of the scheme, Mr. Ward, said without circumlocution : " Those who are most able to bear the cost will have to contribute, in proportion to their income and their position."

There was in this something very alarming to such people, and the opposition did not feel satisfied. It was asserted that the scheme was humiliating to the poor, and from a financial point of view immoral and dangerous. In his own name, Mr. W. Rolleston brought forward the following threefold resolution : (1) The project is not really one of Old Age Pensions, but a kind of Poor Law, imposing on poverty degrading conditions, and only giving real and substantial help in so far as it lays the stigma of poverty on those who receive it ; (2) The provisions of the scheme make no distinction between the deserving and the undeserving, between those who look after their future and those who do not. There is no sufficient guarantee that those who receive the pensions will be those who have, by their labour and their skill, contributed to develop the resources of the Colony, or who have made an honest attempt to economise with a view to their old age ; (3) It is desirable to redraft the scheme, setting up pensions on the basis of an individual contribution and of a contribution from the State, through the intermediation of life insurance societies or of some other organisation.

The Government was not convinced nor even touched by this. To the objection that it was immoral to have no individual contribution the Premier replied that most of the labourers had already subscribed by the

very fact that they had contributed to the prosperity of the Colony, and that it was only just that at the end of a long life of labour they should receive some reward.

The financial question was not regarded as serious, and the advocates of the Act were content with saying that the Colony could easily bear the actual cost, and could, if necessary, afford much more. In general, however, they fell back on the humanitarian point of view, and would reply to all objections, of whatever nature, in words of compassion and pity for the poor and humble. In a democratic country this is beyond doubt the strongest form of argument. Someone, speaking to Mr. Lloyd, summed up the whole discussion in a vivid and picturesque way, saying: "If the workman cannot, like the beaver and the ant, set aside a store for the winter of his life, well, there is 'something rotten in the state of Denmark!'"<sup>1</sup>

Such were the principal arguments on both sides, which were repeated *ad nauseam* in heated and interminable debates. There was one sitting of ninety hours; the number of speeches delivered in Parliament on this subject came to fourteen hundred; and one member spoke ninety-three times. This shows to what extent the question had aroused interest and excited public opinion. At last, after many vicissitudes, the Bill became law on the 1st of November, 1898, without the conservatives having succeeded in modifying its character; and in March, 1899, the first pensions were paid.

Let us now examine the financial aspect of the scheme. Having from the very first, as we have just said, rejected the principle of contribution, the authors of the law did not proceed to discover some ingenious financial

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd, *Newest England*, p. 343.

contrivance. They simply decided to face the payment of pensions out of the general resources of the budget. We said above that they did not trouble to think of the consequences of the Act fifty years on. To be exact we can say that they did not even take the trouble to ask what would happen in four years' time, for they only voted the Act of 1898 for three years. Then, they said, they would see what was to be done. If the results had been good, the Act would be renewed. If, on the other hand, the financial situation was not such as to admit the continued payment of pensions, they would be either reduced or abolished. But no one who knows what a democracy is like could suppose that such a law would ever be repealed. As a matter of fact, the New Zealand Parliament did not even wait for the three years it had determined on to elapse before it renewed the Act. An amendment of October 18th, 1900, confirmed old age pensions such as had been established in 1898. There has been no modification of any importance in the original scheme, which works as follows :

In general, all New Zealanders of both sexes, who are more than sixty-five years of age, are entitled to receive a small monthly allowance from the State. But the measure has not as universal an application as might at first sight appear, for many conditions have to be fulfilled before one can become the recipient of a pension.

First, one must be in modest circumstances, that is to say, one's yearly income must not be over £34. For every £1 of income over and above this £34, £1 of the pension is deducted, and as the latter amounts to £18 a year, the person whose income reaches £52 loses the right to an allowance of any sort. A husband and wife

may combine two pensions, provided always that their total revenue, including the pensions, should not be more than £78. The possession of a certain amount of capital is another cause for the withholding of a pension. With a capital of less than £50 the pension would be given in its entirety. Above that amount, £1 of pension is subtracted for every £15 additional capital up to the amount of £270 ; with a capital greater than this there is no longer any claim to a pension.

Next follow conditions of another kind. To claim a pension, one must have lived twenty-five years in the Colony, be an English subject, not be in a lunatic asylum, be neither a confirmed drunkard nor a Chinese. In Australasia the hatred of the yellow races is so strong that it leaves no place for any charitable feeling. An imprisonment of at least four months during the preceding twelve years, or of five years during the preceding twenty-five, and desertion of one's husband or wife, are other disqualifications.

But this is not all. It is not enough to have, so to say, negative qualities. The candidate for a pension must be able to bring before a police magistrate a witness to certify that he is of moral character, and that during the five years preceding he has led a sober and respectable life.

If the candidate is successful in passing through all these tests, the pension is paid to him for twelve months; but he cannot rest in reliance on a false security, and, thinking himself beyond any supervision, become a drunkard or a vagabond. If he forgets himself in such a way, his pension will simply be withdrawn. The opponents of the Act complained in Parliament that it was necessary to be a saint to touch one's pension. They were met with the reply, grandiose, almost bibli-

cal, yet after all true enough, that at sixty-five one ought to begin to live a saint's life.

The administration of the Act has been carried out in a very simple and practical manner. For this purpose the Colony was divided into 72 districts, in each of which a deputy registrar was appointed.<sup>1</sup> At Wellington there is a chief registrar, who has authority over the whole Colony. Every candidate for a pension must put in an application on a printed form, drawn up by the Government, and which can be obtained in any post office. The form, when duly filled up, is sent to the deputy registrar of the district, who classifies the claims and records them in a register called "The District Old Age Pension Claim Register." But neither the deputies nor even the chief registrar have authority to assign a pension. This authority is reserved to a magistrate, who fixes a day to examine the claims and may require the attendance of the candidate if he thinks it necessary. A certificate is given to the claimant if a pension is granted. The deputy-registrar sends to Wellington a weekly sheet on which are shown, with their amounts, the pensions granted. The dates when they fall due are communicated to the Postmaster-General, who in turn advises the post-masters in the localities where payments are to be made. The recipient of the pension has then only to present his certificate, and he is thenceforward paid his pension in monthly instalments.

The law has now been in force for a number of years, and up to now everything has been done with order and justice. The clauses of forfeiture dependent on the possession of too much capital or income have been

<sup>1</sup> The deputy registrar is generally an officer who has also other duties to perform.

rigorously applied. But compliance with all the conditions mentioned above—conditions which made the opponents of the Act say that one must be a saint to gain any benefit under it—has not proved difficult. During the year 1901-1902, 1694 new pensions were granted, and only 206 claims were refused, mostly on the ground that the candidate making application was already in possession of a capital or income such as to make State assistance impossible under the Act. In short, there has been no evidence of any severity in treatment; and potential claimants see for themselves when they have no chance of success, and in such cases do not even make a claim.

The inquiry into the authenticity of claims for pensions is a public one. This is reassuring to claimants, and at the same time is a trial for their self-respect, though the inquiry is conducted with the greatest possible tact. Mr. H. D. Lloyd describes, with great vigour and picturesqueness, one of these sessions of inquiry at which he was present, in Wellington: "The court room on the morning of my attendance was filled with a pathetic crowd of men and women, ruined hulks, flotsam and jetsam of the work-a-day life of New Zealand. Some were from one of the benevolent homes which are maintained by the Colony for the relief of its aged poor. These are not barred from receiving pensions, and they are also allowed to remain in the institutions if they desire, but in such cases the trustees appropriate part or all of the pension to pay for their keep.

"There were old soldiers, miners, sailors, working men, and wives and widows of the same classes. The examinations proceeded rapidly, from two to four minutes being taken up with each case. Sometimes husbands

and wives were present together, and if their cases fulfilled the requirements of the law each went away happy with his allowance of a full pension of £18 each.”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd then goes on to describe the inquiry itself, which being not at all of the police-inquiry type, is carried out with special tact and care. He gives an account of an old woman who is asked by the magistrate, with the most discreet euphemisms, whether she has ever been in prison ; and then we come upon the inevitable really bad case :

“ He was a vagrant of the most undeniably chronic type. He admitted cheerfully that he had been in prison, but, he urged, ‘ never for any criminal offence.’ He had been turned out of the home for drunkenness. ‘ What else can a man do,’ he demanded, ‘ if he is turned out, but turn vagrant ? ’ ”

What most struck Mr. Lloyd was the courtesy with which the Act was administered. As a matter of fact, in almost every case the applicants for pensions are people who really should be treated with great respect, and small formal irregularities that they have committed through ignorance may be passed over. To give only one example, here is a case of leniency mentioned by Mr. Reeves : “ An old blind woman decided to save up her monthly allowances till she was able to afford an operation. Denying herself every temptation to spend money, she treated the post office charged with the payment of her pension as a bank, and did not withdraw her monthly allowance, thinking that it was simply being placed to her credit. It was only after several pounds had been lost in this way that she discovered that, according to the Act, she should have withdrawn her allowance each month. This case, with

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd, *Newest England*, p. 348 *et seq.*

many similar ones, attracted attention, and Parliament readily voted a special sum to indemnify the poor people whom a praiseworthy spirit of economy had led to lose the benefits of many months of pension."

Although many people come before the magistrate to claim pensions to which they are not entitled, there are on the other hand many who voluntarily resign the benefits of the Act, either through pride or mere negligence. In fact, with voluntary abstention on the one hand, and on the other cases in which there is no title to a pension, there are at most 40 to 50 per cent. of the New Zealanders more than sixty-five years of age who draw pensions. It has been calculated that in England the proportion of people who are more than 65 years old is about 5 per cent. In New Zealand this proportion is much lower, which can be explained by the fact that it is a new colony, which has in the main been peopled by the immigration of men in the prime of life. In 1864 the percentage of inhabitants of more than 65 years of age was only 0.65. By 1896 the number had risen to 2.95 per cent. and beyond doubt the proportion has risen even since then, so that out of a population of 800,000 about 24,000 or 25,000 may be supposed to have the age qualification for a pension. At the 31st of March, 1902 there were 12,776 pensions in course of payment, which confirms the calculation we made above.

But we must now come to the financial side of the question, which is at least as important as the social side, because in this case, as in every other and perhaps in more than every other, money is the indispensable condition of success. The Pensions Act produced a charge of £207,468 in the 1901-1902 budget. Of this amount the cost of administration was responsible



for little more than £2400. Up to the present the New Zealand finances have easily supported this charge.

Mr. Reeves wrote on this point : “ £200,000 a year is a substantial burden. But a prosperous colony with a growing revenue can afford to be bold. Times are very good in New Zealand now. For the last eight years the Government has been able to pay a large sum out of surplus revenue to aid in making railways and those other public works which in the colonies are usually paid for out of loan moneys raised in London. For the present, then, all the treasurer will have to do is to impound a certain amount of his surplus on behalf of Old Age Pensions instead of transferring it to the fund for public works. A financial crisis followed by a deficit in our revenue would certainly change the situation ; but for the time being there is no reason to fear such a catastrophe.”<sup>1</sup>

But, even if we cannot prophesy such a catastrophe, we can imagine that it might happen, and we can ask what would be the result if it did. It is possible that in that case this chapter in the social legislation of the Seddon ministry might simply be dropped. But there are in all democracies certain reforms which are never done away with, and it is much more probable that the Government would do what Mr. Seddon himself calmly said they would : “ If later on the charge is too much for our resources, we shall increase the taxes on land and income.”

This manner of legislating is original enough and in any case very colonial. “ We do not pretend to be great theorists,” they say, “ we are not politicians who are the slaves of a system, but simply noble-minded

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *State Experiments*, vol. ii. p. 273.

people trying to brighten the last days of those who are on the downward slope of life." This kind of talk cannot, however, save us from inquiring into the consequences that such an Act might have in the future, and has already had, not only on the finances, but also on the morals of the country.

The reform is too recent for it to have been able to provide indisputable conclusions. It is only (1904) in the fifth year of its existence, which is not long enough either to confirm or to remove definitely the fears of its opponents. But, of course, in three years it has been possible to observe a great deal, and the debate which took place in Parliament in 1900, at the time when the Act was renewed, may be found in many ways instructive. There were naturally a great many facile objections and phrases used merely for effect. It was said that pensions were distributed without discernment, or with a discernment which was no new thing in politics. These objections were to be expected, and are after all not very serious.

But a more serious objection was that this reform would result in destroying the spirit of economy. It can certainly be said that the pension is so small that it can never be more than something additional, and that one shilling a day does not go very far. The people who hope to benefit under the Act have then every inducement to lay aside something on their own account, in order slightly to increase the income of their old age. The authors of the law probably hoped that this would be the case, and none of them can be accused of ever having condemned or spoken against thrift. But there is a point at which the Pensions Act becomes hostile to thrift. For example, a man who has a capital of £50 has no inducement to put any more on one side, because

for each £15 he saves up he loses £1 of his annual pension. Similarly, a person having an income of £34 has no inducement to add to it, because for each £1 that he increases it he loses £1 of his pension. Mr. Lloyd gives a most life-like case of this kind: "You are not entitled to any kind of pension," said the magistrate, in his presence, to a claimant: "your income is more than a pound a week." "Thank you, sir," replied the latter, "it shall not happen again." And he went out, having summed up in a word the whole philosophy of the situation.

It is really very natural that people should strive to throw over to the State a burden which the State offers to bear. This, it would seem, is the attitude of many children who have to look after old parents whom they can perfectly well support; they prefer to give them nothing, or to give them just enough for the whole pension to be paid to them. Often the parents share in this little ruse, and when they are nearing the age of sixty-five, they squander their property or give it to their children. The Act, however, takes account of such cases, and relentlessly refuses help to anyone who may be convicted of having wilfully diminished his capital or income with the purpose of bringing himself within the conditions necessary to obtain a pension.

The majority in Parliament were not discouraged by these objections. It realised that the Act had its weak points, and it attempted to correct them. But it did not hesitate for a moment to confirm the principle, and it considered the trial that had been made of it completely satisfactory, for it passed an amendment making the Act perpetual. Indeed, no possible argument could ever, in a democracy, prevail against a measure of this

type. When Mr. Reeves defined it as a humanitarian measure, he said just the right thing. His judgment would have been even more exact if he had added that humanitarian measures are the strongest and the most necessary basis for democratic governments.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LAND LEGISLATION.

THE distribution of the soil and land legislation are questions of the first rank in a new and thinly peopled country like New Zealand. Eight hundred thousand inhabitants live at their ease in a colony as large as England and Scotland put together ; and many more are necessary to settle the whole country. Property there has not yet become crystallised, and the laws governing the tenure of land are destined to have immense influence on the economic development of the country.

As in most colonies, the decisions, regulations, and laws of every sort which bore on the land system, were remarkable from the beginning for their lack of firmness and stability. The whole history of the English in New Zealand may be traced in these vacillations. From the moment that a Parliament was set up, as Mr. Reeves points out, the land question has been the vital problem in politics, the touch-stone of parties, the source of innumerable contests, of never-ending manœuvre and intrigue. What New Zealand Member has not brought his stone to the building, his little Bill, long nurtured and thought over, only for it to be thrown like all the others into the ditch, where lie already a hundred

similar schemes? Every person, in fact, has had his panacea. When all the agrarian laws were to some extent codified in 1892, more than fifty-two separate Acts had to be repealed. It was at this period that an army of reformers appeared, of whom Mr. Reeves, who knew them well (for was he not one of them?), gives us an ironical and striking description: "To listen to them one would believe that they were practical men; they judge questions only in the light of their personal experience—which amounts to saying that each of them interprets the public interest according to the needs of his own circle, and shows absolute intolerance for every theory which is not his own."

This mob of such well-intentioned reformers and legislators need cause us no surprise, for, as it has been the working classes that have made New Zealand famous, so it has been the planting class that has made it rich, and this class forms to-day, more than ever, the nucleus of its population. Going back to the earliest days of the Colony we shall find that it is this class which has always most occupied the thoughts of the Government.

Actual colonisation took place long before the official occupation. It was only in 1840 that the English flag was planted in the Bay of Islands by Captain Hobson. But since 1823 a number of colonists had established themselves along the coast, and, entering into communication with the Maoris, had bought from them or seized enormous tracts of territory. No regulation, no law came to trouble them. Consequently, when an English occupation became likely, the speculators felt that the Golden Age was drawing to a close, and hastened to take advantage of its last moments by buying up millions of acres. It is estimated that in 1840 these

“ land-sharks ” had appropriated or pretended to have legally acquired twenty million acres, *i.e.* about a third of New Zealand.

The English authorities could not ratify such a state of things, for most of these purchases had only been veiled robberies, in which the Maori chiefs had been led to sign contracts which they could not understand. The Government found it necessary to institute a searching inquiry into these pretended properties, and considerable reductions were made in the lands which the colonists, or rather speculators, had acquired. But instead of giving back to the Maoris the lands of which they had been robbed, the Government appropriated them, and these were the first Crown lands.

The scandalous abuses of the twenty years preceding could not be renewed under a regularly constituted authority. In the treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 by Hobson and the Maori chiefs, the land question, together with the sovereignty, was the object of long debates. After endless speeches, as is the Maori habit, the chiefs made over the sovereignty of the country to the Queen of England, but insisted that the ownership of their own territories should be guaranteed to them. The Colonial Government reserved to itself the monopoly of acquiring their lands, and the Maoris undertook not to make over their property to any individual.

There were then at this time three classes of land : the Maori lands, Crown lands, and those whose ownership, acquired by colonists before 1840, had been recognised by the authorities. This system lasted twenty-two years, during which period the Government alone bought from the Maoris. But in 1862 it abandoned its monopoly, only to take it up again in 1894 by the Native Land Court Act. It never ceased, however, to buy up

lands, sometimes on a moderate scale, when its funds were low, sometimes on a large scale, when it was affluent. From 1870 to 1880 the policy prevailed of raising loans for public works and to encourage immigration. Large sums of money were spent in purchasing land, and special officials were appointed to go through the country and buy up land for the Government. There gradually arose in this way the territory of the State, which bears the name of Crown lands.

The Crown lands system is regulated at present by an Act of 1892 (The Land Act), which resumed and, in a way, codified all preceding legislation on the point. This Act, brought in by a Government with socialist tendencies or, more precisely, with tendencies to state-ownership, bears traces of the advanced ideas prevalent in New Zealand. It sets up a system of lease in perpetuity, under which the State always retains the ownership of the land. This provision is evidently inspired by the theories of Henry George on land nationalisation. But in this, as in every other sphere, we find the New Zealand reformers setting out with enthusiasm in the name of the loftiest principles, and we expect them to go right through with it and found a new heaven and earth. And then, to our surprise, they call a halt ; they change from revolutionaries into radicals ; and the pretended socialists become mere democrats.

In this way the movement in favour of land nationalisation in New Zealand stopped short, and became transformed into a crusade against large estates. This is, in fact, the whole point of the new legislation : to limit the area of Crown lands that one individual may acquire ; and in certain circumstances it even goes so far as to compel the large landowner to sell against his will. It is probable that in voting for this Bill the



labour party regarded it chiefly as a means for fighting capital. The Government, indeed, through the Minister for Labour, had no hesitation in making known its feelings on the point: "The Colony," said Mr. Reeves in the course of a debate, "does not want these large estates. Their owners should be the last to seek protection from the State. I regard large estates, whether partially in use or not at all, as a social pest, an obstacle to trade, and a barrier in the way of progress."<sup>1</sup> The great landowners thought these phrases a little severe, and Mr. Reeves had not many political friends among them; but popular feeling in the country warmly supported the minister, and, feeling that he was properly backed, he fearlessly attacked his opponents.

The result was curious. In order better to fight large estates, it was thought that the most effective tactics would be directly or indirectly to favour the small-holder. So that, in spite of the socialistic pretensions and the high-sounding words of the Act, the Government proceeded in the most open manner to combat socialism, by setting up a class of small owners, whom no one would suspect of collectivist ideas. The advent of the Ballance-Seddon Ministry then had the result of inaugurating an entirely novel agrarian policy.

The main idea of the earlier governments of the Colony had been that land must be sold to everyone who came, ceaselessly and without restriction or regulation. They thought that thus, in the natural course of immigration, the country would become inhabited and developed. So far this was all right. But no one had thought of the speculators, who always appear in a newly-opened country. The Government was not as careful as it should have been, and the land was

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by H. de R. Walker, *Australasian Democracy*, p. 91.

disposed of in any direction. Large tracts of the Crown lands were alienated, and about 1875 a few politicians began to be seriously alarmed at the formation of large estates. In 1891, 584 individuals or societies owned seven million acres.

It was then that the Ballance-Seddon Ministry attacked the problem, only to settle it in the democratic spirit of which we spoke above. The great point in the debate was the question whether Crown lands should ever be sold, even to the smallest colonist. The radicals regretted that the smallest portion of Crown territory should ever be definitely lost and become private property ; while the conservatives protected this principle of private property. A compromise followed, and now the Government can dispose of Crown lands in several ways, which we give below :

The buyer has to choose between three systems : sale, pure and simple ; lease, with a purchasing power ; and lease in perpetuity.

Under the system of sale pure and simple, one-fifth of the price must be paid on the spot, and the rest within a month. But the buyer does not become the owner, in the full sense of the word, unless certain conditions of improvement and residence are fulfilled. For it is really essential, in the colonies, that lands should not be scattered broadcast among pseudo-colonists, who often have no interest in developing them ; and this clause has become classical in almost all colonial legislation.

In the " lease with a purchasing power," the rent is fixed at 5 per cent. of the value of the land, and, the lease being for twenty-five years, the lessee has the right of purchase after ten years, at the price arranged in the beginning.

These two systems are not new, and have nothing in them of a socialistic or even original nature. But in setting up the third system, lease in perpetuity, the legislators of 1892 were evidently influenced by certain socialistic doctrines. For twenty years the formula "land nationalisation" had great popularity in New Zealand; and it found its way into legislation with the lease in perpetuity. Under this system the State retains the ownership of the land, and only gives to the occupier a lease of 999 years, really an everlasting lease. The rent is 4 per cent. of the value of the land, and is not afterwards subject to any alteration, which is a great advantage for the lessee. In these circumstances his rights are practically equivalent to those of ownership, but he can enter into possession without laying down any capital, so that the very poorest are enabled to set to work and cultivate the soil without having recourse to a loan.

Under the two latter systems (lease with a purchasing power and lease in perpetuity), as in the first, the lessee must observe certain conditions of improvement and of residence. He must, for example, build a habitable house, clear uncultivated ground and cultivate it when it is cleared; in a word, he must reside in a real manner, and must show his presence by making productive that portion of the soil which he occupies. This excludes the speculator who only buys to sell again, without interesting himself in the least in making the land productive.

But the Act does not only exclude the speculator; it directly prevents the formation of large estates. A clause in the Land Act of 1892 limits the area of Crown lands that one individual can acquire to 640 acres of first-class land, and 2000 acres of second-class. This

limit is a maximum, and the Government may reduce it at pleasure. This is the explanation of the State's interest in keeping or adding to the Crown lands. It cannot prevent a small landowner from selling his property to a richer one and thus helping to form large estates. But, now that the State itself owns the greater part of the land, and will later on, perhaps, own almost all in the Colony, it is easy for it to refuse to sell to any individual who is already too powerful, and thus effectively to control the conditions of land tenure.

It is easy to see that enmity to large estates is at the bottom of all this legislation. At the present day it is very difficult for them to grow larger. Every year the Government puts at the disposal of the colonists, either by sale or by lease in perpetuity, some of the Crown lands available; and during the last ten years the amount of Crown lands thus disposed of totalled from two to three million acres. The number of colonists thus given a stake in the land was between two and three thousand each year.

As the Land Act has been in force since 1892 its results may now be examined; and in particular we may inquire which of the three systems of purchase was most advantageous to the colonists. The statistics for 1902 are as follows:

Sales outright, - - -	237,	amounting to	26,739	acres.
Leases with purchasing power, 447,	„		128,893	„
Leases in perpetuity, - - 241,	„		65,468	„ <sup>1</sup>

It may be seen from these figures that the second system of purchase is still the most popular, and that the New Zealander prefers absolute ownership to the other contrivances offered by the Government.

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 491.

But the Seddon ministry did not stop there. Having taken up the formula "The Land for the State," it devoted its attention to another formula: "The Land for the People." To make it easy for the colonist to acquire land is a serious and important problem in colonial policy. Every year some thousands of immigrants arrive in New Zealand and ask either for lands or for work. To these new-comers must be added such of the unemployed as the Department for Labour has been unable to place. It is therefore necessary to find some practical means of setting up people who have little or no capital. The experiments made with this purpose in view have been very interesting.

Small farm associations, village settlements and improved farm settlements were some of the expedients proposed to make it easier for people without capital to get on their feet.

The Act authorises and encourages, under the name of small farm associations, associations of at least twelve persons for the purpose of acquiring between them a certain tract of land. When the purchase has been made, roads are mapped out, and then the land is divided into sections which are distributed by lot among the associates. Then the association comes to an end, and each person is once more free, having had the advantage of not being isolated and the chance of securing a really good lot.

The system of village settlement is very similar. But under this latter system the Government advances to the colonists the capital necessary for preliminary expenses. Village settlements have up to the present given good results wherever their position has been well chosen. The colonists who settle on them usually devote a part of their time to husbandry; and the rest

of the time they hire themselves out either as sheep-shearers or as day-labourers. The isolation of the village presents a serious obstacle to such a class of colonists, and that explains the failure of many settlements of this type which were placed too far within the bush.

The improved farm settlements were intended to provide labour for the unemployed and if possible to give them a stake in the land. From time to time, when unemployment makes itself particularly felt, the Government selects a certain tract of waste land and sends the unemployed workmen to occupy it. They receive wages for clearing the land, and then, when it is ready for cultivation, they are given the land, which they themselves have prepared, on perpetual lease. This is a very ingenious system, which has the double advantage of being a remedy for unemployment, and of setting up on the land people who are more or less a burden on society. It cannot, however, be said that up to the present this experiment has been an undoubted success. "The results vary." To quote the Land Department Report, "In the province of Auckland the villages are not very flourishing, while at Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington a large proportion of these settlements promise to become financially autonomous."

The great difficulty is to keep out of the towns men who are not especially attracted to the land, and who are not always industrious and hard-working. The personal worth of the settler is consequently a factor of supreme importance. Lord Onslow, formerly Governor of New Zealand, gives a striking example of this in a work called *State Socialism and Labour Government in Antipodean Britain*. "I visited," he writes, "two of

these settlements which had been founded in similar conditions and in the same district. One of them had been formed by the voluntary association of industrious workmen, under an able leader ; the other by a mixed enough crowd of unemployed (settlers from necessity rather than vocation), who met for the first time on the ship which brought them to the spot where their settlement was to be. Their work brought them enough to live on, it is true ; but they had spent a large portion of the money which the Government had lent to them, at the nearest shop, and that in the purchase of objects which they would have been perfectly able to provide for themselves. Contrary to their agreement, they made a great outcry that the Government should get them out of the hole into which it had led them. The other community seemed satisfied . . .”—there follows an idyllic and pleasing picture.

Lord Onslow mentions another successful case. “ Twenty years ago, a fairly large Norwegian settlement was made on a similar plan. Each family received 40 acres. At this time the land was covered with bush, and there was not a single European within a radius of 20 miles. But the Government had begun to make a road to go through and clear the bush, and these settlers were employed on the work. Now the bush has been cleared and the land converted into pasturage which can support four sheep to the acre. With two exceptions, all of the original settlers are still there.”

These instances serve to show the conditions necessary for healthy and prosperous colonisation. We see that the personal element is more important than the legal position in which the settler is placed. The failure of certain settlements of unemployed proves nothing against the Government's experiments, any more than

the success of others counts in their favour. Small farm associations, village settlements and improved farm settlements are a great help to industrious settlers ; but they are of small value to others.

Up to now we have only seen, as it were, the preventive side of the Government's agrarian policy. It was not enough to prevent the formation of large estates ; there were some already in existence, and the reformers of the Seddon ministry had recourse to weapons most fitted to destroy them. These weapons are the Land Tax and the forced purchase of large estates.

In 1891 the old scheme of direct taxation was completely revised, in such a way as to favour the small landowner at the expense of the great. The old tax of a penny in the pound on all property, of whatsoever kind, was replaced by a twofold tax, on land and on income. The democratic principles of aiding and exempting the small-holder were, of course, introduced into this legislation.

Here we are only interested in the land tax. Its authors never denied that this was a fighting measure. "The progressive tax," Mr. Reeves told the House, "is a warning to the large landowners. They should regard it as a proof that the Colony has had enough of them . . ." and, continuing in the same tone, the Minister for Labour spoke of large estates as a social pest. This tax is based on a graduated scale. The small landowners pay nothing ; the whole burden is laid on the rich. Below £500 there is no tax. From £500 to £5000 the tax is a penny in the pound. From £10,000 to £15,000 the rate increases to 1½d. in the pound. And so on by successive steps till the tax reaches a maximum of 2d. in the pound for an estate worth £210,000.

To this must be added the tax on the absentee pro-



prietor. Landowners who are absent from the Colony for three years are subject to an addition of 20 per cent. to the graduated tax.

Under this system buildings, hedges and all improvements are exempt—George's idea was that only the land should be taxed. The number of persons who are liable to the land tax has grown considerably smaller in consequence of the new régime. There are more than 110,000 landowners in New Zealand. The £313,000 brought in by the land tax is paid by only 17,500 of these.<sup>1</sup> The Government congratulates itself on these figures, and indeed such a system could not but be irritating to the absentee and to the great landowner. More than one property has tended to disintegrate in order to avoid the heavy land tax, while the small-holder only pays a nominal amount.

The income tax, framed on the same model, has results similarly favourable to the working man and unfavourable to capital. By this clever policy, which we may consider to be at once a policy of principle and of expediency, the Seddon ministry were skilful enough to satisfy at the same time both the peasant and the working man, and thus to unite, to form one majority, two classes which are seldom found to agree in supporting the same government.

The second method of attack on large landowners was the forced purchase of their lands. The Government, it is true, could do as it liked with the Crown lands, but that was not always enough; the best lands had been snapped up long before, and small settlers in search of an estate had often to go far away and content themselves with inferior lands, although, quite close to towns or to the sea, there were large fertile tracts of

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 515.

territory that had hardly been touched. The legislation introduced in 1862 had allowed purchase by individuals and speculators ; and, as anyone could get into direct communication with the Maoris, vast tracts of land had been alienated. Many of the purchasers took no interest in making the land productive, but quietly awaited the time when the general development of the Colony would allow them to resell the land at an immense profit. While they were waiting, they put a few sheep out to graze and spent half their own time in Europe. Here was the classic large scale landlordism, with its abuses and its dangers, which were the more threatening in such a young Colony. The Seddon ministry hastened to deal with this state of things. Its first step was to try to make it impossible in the future for new estates of this size to spring up ; and then it busied itself with the destruction of the existing large estates, by means of the land tax on one hand, and on the other by the measure now before us.

The idea is, to buy in the large estates and divide them into lots of 320 acres at most. This is a very natural and very wise policy ; but what gives it its peculiarly bold character is the amendment of 1894,<sup>1</sup> in virtue of which the State has in certain cases the right to force the large landowners to sell. The price is determined on by a commission, composed of a judge of the Supreme Court and two assessors, one nominated by the Government and the other by the vendor. It is a species of expropriation.

No public feeling was aroused by it. As far as I could gather from numerous conversations, even in conservative circles, the New Zealanders have a much more social, a much less rigid, conception of property than

<sup>1</sup> The Act was consolidated in 1900.

that held by the "citizens" of Europe. They accept expropriation not only when it is necessary, but whenever it is for the public good. If a large landowner does not cultivate his lands, public opinion thinks it quite right that he should be forced to sell in order to make way for a crowd of settlers. The extreme opposition supporters of private property hardly exist in New Zealand.

The ultimate result of a law such as this might well be the nationalisation of the soil. But the colonials, radicals as well as conservatives, do not look so far ahead, and care little for principles and their logical consequences. Once the practical and immediate results are good, they want no more. It is for this reason that the great landowners of New Zealand accepted this clause in the Act of 1894, however strange it may appear. They protested against the land tax, as may be supposed. But the Government was able to make use of the complaints of these great tax-payers to induce them to sell. If they thought that they were being taxed beyond their means, they could force the Government to take over their property, at the price which they as owners had fixed as the basis on which the land tax was assessed. It was a very clever device, and one which gave the Government an advantage in every case. If the owner sells, the Government fulfils its policy by adding to the Crown lands. If the owner does not sell, he dare not put too low a valuation on his property, in view of possible sales in the future, and there again the Government comes in.

As a matter of fact, the position in which it places the large landowners is not a very enviable one, as is apparent from the hurry with which they wish to sell. It must, however, be confessed that these unwilling

vendors are really quite satisfied. A rich and solvent purchaser like the State is not to be found every day, and, as the purchaser is insatiable, he is a wonderful client for anyone who wishes to get rid of his property to have dealings with. And this is the attitude of many wealthy people. Instead of viewing the State as a kind of dangerous ogre who threatens to devour them, they look on it as a business-like government, which comes forward with its ready money, and buys from them what no one else would have been likely to buy. It is a remarkably English point of view; politics are forgotten, and it becomes simply a question of business. So that up to the present the Act has been most successful. There have been very few forced sales, all the others being voluntary.

Purchases have been made year by year on a more advanced scale. The Act of 1892 limited the amount to be expended yearly on the purchase of large estates to £50,000. The Act of 1894 raised the amount to £250,000; and an amendment in 1897 raised it to double that figure, so that now the Government has authority to spend £500,000 yearly on the purchase of land.<sup>1</sup>

The Ballance-Seddon ministry were the inaugurators of this policy. Since 1891, and more especially since 1894, the Minister for Land set himself to discover large estates to purchase, and this policy has been pursued without relaxation. The most notable purchase was that of the Cheviot Estate, the owner of which forced the Government to acquire it. The result was that the State found itself in possession of an extensive territory of 84,000 acres, well-situated and quite accessible, which it had acquired for £300,000. Under its former owner it

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, pp. 493-494.

had had only forty inhabitants—a flagrant instance of the danger of such properties. The Government induced 310 settlers to occupy it, either owners or farmers, who with their families make a population of over 1000 human beings on the Cheviot Estate.

Summing up the transactions since 1892 we find that up to the 31st March, 1902, the State had acquired a total area of 448,350 acres, of which 386,529 acres had been farmed out to 2033 settlers. The 448,350 acres mentioned above represented 107 large estates. The total expenditure of the Government amounted to £2,229,128, of which £2,117,352 was for the purchase of land, and £111,776 for road construction, surveying and laying it out generally. The charges for interest and for the circulation of loans amounted to £213,828 ; while the total revenue up to 31st March, 1902, was £303,105, showing a profit balance of £89,277.

So long as the rents are regularly paid the Government benefits by the transaction. From the point of view of colonisation also the result is extremely good, for it makes it possible to replace the former immense prairies by a real and infinitely more remunerative cultivation, and to establish on the land a number of settlers who would otherwise have had to look for an estate in some inaccessible corner of the Colony.

If we now inquire into the general characteristics of this legislation we shall find two opposite tendencies. On the theoretical side, what strikes us most are the headings of chapters, the high-sounding phrases which attract our attention—nationalisation of land, lease in perpetuity, limitation of large estates, expropriation. It is true that the legislators who secured the passing of these Acts had no sympathy for inherited wealth, and no doubt many of them thought land nationalisation

desirable. But it was a long way to go from this to the most extreme consequences of their theories; and here we can see to the life the true New Zealand attitude, more careful of practice than of theory; business-like rather than thoroughly socialistic.

Every day the Government adds to the Crown lands; but is land nationalisation making any real progress in New Zealand? This is a question that may well be asked. The policy of the Government consists more in preventing the formation of new wealth than in destroying existing wealth. It is hostile to the large landowner, but it fosters the small one, and is in reality rather democratic than socialistic. In fact, the result of its work is the very opposite of socialistic. Is it socialistic to change exploitation on a large scale into exploitation by a multitude of less powerful men? This was all that the French Revolution did. Is it socialistic to establish small-holders on the Crown lands and make them to all intents and purposes owners? Is it socialistic to create a class of small cultivators whose interests might well differ at some point from those of the workers in the large industries?

If we must somehow qualify the policy of the Seddon ministry, we must call it democratic, and reserve the name of socialism for reforms much wider and indeed much more pretentious than those of Mr. Seddon and his colleagues.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE STATE AND AGRICULTURAL LOANS.

POLITICAL life in New Zealand, under the Seddon ministry, may be summed up as a continual and never-varying dialogue between the electors and the Government, between the faithful and their God. The former, in beseeching tones, whose humility hardly covers their menace, clamour for help and assistance; the latter, to avoid losing his worshippers, gives all that he can, and scatters in profusion the benefits of the State. There are two classes of people who are more especially powerful and clever enough to gain some advantage from this situation: the workmen and the small-holders.

We have already seen, several times, that whenever they demanded a reform they did not ask in vain. The workmen gained a great deal; but the settler was no less successful. We shall find a new proof of this in a measure the most original, the most *colonial*, as a bold and practical device, that was ever taken by the liberal-labour cabinet from the time when it became the devoted servant of the poor and lowly.

The Act authorising the State to advance money directly to the settlers, passed in 1894,<sup>1</sup> met an urgent agricultural need at a time of crisis which was not

<sup>1</sup> The Government Advances to Settlers Act, 1894.

peculiar to New Zealand, and which made the situation of a large number of settlers extremely precarious. The difficulty of borrowing at a reasonable rate is indeed one of the greatest obstacles which the agriculturists of all countries find before them. At the Antipodes the problem is more difficult to solve than perhaps anywhere else. For in these distant colonies, with their as yet scanty supplies of men and capital, credit is naturally scarce and expensive. It is not always that money can be raised in the distant and isolated districts over which a great part of the population is scattered. If there does happen to be money, it is generally in the hands of some rich man who takes advantage of the situation and reduces his unfortunate debtors to a miserable state of dependence. But that is only one side of the problem, and many people would be inclined to pass over these difficulties. Often, however, the actual conditions of credit are so onerous that anyone who needs it simply cannot think of it.

About 1894, the position of the New Zealand settler, with regard to this special question of credit, was lamentable. As we just said, capital is by no means abundant in Australasia. It has to be found in England—a long and costly search. It must be supposed that the English capitalist lends his money to some London bank or society, and that this institution then gets into communication with a colonial agency; but at any rate before the money reaches the hands of the ultimate borrower the number of intermediaries who have to make profits is enormous, and the New Zealand planter, who more than anyone else needs cheap money, has to pay a ruinous rate of interest on the loan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Reeves, "Colonial Governments as Money Lenders," *National Review*, December, 1900.



This state of things had for long been chronic in Australasia. Mr. Reeves said that for forty years past it had been quite a common thing to find Australasian cattle-owners paying up to 15 per cent. for advances on their crops or cattle. Such rates of interest were perhaps not openly charged; but to an interest of say 10 per cent. there would be an additional charge for commission of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., made twice a year. From 1850 to 1870, again on Mr. Reeves's authority, the rate of loans on mortgages varied between 7 and 9 per cent. By about 1890 it had fallen to about 7 per cent., but only when the guarantee was first rate. In 1895 a Government Inquiry showed that the rates for loans on mortgages were at least 6 to 8 per cent., and in some cases were as high as 9 or 10 per cent. It was quite exceptional to be able to raise money at 5 per cent.

It must be confessed that these bad conditions of credit were hardly noticed so long as things went well and prices were high. However exorbitant the rate of interest was it was paid easily and without much complaint, because there was a good market for produce at high prices. But after 1890 the effects of a general lowering in prices began to be severely felt by the New Zealand settlers. The rates of interest mentioned above, which were easily borne in prosperous times, quickly became an unbearable charge; prices had fallen low enough to make the sale of meat, corn, and butter hardly remunerative; and yet the banks refused to lower their rates. The discontented borrowers found, as is always the case in such circumstances, that something had to be done.

At this point, the settlers remembered that, though they were the clients of the capitalists, yet they them-

selves had in their power a docile client who was otherwise powerful, the State. After all, they themselves were the State, and in the political condition of the country they had only to speak to ensure hearing and obedience. In opening this chapter we remarked on the electoral power of the farmers. This is the opinion of Mr. Reeves, who knew them well, on the point: "The farmer and the sheep-owner are not merely economically of greater importance than in England, they are also more powerful in politics. The globe-trotter is told in the clubs of Australasia that the working man rules the colonies. The artisan and the shearer no doubt have their say in public affairs; but, one year with another, they are less powerful than the tillers and graziers." <sup>1</sup>

As soon as the New Zealander finds himself faced with any sort of difficulty, he turns to the State. Thus, in 1893, there was a unanimous petition made by the planters to the Seddon ministry. The matter did not long hang fire; in 1894 the Act we are now discussing was passed, and in May, 1895, it came into force.

The governing idea of this law is simple and practical. Thanks to its credit, the New Zealand Government could borrow in London at a much cheaper rate than any private capitalist or even any association. Why should it not put the money thus obtained directly and without any middle-men at the disposal of the settlers, charging a reasonable rate of interest? Such was the reply to the planters' demand for cheap money.

Parliament approved this scheme, and authorised the Government to raise in London, at a maximum rate of 4 per cent. a loan of three million pounds, to be completed in two years. The transaction was promptly

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Article quoted.

made : in May, 1895, a 3 per cent. loan of £1,500,000 was opened in London. This sum did not come in as quickly as had been expected, and the raising of the balance of the three millions was further delayed by two successive amendments.

The money was then in New Zealand, borrowed at the very low rate of 3 per cent. What was to be done with it ? Here we enter upon the practical application of the Act. The distribution of the money was, as may be supposed, a very difficult affair. To effect this distribution a special department was opened, called The Advances to Settlers Office. This office is controlled by an official with the title of superintendent. He works in conjunction with a Board, composed of high officials, whose duty it is to supervise the working of the scheme.

The work of the office consists in distributing the money among the borrowers, according to conditions laid down by the Act. The loans are made on a first mortgage on lands used for cultivation, sheep-rearing, or gardening. The borrowers may be either absolute owners, or may have Crown lands on a lease in perpetuity. The minimum amount advanced is £25 ; the maximum £3000. A person wishing to borrow has only to present himself at the nearest post office. There he can read the following notice, which details exactly the conditions of the loan :

#### ADVANCES TO SETTLERS.

The Department of State for Advances to Settlers has funds to loan on mortgages, in sums of from £25 to £3000, on land owned or held on perpetual lease and used in agriculture, dairying, farming or gardening.

The borrowers have the right to repay the loan partially or in full at any time. Fixed loans are made, on

a guarantee, for any period under 10 years, and instalment loans for  $36\frac{1}{2}$  years. The interest is 5 per cent. plus 1 per cent. towards redemption.

All the charges are very moderate. No brokerage or commission.

Forms are ready at all post offices, and the borrower has only to fill them in.

At the same time he is given an envelope which goes through the post free, so that his application costs him absolutely nothing. The form, when filled in, is forwarded to the superintendent, who, however, has not full authority to grant the loan, but must refer the application to the Board. The Board satisfies itself as to the value of the property mortgaged, and then authorises or refuses the advance.

The loans are of two kinds. According to the first, the advance is made with a definite period for repayment of not more than ten years, at the rate of 5 per cent. ; this system is little used. According to the second, the loan is redeemed by fixed and regular instalments which fall due at the same time as the interest : as soon as the loan is made the repayment commences. In this case, instead of paying 5 per cent., or just the interest, he pays 6 per cent., the additional percentage going towards the redemption of the loan. As soon as the repayment begins, that is to say, immediately, the amount due automatically becomes less, so that, of the 6 per cent. paid, the part placed to the redemption of the loan becomes larger, and the part charged as interest becomes smaller. The loan is thus redeemed in thirty-six years, by 72 half-yearly instalments.

The other expenses on the transaction are extremely moderate. The fees for inspection and valuation of the

property offered as security amount to 10s. 6d. for £100, one guinea for £250, £1 11s. 6d. for £500, and two guineas for any larger amount. The mortgage fees are hardly any larger. Consistent efforts have been made to make it easy for the settler to avail himself of these loans. The payments may be made at any post office, which is a great convenience to the borrower.

According to the *New Zealand Official Year Book* of 1902, the loans effected by the Advances Office, since the passing of the Act, were as follows: from the 23rd of February, 1895, to the 31st of March, 1902, the Supervising Board, whose duty it is to examine the applications for loans, authorised 11,312, representing a total of £3,736,620. The total amount of advances applied for was £4,253,000. 1450 applicants refused the sums offered them by the Board, thinking them too small. After deducting these refusals, the number of advances made only amounted to 9862, with a total value of £3,073,685.<sup>1</sup> The greater part of these loans (about 60 per cent.) were made in order to repay debts contracted at a rate higher than 5 per cent.

There can be no doubt whatever as to the consequences of this Act. Its results were excellent, and it was of real assistance to the planters. Thanks to it, they were enabled to pass through a critical period which would otherwise have been fatal to many of them. But can we then regard these advances to the settlers as an exceptional and temporary expedient, used in view of special circumstances, and only destined to last as long as the crisis for which it was devised? Knowing the mind of colonial statesmen we can say that these advances to the settlers were resorted to merely as an expedient and without any thought of

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 511.

socialism. We know that in Australasia it is customary to turn to the Government to ask for help and encouragement. Here once again this was done, much more with the intention of finding money than of making an experiment in up-to-date politics.

It is true that, as usual, theory came after practice, and the commentators explained the matter according to their bent. Let us see what Mr. Reeves, who has the advantage of being at once a man of action and a lover of theoretical explanation, has to say on the subject. For him the advances to settlers were more than an expedient: "This Act," he says, "is meant to be permanent. It is not intended to be a mere exertion of public generosity, put forward to enable some deserving class to tide over some short, sharp crisis. It is to be a new sphere of State activity, a complete and lasting assumption by the State of the part of money-lender. The community has entered into permanent competition with the private usurer. So long as the Government can borrow money at something like current rates, it is not likely that lenders on mortgage in the colonies will have much chance of seeing rates rise; State competition will keep them down to very near their present level."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Reeves's opinion is very interesting. We know him already as a fervent State socialist, and his opinion need not astonish us. But shall we say that these words are an accurate representation of what the New Zealanders actually thought? Not in the least. Mr. Reeves is no doubt right in saying that these State loans to the settlers are now a permanent institution. But the reason he gives for this does not seem to me to be the true one. The New Zealanders are not State

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Article cited.

socialists like Mr. Reeves. The logical development of Government intervention seems to leave them cold enough. What they want is some practical advantage. The Act of 1894 gives them this, and that is the reason why they will not repeal it.

The State, then, will not abandon this new sphere of activity which circumstances have given to it. It is the less likely to abandon it because the Act of 1894, besides rendering undoubted service to a large class of people with small means, also openly attacks another class which the New Zealanders have never regarded with favour—the class of capitalists. The latter may complain; but no one pays any attention. “A small group of capitalists was furious, very naturally,” Mr. Lloyd writes, “but it is not this class which manages the administration of New Zealand.”<sup>1</sup> It is thus that little by little the State is taking the place and the power which but lately belonged to the richest section in the community.

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd, *Newest England*, p. 505.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE GOVERNMENT AND IMMIGRATION

THERE was a time in new countries like Australasia and America when any immigrant was received with open arms. He was not only induced to come: he was welcomed in a thousand ways, and jealous attentions were lavished on him. Far from being asked whether he brought with him any capital besides his arms and his energy, he was given all that he needed, and he was benevolently placed on land which the State often presented to him, if he could not pay for it himself. As for his antecedents, no questions were asked. This guest, so kindly received, was in those days thought to be a necessary and essential factor for prosperity, a factor for which one could never pay too dearly. The man was taken at his worth whenever he cared to present himself.

How times have changed ! This immigrant, who but lately was everywhere welcome, is now in most cases treated as an intruder and a vagabond who would have done better to remain in his native land, rather than to come to share the bread of the settlers who are senior to him. Every sort of defect is rigorously hunted out, where formerly his most terrible crimes were gladly passed over. As a rule he is very grudgingly admitted,



and sometimes he is straightway put again on board the ship in which he had come and requested to return on the path to his former abode. This is what the legendary hospitality of new countries has come to.

The policy of the Australasian colonies did not fail to be influenced by these new ideas. It is a long time now since their governments ceased to subsidise immigration, regarding it as more harmful than useful; and New Zealand followed the general tendency. It never conceals the small amount of enthusiasm with which the arrival of new citizens inspires it, and its protectionism applies to men as well as to things.

We shall briefly sum up the different phases through which colonisation in New Zealand has passed, in order to get a better idea of the kind of problem which immigration presents to-day. At first, that is to say, from 1800 to 1835 or 1840, colonisation was purely individual and irregular. A few isolated sailors, adventurers and pirates cruised along the coasts of the two islands and got into communication with the Maoris, less for the purpose of establishing themselves in the country than of making an opening for trade and, if possible, for theft and piracy. Then came the annexation to England, followed by a period of more methodical working. First, the New Zealand Company, under the auspices of Gibbon Wakefield, established some settlers at Port Nicholson, and thus helped to people the Northern Island. A little later, about 1848, a Scottish Presbyterian Society founded Dunedin; and in 1850 a colony of English Anglicans was formed at Christchurch. This was the principal epoch in the colonisation of New Zealand; towns sprang up from the ground, and the population was already sufficiently numerous to endure the terrible wars against

the Maoris which stained the land with blood up to 1870.

From that time New Zealand became organised and autonomous. It was no longer a mere dependent Colony, but a real nation formed and existing by itself. The land, however, was not sufficiently peopled or cultivated. Then it was that Sir Julius Vogel inaugurated a policy of loans and public works which with extraordinary consistency was maintained till 1888. The idea was to raise loans to undertake a series of public works which were necessary for the development of the country; and to encourage immigration by providing subsidies and special facilities. The different ministries which succeeded to power from 1870 to 1890 remained faithful to this programme. The debt grew with alarming rapidity; but at the same time the number of railways increased, roads were constructed across the country, harbours were improved, the population was tripled: and meanwhile trade steadily improved. This was the period of the real economic development of New Zealand. Business men were at the head of affairs, and their first care was to make the Colony valuable, relegating questions of politics to the second place.

About 1890 new tendencies came to light, and economic requirements gave place to political and social demands. Attention was given rather to ensuring the well-being of one class in the State than to the development of the land as a whole. The labour party, all-powerful through its alliance with the liberal party, showed a new spirit of exclusivism and of self-protection against the outsider. It was not long before the workmen began to eye with disfavour State immigration, which brought new hands into the Colony and

threatened to bring about a lowering of wages. They did not believe that an increased population does not necessarily mean a reduced wage, and they remained tied to the narrow and widely-held belief that there are definite amounts both of labour and of wages, and that it was to their interest to divide these among as few people as possible.

The Seddon ministry, so submissive to the working man, allowed itself to be entirely influenced by these tendencies. In 1891 the subsidies to immigration were abolished, and they have not since been re-established. There is always, however, a minister for immigration, who is also in charge of public education, poor law relief and hospitals ; but I do not imagine that he finds the first of these duties very exhausting. Having had the honour to meet him, I asked him what he did for immigration. His reply may be summed up in one word : Nothing. For that matter, he would be more likely to be employed in preventing immigration ; for public opinion has declared so directly against the arrival of newcomers that a minister is sure to be approved of if he ruthlessly closes the door of the Colony.

There is nothing surprising in such a policy : it springs from a very human egoism, and reasons which have every appearance of wisdom can be brought forward in its support. Mr. Reeves, who was one of the apostles of the anti-immigration movement, knew how to justify his point of view with much skill and persuasion. We shall sum up in a few pages his theory on the subject, as he expressed it in an article in the *Review of Reviews*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> " Why I introduced the Undesirable Immigrants Bill," *Review of Reviews*, January, 1895.

For some ten years past New Zealand had been actively occupied in finding a remedy for the chronic malady of the Old World—unemployment. In the end it had been successful enough—so successful that immigrants came in from all countries to share the enviable lot of the New Zealand working man. Although these newcomers were not always in distress, yet most of them were workers looking for employment; and the Colony's power of absorption was not large enough for it to be able to assimilate them all. The result was the reappearance of misery and unemployment. A Government, whose first aim was to ensure the well-being of the population even at the cost of the country's industrial development, could not put up with this state of things. It is true that the New Zealand State did not formally recognise the right to work, but it did recognise it morally, and it looked on the presence of unemployed workmen as a reproach and a cause for remorse. It therefore did everything in its power to give work to everyone. But if the natural laws of population and of emigration came in each time to destroy its work, it would get no further than did Sisyphus or the Danaïdes.

Besides, there are settlers and settlers. Some are in earnest, and want to do well; these bring with them a little capital, which is enough to set them up and to make them prosper. We mentioned above, in speaking of the agrarian laws, the case of a group of Norwegians who have been most successful, and who will be in a few years, if they are not already, genuine New Zealanders, and a real life-force in the country. As the colonies grow more thickly peopled, as colonial questions are better studied, and as political experience becomes wider, this species of settler is more sought after, to the

exclusion of the other. The other species is composed of men, perhaps honest, who bring their hands and their good-will, but who, being penniless, are unable to start on their own account, and have to find work to earn themselves a living. They are not too low for the function which they want to fill; but the natural result of their presence is to diminish the chances of finding work for the people already in the country, and to create the problem of unemployment or to aggravate it if it already exists.

Again, the Colony has to consider itself fortunate if the problem arises with regard to honest hard-working people; for, to use Mr. Reeves's forcible expression, it is its moral and physical rubbish that Europe is most ready to ship to the Antipodes. "It is to the colonies," writes the Agent-General of New Zealand, in a fit of temper, which one can understand, "that the clerk who has stolen from his employer, and whose friends have privately repaid the theft, is sent; the drunkard or the gambler whose relations are prepared to pay for his passage to get rid of him; the idiot, who is just not violent enough to be put in an asylum; the invalid given up by the doctors. . . . All these wrecks are thrown on to colonial shores." When a colony is first founded, when it must at any cost be peopled, any material is good, and such settlers may be used for want of better. Later on, when the new society begins to settle down, when the life of wood and camp gives place to a regular, moral, and policed existence, these outcasts become a real danger, and every colony does well in keeping them as far off as it can.

"Not many years ago," Mr. Reeves ends, "a white working man, in good health, neither obviously criminal

nor obviously vicious, was a welcome guest in this part of the world. Such a man was regarded, and with reason, as an addition to the national wealth of the land in which he landed. Certain colonies borrowed largely and spent without reckoning to induce workers to come. But in those days cultivable lands awaited arms to develop them: they were inexhaustible and labour was scarce. Now conditions are absolutely reversed. The land is still there, but in most cases it is occupied or locked up. While the number of acres has not increased, the workers have multiplied. For the lands which remain free, there are more applicants than the promptest and most strenuous of governments could satisfy. The low prices, with which all producing countries must reckon nowadays, do not improve the situation, since they do not increase, but on the contrary decrease, the demand for labour. In these circumstances it is allowable to say that a Bill which protects the workers and the taxpayers of a little industrial community against the possible invasion of poverty, sickness, crime, folly and barbarism, is neither a foolish nor a ridiculous measure. If those who are responsible for the life and health of the people of New Zealand did not consider it their duty to watch over the comfort and happiness of their fellow-citizens, if ever they were ready to let strangers land on their shores, look after themselves, swim or sink, live or perish, according to their fate, there would be no need to legislate against immigration. But a democratic community which refuses to let human beings die of hunger, and whose conscience revolts against the sufferings of the unfortunate, or even against the spectacle of enforced idleness, must choose with care those whom she takes as her

associates, and for whose well-being she becomes responsible.”<sup>1</sup>

Such were the ideas of the Government, systematised and a little idealised by the clear and unfettered mind of Mr. Reeves. There is certainly something undoubtedly true in this conception of immigration. But the inferences which one may be led to draw from it are dangerous ; for though they are intended to preserve the purity of the land, these new principles minister in an alarming way not so much to the interests of the workmen as to their egoism. Mr. Reeves did not dwell on this side of the question ; but the trade unionists who supported him would hardly have cared about lofty moral and political principles, and had evidently only the one end of keeping up the rate of wages by making labour scarce. Mr. Reeves, in his sincere patriotism, wanted to keep his little country free from outside taint ; he preferred a small and happy New Zealand to a New Zealand rich and powerful but badly governed. He seems to have feared contagion from Europe and from the evil associations of the continents. This was a doubly insular state of mind, and one which makes us remember that we have before us a British citizen. The workmen, too, hold this insular attitude, but in a more cynical way : “ There is a cake to be divided,” they think ; “ let us be as few as possible when the division comes.”

The doctrines of the rulers, then, were in marvellous agreement with the desires of the ruled ; and they were soon put into practice, to such an extent that New Zealand furnishes us to-day with the extraordinary spectacle of a Colony half the size of France which has under 900,000 inhabitants and does not want any more.

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *Review of Reviews*, January, 1895.

At the instance of Mr. Reeves, a Bill was brought into Parliament for restricting the immigration of certain settlers whom it qualified as undesirable. This Bill caused much ink to flow in England, America, and most of all in Australasia. The inhospitable tendencies of New Zealand were brought to light. So complete a collection of qualities was required of the immigrant that a humorist caused much amusement by saying that if Jesus Christ and his twelve Apostles were to come to New Zealand, they would certainly be classed as undesirable immigrants under the Act, and would be made to take the next boat out. But as a matter of fact there was nothing ridiculous in Mr. Reeves's proposal, nor was there anything for his fellow-citizens to be amused at. The Bill was merely the expression of the general feeling in the Colony that immigration was dangerous, a feeling which may be summed up in the classic phrase: New Zealand for the New Zealanders.

The Undesirable Immigrants Bill did not become law in the form in which its authors introduced it. The Home Government, through the governor, refused its sanction. But the principal provisions of the Bill successfully appeared in New Zealand legislation, and may be found especially in two laws, the Act to restrict Immigration, 1899,<sup>1</sup> and the Act dealing with Chinese Immigration, 1896.<sup>2</sup>

By the first of these Acts every immigrant not a member of the British Empire had before sailing to sign a printed form, on which he showed his business and place of origin. He had, moreover, to show that he had a capital of £100, plus £50 for each member of his

<sup>1</sup> Act to place certain restrictions on immigration into New Zealand, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese Immigrants Amendment Act, 1896.



family more than twelve years old whom he brought with him. No idiot or madman was to be allowed to land in New Zealand ; nor anyone suffering from a contagious disease, nor anyone who had been imprisoned during the two years preceding his embarkation.<sup>1</sup> Not only the immigrant himself, but also the captain of the ship which brought him, was liable to severe penalties for the violation of this law.<sup>2</sup> The Government, of course, retained the right to prevent immigration for reasons of State, so that the new-comer is never quite sure that he will be allowed to enter the Colony.

It is easy to see that such provisions open the door wide to despotism. The opponents of the Act did not fail to lay stress on this point, and, although their criticisms of the Government were sometimes unjust and scurrilous, it cannot be denied that their objections were on the whole well founded. With a law such as this, and with public opinion supporting its application, the minister or commissary administering it evidently acts as he thinks best, or, more precisely, as the influential electors who can bring pressure to bear on him wish. The employers, to whose interest it is to have cheap labour, know quite well that any of their efforts to secure it will be ruthlessly resisted and easily stopped. On the other hand, the New Zealand working men know just as well that they can count on definite assistance from the Government whenever there is question of restricting the importation of new labour into the Colony. This is indeed the true meaning of the Act, and its supporters, as well as its opponents, saw this at once.

Recent events have shown that the fears of the

<sup>1</sup> Act to place certain restrictions on immigration into New Zealand, Art. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Art. 7, £100 fine.

opposition were not vain, and that individual or collective immigration into New Zealand will in future meet with no great welcome.

From 1893, and more especially since 1898, Austrian workmen had come and settled in the Northern Island, above Auckland, to work at collecting the kauri gum, a kind of resin that abounds in that district. They were sober, hardy, hard-working people with few wants, who brought with them little or no capital and hardly anything but their energy. Finding that they could earn a livelihood they sent for their fellow-countrymen, and their number grew fast enough. The labour party and the Government were alarmed. This Austrian labour, unless something was done to stop it, would simply lower the scale of wages and drive out New Zealand labour from that whole part of the island. The members for the districts affected brought the question before Parliament, and called on the Government to do its duty, saying that the Colony could not be allowed to become a prey to the paupers of the Old World ; and that unless some energetic action were taken, existence would become impossible for the people of New Zealand, and that the whole district north of Auckland would fall into the hands of foreigners. The problem was thus simply stated : it was just a question of competition. The Austrians were not charged with any special vice, but merely with working too hard and too cheaply, and with thus making a competition disastrous to native labour. Numerous inquiries were made, and led to the passing of an Act to regulate the conditions of the kauri gum industry ;<sup>1</sup> native labour was strongly protected and the country was closed to any new invasion of labour.

<sup>1</sup> Kauri Gum Industry Act, 1898 ; Amend. Act, 1899.

In this nationalist and exclusive attitude there is nothing which is peculiar to New Zealand. European countries and the United States are not free from it. But the exclusivism that a thickly-peopled and already developed land can safely practise may well be dangerous in a Colony as yet nearly unoccupied, where also, as we shall see in a later chapter, the population is increasing at an extremely slow rate.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE GOVERNMENT AND THE YELLOW PERIL.

EUROPEAN immigration is looked on with disfavour in New Zealand ; but Chinese immigration raises absolute disgust, and public opinion has demanded and obtained the most Draconian measures against it. In fact, in New Zealand, and for that matter in the whole of Australasia, there is a real Asiatic question. China, that vast human reservoir, pours forth an unceasing stream of emigrants upon all the shores of the Pacific. California, Mexico, South America, the Hawaian Islands, the Philippines, the Sunda Islands, not to speak of Indo-China, which is actually colonised by them, have made the acquaintance of the Chinese. No climate daunts them, no work is too hard for them. Australasia has not escaped them ; they have appeared there, as everywhere else.

The Chinaman is no ordinary competitor. Too often the Westerners are led to look on him as a being of an inferior race, less dangerous than the Japanese in the economic struggle. In point of fact, the white man has no more powerful opponent. His qualities of labour and endurance make him almost invulnerable. His calm energy, never worn out, makes him capable of working without halt or rest. His extraordinary economy allows him to live on next to nothing, and to be satisfied

with the most absurd wages. His indifference to comfort keeps him from many a temptation to spend. At the same time he unites in his person many gifts which as a rule are wanting in the cleverest trader. He is a tradesman of the first rank, with a wonderful grasp of detail, who, so to speak, never handles a farthing without making some profit out of it. He is also a born merchant, full of initiative and confidence, and his "go" reminds one of the most brilliant American business men. His enterprising but prudent spirit, his suspicion ever on the alert, his prodigious cunning, together with his genuine honesty in the fulfilment of promises, make him a wonderful business man and as a competitor often invincible.

In tropical countries like Indo-China, where the European is hardly able to work by himself, and the native races are weak and apathetic, the presence of the Chinaman is a necessity. It is he who really makes the country productive, not perhaps actually with his own hands, but by the life and development which his commercial genius can bestow on trade. He becomes the right hand of the white man, his natural intermediary in business; but later, and this is the danger, he becomes the white man's almost always victorious rival. His settlement in the spot which he colonises is not, as a rule, permanent, for often he has in China his home and his family. That does not, however, prevent him from setting up a new home in his adopted land and giving birth to half-breeds who gradually form a new race. This is going on all over the Far East, and, looking at the results of this immigration, one cannot regard it as an evil. The English, who are acknowledged masters in the art of colonisation, had no hesitation in allowing Singapore to become a town of Chinese.

In Australasia the question of the immigration of the yellow races is in a different setting. Instead of tropical regions, with the exception of the north of Queensland, there are only temperate climatic conditions. Instead of an already over-populated country there are only immense territories as yet thinly peopled. Instead of lower races to be directed and exploited, in Australia there are only a few thousand savages, and in New Zealand only a few thousand Maoris, who, from an economic point of view, do not even count. The difference is radical. Australasia is not an exotic country, a colony for purposes of trade; it is a colony to be settled, a country for Western civilisation, where the Asiatic is as much out of place as in Europe.

The Chinaman, however, does not allow himself to be put off by new and unfavourable conditions. His marvellous adaptability makes him fit for any climate, any trade, any circumstances whatever. After passing many weeks in some ship's between-decks, he lands at Sydney, Auckland or Wellington, generally penniless; his whole capital is contained in some tiny parcel which he carries in his hand. He comes to earn his living, and is ready for the hardest work and the greatest privations. But he will not live on charity, especially not on white men's charity. During the first few days after his arrival his fellow-countrymen support him; they are organised into mutual-aid associations; they have societies for helping each other, and it is a rare thing for them to abandon one of their race. Thanks to this aid, which he hardly ever fails to receive, the newcomer has time to look about him; he finds a lodging, looks for work, and, as a rule, is very soon in a situation.

The work he chooses is most varied. In mining countries the adventurous and gambling spirit of the

Chinaman often leads him to become a prospector. Those who want safer and more regular employment become servants, cooks, or day-labourers. They are excellent servants, sober, attentive, sometimes even faithful ; they are neither unruly nor pretentious ; they take the most cutting reprimand with a smile, and are content with absurdly low wages, on which, however, they are still able to save. Part of these savings generally finds its way back to China, to the man's family ; with the rest, the Chinaman amasses a small capital which sometimes allows him to start work on his own account.

It is then that he shows his true qualities. He begins, for example, market-gardening. On this ground no one can compete with him ; he gets up at dawn and works without a stop ; if his business increases, he gets in one of his fellow-countrymen to help—as a rule his nearest relative, whom he hardly pays anything, but who, according to Chinese custom, becomes a sharer in the profits. The white gardener can do nothing but give way. How could he, with the expensive wants of a civilised man, with his smaller powers of endurance, compete with a being like the Chinaman ? Anyone who has any close acquaintance with the Celestials knows that it is impossible. The New Zealanders have actually given up the struggle, and near large towns market-gardening has for the most part fallen into the hands of Asiatics.

Other Chinamen take up trading in a small way ; they open third-rate hotels or restaurants, groceries and shops of every sort, where their activity, grasp of detail, and economy seldom leave them without profits. Their zeal for their clients is boundless, and they will undertake to carry out the most extraordinary orders and

commissions. They are, besides, born exporters and importers. The distinction between wholesale and retail trading, which with us is so marked, hardly exists for them. As their business increases they keep pace with their conditions and often become thorough capitalists.

Indeed, it must not be supposed that they are indefinitely confined to the lower trades. Many, beyond doubt, are skilful capitalists, who are able to make use of Western economic machinery with extraordinary success. Their judgment in making investments is remarkable; and more than one New Zealander does not despise the advice which they freely offer—and which nevertheless it is just as well to be on one's guard against, as the following anecdote, which was told me at Dunedin, will show. It was about a mining company, whose shares had gone up enormously. The question was whether to go on buying or not. An English capitalist thought that it would be prudent, before doing anything, to ask advice from a rich Chinaman of his acquaintance. "Very good: you should buy," was the reply he got. Next day the capitalist bought some ten shares which just happened to be in the market. A few days later the decline began; and he discovered that the man who had sold the ten shares had been no other than his adviser, who had found in him an excellent opportunity for getting rid of uncertain securities at the top of the market.

It is, then, certain that the Chinese do very well in New Zealand. But it cannot be said that their presence is a benefit to the land. They only settle there for a time, spend very little, and when they have made enough money, once more take ship and return to China, leaving their relatives or their friends to



inherit their work. Any hope of assimilating them is vain ; they are and will remain strangers.

It was not long before the Australasians became alarmed at this invasion ; not, however, because it was numerically disturbing. In 1881 there were only 5000 Celestials in New Zealand, and since then their number has considerably diminished. But their presence constituted a danger at once moral and economic.

The moral danger is what the New Zealanders, like the Australians, are most inclined to place in the foreground ; and this is no mere pretext used to hide the ill-feeling with which a disturbing and dangerous competition fills them. The Chinaman is the object of a genuine and undoubted race-hatred. When Mr. Reeves says that his fellow-citizens think Chinese competition to be " foul, contrary to nature, and unjust," he only gives a faithful expression of their attitude, which is an attitude of contempt and disgust. In point of fact, these temporary immigrants, who never dream of settling down for good, can lead nothing but an immoral and degrading life. They do not bring their families with them, and, as they cannot start fresh ones, they find themselves in a situation which is contrary to nature, and which has the effect of developing among them the most deplorable vices. It is true that they trouble no one and are always mild and good-natured in their manner, in the hope that they will be unnoticed, and that they will be able easily to amass their money without attracting anyone's attention. They are not unruly and unbearable like the negroes. But nevertheless it is understandable that the New Zealanders should fear the presence in their cities of these members of a race which cannot be assimilated, and that they should

honestly believe that they only lose by coming in contact with them.

“ It has been argued,” Mr. Reeves writes, “ that the Chinese are not a degrading element ; that they are an industrious, peaceful and frugal people, with a civilisation, a learning, and an education of their own. It has been said by many Englishmen, Mr. R. W. Dale amongst others, that the Chinese have been hated in Australia for their virtues, not their vices. The reply to this is that, to begin with, the Chinese are admitted by all observers to be utterly unfit to use political rights in a democracy. They have no conception of government and public duty, as these are understood in Europe. Their *litterati* may be entitled to be called civilised, but the classes from which their emigrants are drawn are not *litterati*. Industrious they are, but industry without certain social qualities is a doubtful virtue. A man may be industrious, and yet be dirty, miserly, ignorant, a shirker of social duty, and a danger to public health. All these most of the Chinese immigrants are. It is said that they commit few crimes. A man may be a very undesirable citizen without infringing the criminal law.”<sup>1</sup>

Such, expressed coolly and with moderation, is the average New Zealander's opinion on the moral and political dangers which the Chinaman's presence may cause his country. If we care to remember that these race hatreds are the most violent and the most irreducible of any, just because they are the most instinctive, we shall not find it difficult to understand how it is that in this concert of reproaches no discordant voice is heard—the more so because to their feeling of re-

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, “ Aliens and Undesirables in Australasia,” *National Review*, December, 1901.

pulsion and contempt there is added that of threatened interests.

By the side of the moral danger that we have just set forth there is an economic danger, which causes much greater alarm to the Australasians. The Englishman, quoted by Mr. Reeves, who said that the Chinaman was hated as much because of his virtues as of his vices, was not entirely wrong. Had he said his *commercial* virtues he would have been entirely right. The Chinaman is too successful ; and that is the principal grievance against him. There are even some naïve or cynical people who say this without any circumlocution, as, for example, the Wellington baker who, before a commission of inquiry, expressed himself thus : “ We all know that the Chinese are a very industrious race, and that is just why we are against them.” <sup>1</sup>

It is true that the yellow race has a dangerous advantage in the economic struggle. With wants fewer than those of the white man, the Chinaman works longer and sometimes better ; he is always willing to let the scale of wages be reduced, and he accepts work at any figure. How could a civilised man, living a civilised life, possibly be able to compete with him in such circumstances ? Remembering the terms which Mr. Reeves used in qualifying this kind of competition, we shall find that we too, in our turn, cannot but regard it as unjust and contrary to nature. Following Mr. Reeves, we must observe that the New Zealand workman is seriously handicapped as compared with the Asiatic.

“ The white workman in the Colonies,” the ex-Minister for Labour wrote, “ is expected to be clean and comfortably dressed ; to marry and rear children ;

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission of Federation. Deposition No. 113, p. 312.

to have a home, decent, bright, and which looks a credit to the neighbourhood. His children have to be healthy, well fed, and properly clothed ; and he has to support them until their thirteenth or fourteenth year. The father and mother are expected to read books and newspapers and give a certain amount of time and intelligent attention to public affairs. The Chinaman, when allowed, will live in a hovel and scorn sanitation. Without family responsibilities, without social interests, without political knowledge, he comes to a Colony to extract what he can from it, and to take his savings back to China." <sup>1</sup>

This contrast is a true one, and the conditions of the competition are not the same for both sides. There is no fair play, as the Anglo-Saxons understand it. Is it reasonable to expect the Australasian workman to give up his civilised life in order to be able to compete with the Chinaman ? Can he be expected to be content with smaller wages, on the ground that the Chinaman is quite satisfied with them ? Certainly not, unless the attempt to make New Zealand into a settled Colony be given up, and unless it is destined to be changed into a colony for exploitation in which the white man is nothing more than a chief and director over inferior races who labour for him. There are the two policies, and a choice must be made.

If the Chinaman were a necessity, as he is in Indo-China, his presence might have been borne—perhaps it might even have been desired. Such is the case in the north of Queensland, for the reason that the white man can hardly take the Chinaman's place. But in a temperate country like New Zealand, which means to remain a land of Western civilisation, there can be no

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Article cited.

two opinions. Chinese competition is immoral and bad, and must be eliminated at any cost. Set forth in this way the problem seems much clearer ; and this is how it was stated by Sir Charles Dilke in his work, *Problems of Greater Britain* :

“ To the colonies the Chinese question appears to present itself in a very different aspect from that in which it is viewed by us at home, and it is difficult to induce the men of the colonial lower middle or working classes, dependent upon labour or trade for maintenance, to take what we should call a broad international view of Chinese immigration. That the Chinamen shall be excluded from white colonies means only in the minds of the working colonists that they intend to protect their own position. ‘ Canada for the Canadian,’ ‘ Australia for the Australian,’ are the prevailing cries ; and colonial labour, knit together in its powerful federations, desires to limit competition, and above all wholly to shut out the competition of the cheapest of competitors—the Chinese.”<sup>1</sup>

Now that we realise the feelings of fear and hatred with which Chinese immigration inspires the Australasian, the rigorous legislation which has resulted from these feelings need cause us no surprise. Supported and even coerced by public opinion, the politicians of the different colonies would have nothing but immediate action. Queensland began, in 1876, by imposing a tax on Chinese immigration. Other colonies followed suit, and in 1881 New Zealand set up a Chinese immigration tax of £10 per head. Such legislation, in this form, gave rise to international difficulties, and for a long time the Colonial Office refused to recognise it. For there are treaties between China and England in

<sup>1</sup> Sir Chas. Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, p. 528.

virtue of which the Chinese are placed on the same footing as other foreigners, and hence they cannot be detained in any port of a British Colony merely because they are Chinese. Besides this, England owns in the Far East Hong-Kong and Singapore, and there are consequently many British subjects who are of Chinese race. These, as well as the Chinese proper, were excluded by the Australasian legislation.

The mother-country, however, inquired whether they seriously thought of prohibiting a British subject from entering a British colony. This legal point could hardly be met; but all the same the Australasians remained firm in the attitude they had adopted. They are far from Europe, and strange to the subtleties of law, and no doubt they thought of international treaties as vain formulæ which it is just as well to disregard if they are in the way, especially when they deal with China and the Chinese. Moreover, when they want something, Australasians are in the habit of going straight towards their goal, with a simple spirit that makes Europeans smile, but which always ends by attaining their desire. "Neither His Majesty's ships of war," Sir Henry Parkes said bluntly, "nor his governors, nor his colonial secretary will make us abandon our scheme." In short, England had to give in. The Australasian legislation was not formally confirmed, but it was tacitly accepted.

At present Chinese immigration into New Zealand is subject to the restrictions laid down in the Chinese Immigrants Act Amendment Act of 1896, and also in the more general law on immigration, which we mentioned in the preceding chapter, and which is called "An Act to place certain restrictions on immigration into New Zealand, 1899." The immigration tax was raised in 1896 to £100 per head. Moreover, the more

effective measure was taken of limiting the number of Chinese immigrants allowed under the Act to one for every two hundred tons of each ship coming to one of the ports of the Colony. Captains and shipowners caught in the act of violating the law were liable to very severe penalties; the New Zealand legislator showed no tenderness for them, because they had always encouraged an immigration which, of course, increased their business. In this case, New Zealand interests, or, if you will, Australasian interests, are in conflict with English interests. Much annoyance arose because of this, and we find traces of it in these severe words of the Agent-General for New Zealand: "When the Australians are criticised in England for their egoistic exclusive policy, they bitterly think how their national life and their future are threatened by this very spirit of English business, which, while poisoning China with opium in the interest of India, is ready to take up the cause of the Chinese, if only there is money to be made in flooding Australasia with yellow barbarians."

It is a severe judgment. But England has had to accustom herself for some time past to the remonstrances, often harshly expressed, of her colonies. In the case in point, as almost always, the colonials had the last word. The law was rigorously applied. The Act of 1899 even furnished new weapons, to be used in the most improbable event of the former Act not being sufficient. Every immigrant has on landing to sign a form on which he states his name, his place of birth, and a great deal of other information. But what Chinaman can make out in English, as the law requires, such a document? So that if the Government wants to pick a quarrel with him it always has some pretext for sending him back to his own country. This method of

procedure is most effective, and it has the advantage of being more correct, from the international point of view, than the other. For the immigrant is detained at a port in the Colony, not because he is Chinese, but merely because he cannot write. The Chinese Government could raise no objection to such a measure. Mr. Chamberlain, in the conference of Colonial premiers held in 1897, recommended this expedient as unimpeachable from the treaty standpoint.

It is long since this Draconian legislation began to be effective. In 1886 there were 4542 Chinese in New Zealand; their number fell to 4444 in 1891, 3711 in 1896; and, finally, there were only 2846 in 1901. We may suppose that, if this policy of exclusion is maintained, the number of Asiatics established in the Colony will still further diminish. At the present time it can be said that the New Zealanders, by their brutal action and their inflexible prejudices, have succeeded in removing from themselves the yellow peril.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### NEW ZEALAND FINANCE.

THE budget of a country is beyond doubt the best sieve through which its policy may be passed in order to discover the effects of that policy. For there is no reform, no error, no tendency even which is not reflected in its columns of receipt and expenditure. For this reason, then, having reviewed the principal acts of the Seddon cabinet during its long and crowded period of office, we must next examine the position of New Zealand finance at the end of a ten-years' period of social policy, which will certainly be important in the annals of the Colony.

The besetting sin of the social reformer is the deficit. There were, then, strong grounds for fear, from the financial point of view, in a policy of reform at any price, carried out by ministers who had something of the demagogue in them and whose hold on office depended on a people spoilt by experiments and perhaps more anxious for favours than reforms. But as to this, however, let it be said at once that Mr. Seddon once more proved that the politicians of the Antipodes are often extremely clever business men. Despite the new and heavy expenditure necessitated by many and costly reforms, despite the very heavy burden of the public

debt, despite the sacrifices which the Transvaal War entailed, we are faced in 1902 with most satisfactory figures.

The receipts for the year 1902<sup>1</sup> amounted to £6,152,839; the expenditure to £5,895,915, which shows a credit balance of £256,924. Of the £532,564 brought forward from the preceding year's account, £50,000 was transferred to the special account of public works, and £19,000 was used for the redemption of debentures; so that there was an actual excess of £270,488.<sup>2</sup>

Direct taxation forms only a small part of the receipts. Customs duties brought in 37.93 per cent. of ordinary revenue,<sup>3</sup> railways, 32.21 per cent. and post office, 15.66 per cent.; while the land tax brought in only 5.39 per cent. and the income tax 3.09 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

These are the figures for ordinary revenue, 1902 :

Customs -	-	-	-	-	-	£2,180,862
Railways	-	-	-	-	-	1,720,641
Post office	-	-	-	-	-	903,935
Land tax	-	-	-	-	-	294,584
Income tax	-	-	-	-	-	173,809
Beer duties	-	-	-	-	-	85,171
Registration	-	-	-	-	-	67,557
Marine	-	-	-	-	-	29,533
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	126,411
						£5,582,503 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We call the year 1902 the twelve months from April 1st, 1901 to March 31st, 1902. For all matters relating to finance, see the *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, Sections xxvi. p. 452 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> Ordinary revenue does not comprise revenue from Crown lands.

<sup>4</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 453.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 453.

To this ordinary revenue must be added revenue from Crown lands, £249,619, and sundry petty receipts, which bring the total up to the £6,152,839 stated above.

The revenue may be classified, according to the source from which it is derived, as follows :

Revenue from taxation	-	-	-	£3,113,079
Revenue from other sources	-	-	-	£3,039,760

The average revenue per head is £7 17s. 6d., and of this the amount due to taxation is £3 19s. 8d.<sup>1</sup>

In the revenue derived from taxation we must distinguish direct from indirect taxation ; and, doing this, we find that indirect taxation furnishes the greater part, nearly 90 per cent., of the total brought in by taxation. This is one of the essential characteristics in the New Zealand system of finance, as indeed it is in all the Australasian systems.

In the first rank of indirect taxes Customs duties must be mentioned. In 1902 they brought in £2,201,116, or 37.93 of the total revenue. Certainly nothing in New Zealand is more enduring than the fondness of Parliament and people for Customs duties. It is first of all a fiscal question ; for two million pounds is not to be despised, and it would be difficult to set up new taxes to take the place of the Customs. In New Zealand any free-trade proposal will always meet with the objection : How do you propose to make up for the two million pounds sterling which we shall lose by free trade ? That is a problem which no financier, and particularly no politician, would care to handle. And by the side of the fiscal question there stands the even more important economic question. The employers are never tired of

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 455.

saying that they need protection, that their industries would be wiped out even by inter-colonial free trade, apart from free trade in general. As for the workmen, well-informed and practical as they are, they realise that their high and, we may add, artificial wages will collapse at the same time as the Customs barrier which protects them is broken down. For these reasons the Customs duties, defended by both employers and workmen, are a sort of Ark of the Covenant which no one dares to touch. This was made clear on the occasion when New Zealand had to decide on the question of federation with Australia. There were, it is true, many moral and political reasons which encouraged New Zealanders in their love of independence. But there was, greater than these reasons, one blunt and practical reason which made a great impression, and which furnished a decisive argument to the opposers of federation. Union with Australia could only come about by sacrificing the Customs ; and this sacrifice would have involved the two-fold problem of which we just spoke. The reply was categorical ; and a little later we shall see how quasi-unanimously New Zealand refused to enter the great Australian Commonwealth.

With regard to the direct taxes on land and on income, their peculiarly democratic nature has caused much comment. But it must be realised that their importance is, in fact, small, because they might be left out of the budget without causing any great difficulties.

In 1902 the revenue from land taxation was £312,836. We have already spoken of this tax when dealing with land legislation generally ; and here we shall only say that of the total, £234,800 is derived from the ordinary

land tax, and about £78,000 from the graduated tax and the absentee tax.

Every landowner whose property is worth less than £1500 gets an abatement on £500; so that a property worth less than £500 is entirely exempt. Over £1500 the abatement is less by £1 for every £2 additional value, so that above £2500 there is no abatement. The Act allows entire exemption for the smaller properties, and such use was made of reductions and exemptions that out of 110,000 landowners only 17,500 are taxed. Besides the ordinary tax there is a graduated tax which begins to operate above £5000. From £5000 to £6000 there is an increase of one-eighth of a penny in the pound. Over £10,000 there is an automatic increase till the maximum of 2d. in the pound is reached. This tax is a fighting tax; and its authors did not conceal the fact. But though from the political point of view it has some importance, from the fiscal it has very little.

The same may be said of the income tax, from which only a small fraction of the revenue is derived. It is a graduated tax, on the following lines: Complete exemption for an income less than £300. Over £300, for the first £1000, *i.e.* from £300 to £1300, there is a charge of 6d. in the £1. Over £1300 the charge is 1s. in the £1. Thus, a person with an income of £1900 will be taxed in this way: £300 is entirely exempt; £1000 pays 6d. in the pound, *i.e.* 2.5 per cent. The balance of £600 pays 1s. in the pound, or 5 per cent.; and the total tax in this case will be £55. In 1902 the income tax brought in £179,397.

It must be observed that these two taxes, although at the time of their introduction they stirred up a great deal of opposition, have not actually given rise to any serious protest. People have got accustomed to them,

as they do to many other things ; and, for that matter, there is nothing peculiarly alarming in them. It may, of course, be said that they are the expression of dangerous principles, that they are only the thin end of the wedge, and that they have opened the door to eventual robbery. All this is perhaps true, or rather, it would be true in any country but New Zealand. In this Colony even the revolutionary spirit is permeated with compromise. To realise this we have only to think of the trivial part that direct taxation plays in the revenue ; for direct taxes are the only ones that weigh more on the rich than on the poor, the only ones that have a democratic character. The New Zealanders were able, when it was necessary, to be moderate, in order to keep resources which were secure and highly productive.

We have seen wherein consisted the novelty in the budget of revenue ; and we shall now pass to the expenditure, in which the general policy of the Colony is reflected. In 1902 the total ordinary expenditure was £5,895,915. Of this amount interest on the debt took up £1,803,939 ; railways, £1,280,997 ; education, £537,157 ; post office and telegraphs, £463,817 ; army, £191,250 ; old age pensions, £208,605, etc.

Most of these heads of expenditure have for the last ten years been increasing regularly, but in every case the increase is less than under the corresponding head of revenue. From this point of view, it really cannot be said that the Colony is pursuing a peculiarly dangerous path, or that its social policy has resulted in embarrassing its financial position. It must, however, be observed that although the expenditure has increased, yet the population has hardly grown any larger ; and this is a warning to which the financiers should give their atten-

tion. Thanks to a period of real prosperity, the Seddon ministry never found any difficulty in raising money for its schemes. But there can be no doubt that at the first serious crisis the Colony will have to check its pace, that is, it will have to set a limit to the luxury of its social policy. Mr. Seddon, a man of great insight, foresaw such an event, and when he introduced the Bill for Old Age Pensions, he took care to say that if the reform became too costly, or if the general revenue dropped too low, the Act would no longer be applied. This declaration was most admirable. But it may well be asked if democracy will ever give such an example of wisdom and moderation. There are some tendencies which cannot be checked.

One head of expenditure which has relatively greatly increased in the last three years is that of the army. From £91,000 in 1898 it rose to £119,000 in 1899, £202,000 in 1900, and £229,000 in 1901. Since then it fell again to £191,250 in 1902. These are, it is true, exceptional figures, caused by a war which is now over. But it must, however, be observed that the presence of such expenditure in the budget of a small democratic Colony at the Antipodes is, in its way, a sign of the times. Who would have foreseen, a few years ago, that New Zealand would one day be inoculated with this militarist virus, which it is so hard to drive out, and which may become so dangerous when it no longer has as its sole object the defence of the land?

Lastly, by far the heaviest charge in the New Zealand budget is that on the debt, a charge which in 1902 amounted to £1,803,939, or 31 per cent. of the total expenditure. At the 31st of March, 1902, the capital of the debt amounted to £52,966,047. To wipe it out the total revenue of the Colony for eight years would

be needed! The New Zealand debt is due to three chief causes: the Maori wars, the policy of immigration and public works which prevailed after 1870, and lastly the social and agrarian policy of the Seddon cabinet, a policy which began in 1890 and was extended in 1893. In 1856, when New Zealand received full self-government, there was no debt; but this extraordinary situation did not last long. By 1861 there was a debt of over £600,000. Since then the debt has been regularly and considerably growing larger:

1861	-	-	-	-	-	£600,761
1871	-	-	-	-	-	£8,940,991
1881	-	-	-	-	-	29,659,111
1891	-	-	-	-	-	38,844,910
1901	-	-	-	-	-	49,591,245
1902	-	-	-	-	-	52,966,047

The regularity of the increase shows that there has been continual need of loans. In fact, in any circumstances that arose the New Zealanders had recourse to loans rather than to taxation; and their reasons for this were that the sums they wanted were large, that taxation could not have produced them, and that on the whole they were needed for the development of the Colony, and that such expenditure was what may be called reproductive.

Loans are a constant temptation to Australasians, and they are always ready to borrow freely; almost all the colonies can furnish examples, and every minister in office is almost necessarily a raiser of loans. The Seddon ministry found a debt of 38 million. Ten years later it left a debt of 49 million, having added 11 million. We give in detail the way in which this debt has been used:



Gross public debt, 1902	-	-	£52,966,447
„	1891	-	38,830,350
		Increase	£14,136,097
Native Land Purchases	-	-	£649,700
Land Settlement	-	-	2,772,716
Loans to Local Bodies	-	-	1,419,100
Lands Improvement	-	-	500,000
Advances to Settlers	-	-	2,740,000
Bank of N.Z. Preferred Shares	-	-	500,000
N.Z. Consols	-	-	468,324
District Railways	-	-	47,000
Public Works	-	-	4,585,000
Increase by Conversions	-	-	654,229
Sinking Fund Accretions	-	-	1,464,700
Naval and Military Settlers	-	-	27,226
Government Accident Insurance	-	-	2,000
Advances to Dairy Companies	-	-	1,781
			£15,831,776
Less Redemptions	-	-	1,695,679
		Total net Increase	£14,136,097

As may be seen, the agrarian policy (purchase of lands, advances to settlers, etc.) has cost most; and next to it public works. This shows the attitude of the Government with regard to the development of the country in a democratic spirit. For ten years money has flowed like water in the Colony, and whenever the people needed it, the Government has arranged to provide it. This policy of loans to be applied in forwarding the democratic programme of the radical New Zealanders is one more characteristic of the Seddon Government.

It is interesting to note the different rates of interest on the debt. More than 32 millions bear interest at 4 per cent. ; more than 10 millions at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. ; and more than 8 millions at 3 per cent. :

6 per cent.	-	-	-	-	-	£56,000
5 „	-	-	-	-	-	609,600
$4\frac{1}{2}$ „	-	-	-	-	-	52,500
4 „	-	-	-	-	-	33,427,852
$3\frac{3}{4}$ „	-	-	-	-	-	349,000
$3\frac{1}{2}$ „	-	-	-	-	-	10,438,378
3 „	-	-	-	-	-	8,036,957

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£52,970,287

London is for New Zealand a great reservoir of capital. Of the total debt £46,430,126 was raised in England ; £181,000 in Australia ; and £6,274,721 in New Zealand. And here we have one of the most profound causes for the attachment of the Australasian colonies to the mother-country—the inexhaustible, unwearying credit which she gives them. England is for them a banker provided by nature. Without any large capital available, with great and constantly recurring needs for money, New Zealand is compelled to have a financial support that is, as it were, permanent. Europe would probably refuse her this credit. The Australasian colonies are too little known on the Continent ; their financial reputation is not high, and the novelty of their social policy is especially calculated to discourage investors. Moreover, they do not offer a sufficiently remunerative rate of interest to tempt capital which is, as a rule, cautious, and which is only risked on alluring speculations.

And Australia has little chance of success in the

American market. In the first place, Americans have opportunities enough for investing at home. They generally prefer the risks of commercial investments. It is true that many rich people buy State securities to make their property safe. But in those circumstances their choice falls on securities of the first rank, and Australasian stock is disregarded.

There remains, then, England, which has of late years been the most important market in the world for capital. Here the Australasian colonies are well known ; many capitalists and societies are largely interested in their development, so that they meet in London with a financial goodwill which is never withheld from them. To fall out with England would be fatal to New Zealand. We have just seen up to what point taxation can produce really important resources. It is necessary to have recourse to loans whenever large sums are wanted ; and the people turn to loans whenever anything has to be done. Without loans not one clause of the social or agrarian policy could ever have been applied. State loans to settlers, at moderate rates, were only possible because the New Zealand State was able to find money in London at rates between 3 and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. If English credit became tighter the effects would immediately be felt at the Antipodes.

During the last few years the condition of New Zealand credit has been satisfactory. In 1901 New Zealand 4 per cents. were quoted in London at  $115\frac{3}{8}$ , and  $110\frac{3}{4}$  was the lowest point reached ; the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cents.  $109\frac{3}{4}$  highest,  $104\frac{1}{8}$  lowest ; the 3 per cents.  $99\frac{1}{2}$  and  $93\frac{1}{8}$ . New Zealand, then, was able to borrow at rates between 3 and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., which is excellent for such a distant Colony, especially in view of the fact that she has established a dangerous reputation as a

land of reforms—the kind of land that, as a rule, does not attract capitalists.

The real burden of a public debt largely depends on the use that has been made of it. We must know whether it has been expended in wars, in useless works, in electoral favours, or, on the contrary, in really reproductive works that add to the wealth of the country. As far as New Zealand is concerned it may be stated in a general way that the money raised on loans has been employed in a useful manner. It is true that the long wars against the Maoris cost a great deal. But they were necessary, and for that matter could not have been avoided. It is true also that the Government has often been tempted to expend the money borrowed in electoral measures. The Seddon ministry, in particular, made many friends with the help of this “unrighteous wealth,” and their opponents reproached them bitterly for this. But they might have replied that their opponents were slightly exaggerating the facts, and that they would certainly have done the same thing had they been in power. The New Zealanders do not belong to the Gladstonian school. When they have money they hardly think of possible redemption, but almost always of the most effective use of it they can make. But, notwithstanding this, public works have been greatly encouraged by this policy of loans. This, for example, is the list given in the *New Zealand Official Year Book* for 1902, showing the percentage of sums appropriated to particular expenditure, on the total amount of loans :

Railways -	-	-	-	-	32.91 per cent.
Roads and bridges -	-	-	-	-	9.82 „
Sundry public works	-	-	-	-	7.58 „

Purchase of land	-	-	-	4.12	per cent.
Immigration	-	-	-	4.64	„
Maori wars	-	-	-	4.45	„
Defence	-	-	-	3.43	„
Telegraphs	-	-	-	1.70	„
Mines	-	-	-	1.43	„
Harbour Improvements	-	-	-	0.97	„
Organisation of tourist stations	-	-	-	0.02	,
Sundry investments	-	-	-	15.41	„
Cost of issuing loans, to supply deficit in revenue, etc.	-	-	-	13.52	„

A really vigorously conducted scheme of liquidation does not consist in going on borrowing from year to year. Causes or pretexts for loans constantly appear ; and besides, as we noted above, the excess of revenue goes rather towards new schemes of every sort than towards liquidation or redemption. Australasia is so much accustomed to loans that it supports their charges almost without noticing them, much as we support the weight of the atmosphere about us. But it cannot be said that New Zealand has never made an effort to reduce either the capital of the debt or the interest on it. In 1884 the Stout-Vogel ministry inaugurated a policy of conversions, for the purpose of unifying the debt or at least of reducing it to a small number of types. Many conversions were arranged, and these made a sensible reduction in the charges for interest. Besides this, a sinking fund was opened, which at present amounts to £1,348,816. The annual amount appropriated from general revenue for the sinking fund has averaged £44,000 during the last few years ; in 1902 it was £47,844.

Such are the chief characteristics in New Zealand

finance. Even if some qualifications are necessary, the general situation is nevertheless favourable. After a period of unbridled reforms and social experiments, the budget shows a surplus, and the Colony's credit is good, If only the population showed real signs of increasing and if business were developing more rapidly, the finances of New Zealand would be assured of a brilliant future.

*PART IV.*  
SOCIETY AND LIFE.





## CHAPTER ] XIX.

### THE LARGE TOWNS OF NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND is not a country of immense agglomerations, as Australia is. It has no undisputed capital, but four provincial cities which dispute the supremacy between them, and are rivals of each other. They differ greatly in character, showing the traces of their different origins. There was, in fact, a time when New Zealand was only a federation of provinces ; and even to-day the policy of centralisation which has been in force for twenty years has but imperfectly hidden the survival of a provincial spirit, which is to be accounted for both by the geographical configuration of the country, and by its history in the early days of its colonisation.

The entrance to Auckland is one of the finest sights that Australasia can give. The land first appears as a long, rocky, clearly-defined line, surrounded by a host of small islands of delicate outlines, which close in the horizon on almost every side. Passing through this labyrinth, one soon enters the magnificent bay of Auckland, which, like a deep branching fiord, plunges more than twelve miles into the land, forming, in the hollows of the green hills which enclose it, numbers of peaceful creeks and spots safe from wind and sea.

The latitude of Auckland practically corresponds to that of the Algerian coast, but the climate is not nearly so warm, being remarkably mild and uniform. This may soon be seen from the fresh green of the vegetation which covers the sides of the bay, and which makes the landscape something like that of the Riviera.

Auckland appears, lying gracefully by the blue water, and overshadowed by the dark hills to which its suburbs stretch. Were it not for the glitter of the brilliant sunshine, the incomparable clearness of the air, and the thoroughly colonial aspect of the houses buried among the trees, one might well take it for an English town. There are the buildings of the port, the Customs House, the Town Hall. They are built of that grey stone, severe and a little gloomy, in that simple, sober, inelegant style that one finds everywhere throughout the British Empire. The English quarters in Canadian towns are much the same; the calm, reserved, and rather time-worn appearance of the houses is in perfect contrast to the eccentricity of the American buildings. The chief street, Queen Street, which goes off at right angles from the quays, is crowded with telegraph poles and wires. The picture is certainly Anglo-Saxon, but—the difference must be noted—purely English. The Americans have not a single town which even at a distance would suggest Auckland.

Nowhere is the difference between the English and American civilisations more striking. The traveller on landing might believe himself transported into some lost and old-fashioned province in old England; no electric trams, but only horse omnibuses, such as in ten years' time we shall find in our museums. No "buildings" tall as towers, but small European houses, the boldest of which are not four storeys high. The town

boasts of at most eight or ten lifts, and these travel with the slow wisdom of our provincial lifts. In the streets reigns a calm, expressive of the peace of this little town. People do not go about their business with that excitement, that "rush" which marks the new world. Good Englishmen as they are, the inhabitants of Auckland never seem to be in a hurry, and in all circumstances one may see and admire their British calm.

The town, with its suburbs, contains 67,000 inhabitants—more than any other town in New Zealand. But, a common phenomenon at the Antipodes, the suburbs, to the number of a dozen, are almost as important as the city itself, having nearly 33,000 inhabitants. In New Zealand, as in Australia, and for that matter as in most Anglo-Saxon countries, the suburb is the residential quarter, where luxurious villas and houses are placed. The city is only the nucleus of the agglomeration, and is given over to the shops, hotels, and business offices. The merchant comes into town ("down town," as the American would say), every day, and in the evening when his work is done he goes back to his residence. This is the English life transplanted to the Antipodes.

The suburbs of Auckland are renowned for their beauty. The town is confined into a narrow space; but on the hillsides the villas stretch at their ease, surrounded by luxuriant vegetation, and looking down on the magnificent roadstead, which is so well protected by the islands which close it in that it seems a blue lake of clear and tranquil water.

Before a regular stream of travellers from France had visited New Zealand the general belief was that American influence was preponderant at the Antipodes.

We have just seen that such is not the case. The smallest towns of the United States, but newly sprung from the prairie, hardly a few paces from the desert, are from the first day of their birth seized with that fever of activity which kills all calm and all repose, and which makes of man the devoted servant of sacrosanct Business. In such young, vivacious towns, all is harsh, and contrast rules ; the roads, hardly marked out, are already traversed at full speed by electric trams. Alongside of the wood cabin stands the pretentious sky-scraper, and the typewriter makes its sound heard where only silence and solitude dwelt but a short time before.

The comparison, although only exterior, shows to what extent New Zealand and the United States have developed under different influences. The Yankees would no doubt find Auckland a great deal behind the times ; we should call it provincial. The English hearth, the home, which has been adapted to many climates, is at its best in this calm spot. The merchant, the lawyer who works hard all the week, keeps his evenings for rest, his Saturdays for sport, and his Sundays for religious duties. It seems as though the English habit of life has been transported into this new land without any change.

Going out into the main street at the time of the daily evening stroll, one may see such purely British types as the " boy " in breeches, wearing the little cap that the English have made famous throughout the world, and the true English gentleman in a morning coat, a flower in his buttonhole, wearing a tall hat that, if not quite the latest fashion, nevertheless has pretensions to most absolute correctness. As for the women, their fashions are purely British. They follow

London . . . at a great distance ; they seem never to have heard of New York or Paris.

On Saturdays in Auckland, as everywhere throughout the Empire, life has full scope. Saturday is the great day for open-air exercise, and the Australasian's keenness for games is greater even than the Englishman's. Just outside Auckland there is an immense football ground, with stands all round it. Every Saturday in winter this ground is full of life ; the stands are filled to overflowing, and the different teams begin Homeric struggles, before a public which follows the events of the game in the spirit of a connoisseur. In summer the crowd makes for the cricket field, magnificently equipped, where other teams play their interminable games before the same public, which never seems to get tired of looking on. A little further on is the racecourse, the classic meeting-place of Australasian cities, where few New Zealanders can resist the temptation to have a gamble. Beyond this again there are golf, hockey, and tennis clubs. It would take too long to enumerate all the national games that the New Zealanders have imported from England, but an account of New Zealand life would be seriously incomplete if there were no mention of this love for physical exercise, which the Australasians have raised to the level of an institution.

Though one's first impression of Auckland is that of a very provincial town, a short stay is enough to make one realise that life there is not so much behind the times, nor so devoid of interest as one would have supposed. It is a case of its being better to be first in Gaul than second at Rome. 67,000 inhabitants hardly count in Europe ; and in old countries, over-crowded and populous, small towns are sure to be dragged into

the orbit of the larger ones, and to lose their own life and individuality. But in New Zealand, a colony of 800,000 inhabitants, 67,000 is relatively a large population, and assures a certain importance to the town which possesses it. To-day Auckland is no longer the capital. But it is one of the most active commercial centres in the Colony; and although it no longer enjoys the prestige which the presence of the Government gives, it nevertheless draws sufficient vitality from its commercial and maritime relations to enable it to hold its own. It has its newspapers, the best in the Colony, its clubs, its university, its societies of every description—in a word, its life as a large civilised and prosperous town.

Up to 1865 Auckland was the capital. Its excellent harbour had drawn the attention of the first governor, who, not knowing the South Island and not dreaming of the importance it would one day assume, thought his choice good and final. The South Island, however, became peopled in its turn; important factories were set up, large towns sprang from the ground, and gradually the Colony's centre of gravity shifted there. This was the signal for the political overthrow of Auckland, and in 1865 the capital was transferred to Wellington.

The choice was a happy one. Wellington is at the most central point of New Zealand. A splendid roadstead, which at a distance reminds one of San Francisco, forms an admirable shelter for ships. It is a deep gulf with a very narrow opening, and is surrounded by high mountains, which give it the appearance of a lake. At the foot of these mountains lies the town, composed of three or four long parallel streets in all; and its houses are huddled against each other, pressed in between the sea and the first slopes of the mountains.

Immediately above it the villas rise in tiers on the steep inclines.

Wellington does not look at all English, differing in this from Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin. It is a completely colonial town, built of red-roofed wooden houses. There are at most two or three stone buildings, and these are pointed out with admiration. This is not because stone is scarce ; but the frequent earthquakes that shake the town have made architects prudent. For the same reason most of the houses are of a light build, seldom being more than two or three storeys high ; with the sole exception of the public buildings. The Parliament House is an immense wooden palace, of gothic architecture, and is painted pink. The Ministers occupy a huge four-storied wooden barrack, which the inhabitants of Wellington point out with pride as the largest wooden house in the world.

It is, in short, a characterless and inelegant town, whose recent origin is but too evident, and which is most unlike the other New Zealand towns in its colonial, Australian, half-American appearance. The reason of this is that Wellington developed rapidly and in peculiar circumstances. Of slight importance before 1865, it suddenly found the title of capital conferred on it. The Government and the executive migrated to it, and a mixed population, drawn from all the towns in the Colony, came to settle there. Scots from Dunedin, English from Christchurch came in crowds, and gave to the new capital its almost cosmopolitan look, which is noticed to-day by even the least forewarned observer.

Since then the relative growth of Wellington has been larger than that of any other town in the Colony. Such is the prestige of a capital. But it is hardly likely that it will ever be for New Zealand what Sydney is for New

South Wales, or what London is for England—a predominant and unrivalled centre. This is less likely to be the case because of the whole-hearted way in which the towns of the South Island cling, with a passion that has not abated since the first day of their foundation, to their individuality, which they can justly claim to be a true representation of the spirit and traditions of old England.

For these names, Christchurch and Canterbury, are indeed English. Christchurch is certainly the most English town in New Zealand. There are few Scottish people there, and the English element is preponderant. The circumstances which gave birth to the colonisation of Canterbury impressed on it so marked a character, that it has not lost it in the fifty years of its existence.

In 1850 a colonisation company, at the head of which was the famous Wakefield, undertook to people and develop the district that to-day bears the name of Canterbury. The first settlers landed there in December of that same year; they were genuine Englishmen who almost all belonged to the Anglican church. Devoted to their creed as they were to their country, they gave a strongly religious tone to their enterprise, and they were pilgrims as well as settlers. Their plan was to take English life and society with them to the Antipodes. The whole hierarchy of the metropolis was to be transported, and the peer and the bishop were to be placed alongside of the planter. The Church of England became the established church of the Colony, and its interests were closely united with those of this new society.

The land was marvellously suited to colonisation. No Maori came to trouble the peace of these new settlers, and the large and beautiful plain open before



them needed nothing but cultivation. They established themselves some miles from the sea, and gave the name of Christchurch to their first settlement, which they soon made into an English and Christian town. They have fulfilled their promise. The first impression of the new arrival at Christchurch is "This is England." And in fact the resemblance is striking. The houses are not all built of wood, as in Wellington ; most are of brick or of grey stone. The streets are straight, long, and almost lively. A pretty river, the Avon, wanders through the town, with its slow and sinuous course, and its banks are covered with ever-green grass and weeping willows ; and here and there are dark stone bridges. It is the green fields of southern England on a smaller scale. At a bend of the small stream there rises a building, slightly gloomy, gothic, crowned with towers, and having a vaguely ecclesiastic appearance, which one might think a hundred years old ; it is the law courts. The English, who know the value of tradition, even in new countries, are extraordinarily skilful in endowing the youngest creations with an ancient air. Most of the churches are of the same style, and give to this town, which has not existed for more than sixty years, the strange, tranquil and respectable appearance of an old European city.

To leave the centre of the town, and make for the suburbs and the country, is only half to remove the illusion. The land is divided into fields where sheep and cattle pasture ; the grass is green ; the hedges dark and solid, and it is easy to tell that English hands set them up ; the hills by the sea are dry and bare ; and in the distance are great mountains, with wild rocky peaks. It is all a picture of England, the foreground smiling and peaceful, and harsh, poetic

mountains in the background. The houses in the country have, however, a more colonial air than those of the town ; and the clumps of eucalyptus, scattered here and there over the plain, remind the traveller that he is in Australasia.

The Church of England, all-powerful in the early days, and even to-day preponderant, has impressed its character on the town which it helped to found. It is enough to count the places of worship to realise that Christchurch is " a terrible place for churches," as I was once told by an inhabitant, who apparently was not enthusiastic over the number of steeples. But the Church of England has not got the monopoly. The religious activity of the inhabitants has given rise to a considerable number of sects, large and small : by the side of the Methodists, Presbyterians, and blatant Salvationists, there are twenty more modest creeds, and twenty chapels have their adherents. The pantheistic and monistic movement, which we should not have expected to find in such company, itself takes an ecclesiastical form, under the name of a small church, more philosophical than Christian, " Our Father's Church."

Each country has its artistic and literary centre, or rather, in each country there is one town which prides itself on being the capital of letters and of art, the refuge of science and of civilisation. Boston tries to be the Athens of the United States ; and Toronto, the Boston of Canada. To preserve our sense of proportion and to remind ourselves that we are on a small stage, we may say that Christchurch aspires to be the Toronto of New Zealand. In fact, though the pedagogic, literary, and artistic institutions are not so numerous as the churches, yet they make a very good show. From the very beginning education was one of the chief cares of the

settlers. At the present day the Christchurch schools are excellent, and Canterbury College is a very good colonial university. Besides the university, the museum, the picture galleries and the public library, not to speak of innumerable institutes and clubs, are institutions of which the people in this little town are really proud.

The first settlers of Canterbury came from an old English stock, very conservative, bold in action but timid in thought, who regarded tradition as the best guide always and everywhere. They would no doubt be astonished to find to-day that their descendants, while keeping their respect for the exterior forms of the past, have yet become a most adventurous race. In fact, Christchurch boasts a whole staff of reformers, for whom no experiment is too much. The feminist movement, which succeeded in getting for women the right to vote, took its rise in Christchurch. From that date the capital of Canterbury has been a great feminist centre. Every year the university creates a batch of women B.A.'s and M.A.'s, who are prepared to discuss with men the most arduous problems in political economy and philosophy. Their activity shows itself in a number of feminist clubs, where political and social reforms are continually being discussed.

While the province of Canterbury lies in a wide and beautiful plain, of easy access and cultivation, forming a sort of England with its fresh fields and temperate climate, the province of Otago, in the extreme south of the Island, is a second Scotland, rugged, cold and covered with steep hills and lofty mountains. It needed a hardy race of settlers to develop such a country; the Scots undertook it and were successful. When we see Dunedin, with its 50,000 inhabitants, when we go through this province and see villages and

farms on every side, it is difficult for us to realise that sixty years ago nothing of all this existed, and that this country was as bare and silent as if it had never been discovered. It was only in 1848 that the first pioneers appeared. Like those of Canterbury, they were brought over by a colonisation company, and like them again they were under the direct patronage of the Church. But while at Christchurch the password seemed to be "English and Anglican," at Dunedin it was "Scottish and Presbyterian." The new-comers brought with them all the sternness of their Puritan faith, and they landed to the sound of hymns. They were not gay companions, but rough and patient men accustomed to the rigours of the Scottish climate, who were going to present to the Colony their valuable qualities of energy and endurance.

At the beginning their task was a difficult one, and during the first few years but small progress was made. Fortunately the land was unoccupied, and the Maoris did not come down, as they did in the north, and threaten every day to destroy the progress made the day before. But winter with its snows and its icy winds was a strong foe, against which even the Scots found it difficult to fight.

The population remained for a long time almost entirely Presbyterian, and was noted for that distrust of the stranger, that narrow respect for tradition which has always marked the old Puritans. It was therefore with very mixed feelings that the Otago settlers learnt, in 1861, of the discovery of gold in the mountains of their province. It meant wealth; but it also meant an open and inviting door to the crowd of professional adventurers. The gold was the source of Otago's prosperity. The population rapidly increased; but the

stamp of the first days had been so strong that it was never lost. To-day, after fifty years, Dunedin is more than ever the Scottish town of New Zealand, the new Edinburgh, as some enthusiasts love to call it. Built on a magnificent site, by a deep and narrow gulf surrounded by high hills, it rises like an amphitheatre above this arm of water, which has nothing of the Mediterranean gaiety of the Auckland harbour, but reminds one rather of some bay in the north of England. It is a city of stone, with wide and regular streets that are full of life, and towering over it stands the Presbyterian Cathedral, a symbol of the religious influence that still reigns over the city. The type of the passers-by, with their rough and guttural accent soon shows their Scottish descent; while the number of Presbyterian churches proves that the inhabitants of Dunedin have not abandoned the faith of their fathers.

We have now visited four very different towns. They are all British, but each has its own character and individuality. Now that we have seen the places in which they dwell it will be easier to get to know the inhabitants, and to gather some idea of the different aspects of their social life.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE DEMOGRAPHY OF NEW ZEALAND.

THE French colonial empire lies almost entirely in the tropics. For this reason the idea of a colony calls up in the French mind a vision of some scorched and exotic land, with an abounding vegetation of palms and cocoa-trees and a feverish and terrible climate, where life is adventurous, strange and unsettled. The French would almost refuse the name of colony to New Zealand with its temperate climate, where the regular, settled, almost provincial life seems expressly made for Europeans.

Everything in New Zealand suggests Europe ; everything favours the immigration and acclimatisation of the white races, and tends to make of these two islands, but lately unknown and mysterious, a white man's country.

The Cape, Australia and Canada have either the torrid heat of the tropics or the awful cold of northern regions. In winter, Quebec and Montreal disappear under the snow ; in summer Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth are, so to speak, reduced to silence by a fiery sun ; too often, on the plateaux in the centre of Australia, water fails and whole herds die for lack of it. But Auckland is buried under palms and flowers the whole

year through, like some town in the Mediterranean. Dunedin, the only large town in the world which is nearer the South Pole than the Equator, the Edinburgh of the Colony, does not know the rigours of the Scotch winter. At Auckland the highest temperature recorded in 1899 was  $83^{\circ}$  in February; the lowest was  $37^{\circ}$  in July. At Dunedin the extremes for the same year were  $81^{\circ}$  in January, and  $23^{\circ}$  in July. It is true that in the Alps of the Southern Island the winter is severe; but in the plain of Canterbury great cold is unknown, and snow is seldom seen. The average temperature for the whole of New Zealand is  $54^{\circ}$ , which is the lowest in Australasia, that is to say, the best. The average for New South Wales is  $65^{\circ}$ , that for South Australia  $72^{\circ}$ . The influence of such excellent climatic conditions should make New Zealand particularly suitable for European immigration, and it has, in fact, become *par excellence* the Colony for settlers in the whole of the British Empire.

There is some similarity in the geographical situations of England and New Zealand. The Northern Island, which is warmer, is slightly suggestive of Ireland; while the Canterbury plain bears a striking resemblance to the south of England, and the extreme south, more rugged and more magnificent, with its blue lakes and its deep bays, would well deserve the name of New Scotland.

It seems as if the first immigrants felt these differences, and that a kind of instinct directed each race towards the province which was most suited to it, and which most resembled its native land. The Irish are more numerous in the north, where they find a milder climate. The province of Canterbury has become, as it were, the property of the pure-blooded Englishmen

who have been settled there since 1850, and who have formed a strictly Anglican colony, giving to the towns, to the fields, and even to nature itself something astonishingly English. As for the Scots, they have concentrated in the south, where their race, more rugged and more hardy, is more suited to the inclemencies of the climate. The province of Otago already somewhat resembled Scotland; the Scottish settlers have accentuated that resemblance, and many of them, in their young cities thickly sown with austere Presbyterian temples, might well believe that they are still in their native country.

These different currents of immigration have remained curiously distinct. In the Northern Island there has, it is true, been a great deal of mixing; Wellington is a sort of thoroughfare where all the English races meet and merge, almost a cosmopolitan town for the Puritan of Dunedin and the Anglican of Christchurch. But in the south the distinction has remained a very marked one. It is a natural result of that extreme decentralisation which is due to the geography of the country, and which it will be very difficult to destroy. Even to-day the provinces, which have been officially suppressed for more than a quarter of a century, each keep their own character, their autonomy of manners and even of accent. Many people, born in the Colony, and for whom these words can have but little significance, call themselves English, Scottish, or Irish.

And the different types of New Zealander correspond to these distinctions. The Scot of Dunedin is always what his ancestors were, of Herculean figure, rough and hardy, with a guttural accent that half a century of colonial life has not abated. The inhabitant of Christ-



church may be defined in one word : he is English. He could hardly be recognised in a crowd of the classic business men of London or of Liverpool. As for the settlers in the Northern Island, the mild climate and easy life are in process of making them into a somewhat new colonial race, differing from the Australians as from the English, and which perhaps will one day be the New Zealand race.

We showed above that the immigration which, up to 1880, gave to New Zealand a regular enough stream of settlers, began to dwindle away about that time. We also showed that public opinion began to regard with an ever increasing distrust the arrival of new-comers, in whom they saw only new competitors. At the present time immigration has practically ceased to count among the factors which tend to increase the population of New Zealand, although the island has only 800,000 inhabitants,<sup>1</sup> while its area and wealth might support ten times that number. But we know that the stream of public opinion seems decisively set towards a policy of protection, of narrowness, and of "the closed door." In these circumstances the few thousands of individuals who land each year in the Colony hardly count. It is from birth alone that an increase must be looked for.

Thirty years ago the Australasian colonies had a very high birth-rate. During the period 1861 to 1865 the proportion of births per thousand in the different states was as under : <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 815,862, according to the census of 1901. *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 208 ; 772,719, excluding the Maoris.

<sup>2</sup> *The Seven Colonies of Australasia*, 1897-1898, p. 46. These exceptionally high rates are no doubt due in part to the fact that in the early days of a colony the number of settlers in the prime of life is proportionately very great. But the phenomenon of the decreasing birth-rate in Australasia for the last 40 years is no less remarkable.

	Per thousand.		Per thousand.
New South Wales	42.71	Western Australia	39.07
Victoria - -	43.30	Tasmania - -	33.80
Queensland -	43.07	New Zealand -	38.22
South Australia -	44.14		

Since then these figures have been steadily decreasing, with a regularity which proves the existence of a definite and lasting tendency. The statistical table for New Zealand, showing the actual number of births and the proportion per thousand, must be given in full :

Year.	No. of Births.	Proportion per 1000.
1882	19,009	37.32
1883	19,202	36.28
1884	19,846	35.91
1885	19,693	34.35
1886	19,299	33.15
1887	19,135	32.09
1888	18,902	31.22
1889	18,457	30.07
1890	18,278	29.44
1891	18,273	29.01
1892	17,876	27.83
1893	18,187	27.50
1894	18,528	27.28
1895	18,546	26.78
1896	18,612	26.33
1897	18,737	25.96
1898	18,955	25.74
1899	18,835	25.12
1900	19,546	25.60
1901	20,491	26.34 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 335.

As may be seen, the number of births has not every year been steadily decreasing ; it has even risen slightly since 1893. But the proportion of births is far from having had the same movement. In spite of a small advance in 1901 (26.34 instead of 25.60), New Zealand must be classed to-day among the countries with a very low birth-rate.

The number of marriages, however, regularly increases :

Year.	No. of Marriages.	Year.	No. of Marriages.
1881	3267	1892	4002
1882	3600	1893	4115
1883	3612	1894	4178
1884	3800	1895	4110
1885	3813	1896	4843
1886	3488	1897	4928
1887	3563	1898	5091
1888	3617	1899	5461
1889	3632	1900	5860
1890	3797	1901	6095 <sup>1</sup>
1891	3805		

But it must be noticed that the average number of children per marriage decreases during this period ; in 1881 it was 5.72 ; in 1900, it was only 3.58 ;<sup>2</sup> and in 1901, it had fallen to 3.50.<sup>3</sup>

This decrease in the birth-rate is a general phenomenon in Australasia. But nevertheless New Zealand, after having been for a long time the most prolific Colony, has fallen almost to the lowest place. Only South Australia and Victoria have a birth-rate lower than that of New Zealand (respectively 25.78 and 25.77, as against

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 336.

26.34). If, on the other hand, we compare these two colonies with our European countries, we find that they only exceed Ireland (29.9 per 1000) and France (21.7 per 1000).

This disquieting fact of a diminishing birth-rate is, fortunately, compensated by the excellent sanitary condition of New Zealand. It is, in fact, an extraordinarily healthy land, and is, in that respect, practically unique. Europeans have found there hygienic conditions which exactly suit them; and it can almost be said that people do not die in New Zealand.

The rate of mortality in 1901 was 9.81 per 1000; 1896 was even better, 9.10 per 1000.<sup>1</sup> This rate is the lowest known in the world. But we must not take these figures as they stand. The statistics bearing on mortality are falsified in Australasia by the fact that in all new countries the proportion of men in full vigour is peculiarly large, which has the natural result of diminishing the death-rate; and this explains the apparently extraordinary figures given above.

But such as they are the figures do mean something, and they are enough to make us consider New Zealand one of the healthiest countries, perhaps the healthiest country, in the world.

The Australian colonies are also in very good sanitary condition, but not quite so good as New Zealand. In 1901 the death-rate per 1000 was :

Queensland	-	-	-	-	11.88
New South Wales	-	-	-	-	11.68
Victoria	-	-	-	-	13.22
South Australia	-	-	-	-	11.11
Western Australia	-	-	-	-	13.36
Tasmania	-	-	-	-	10.45 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 348.

Europeans, then, have become perfectly acclimatised in New Zealand. They have kept their customs and their mode of life; they have established there their homes, as in England; and they have not even had to wear different clothes.

The best proof that the race has thoroughly adapted itself to the conditions is the health of the young children. In 1901 the proportion of deaths among children less than one year old was as low as 10.03 per cent. at Wellington, and 7.89 per cent. at Dunedin.<sup>1</sup>

Besides this the towns have an extraordinarily low rate of mortality. In 1901 the rates per 1000 were :

Auckland (excluding suburbs)	-	-	13.10
Wellington	„	-	10.66
Christchurch	„	-	13.11
Dunedin	„	-	12.64 <sup>2</sup>

Including the suburbs the rate is still lower :

Auckland and suburbs	-	-	11.50
Wellington	„	-	10.29
Christchurch	„	-	12.77
Dunedin	„	-	11.62 <sup>3</sup>

This difference is due to the special character of the suburbs, which are not, as in most European towns, poor and unhealthy quarters, but, on the contrary, form the residential quarter for rich and well-to-do people.

In its towns, as over the country as a whole, New Zealand compares well with Australia. In the large

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 350.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 349.

Australian towns the death-rate for 1900 was as follows :

Melbourne	-	-	-	14.33	per thousand.
Sydney	-	-	-	11.32	„
Adelaide	-	-	-	12.76	„
Brisbane	-	-	-	10.90	„
Perth	-	-	-	14.72	„
Hobart	-	-	-	14.34 <sup>1</sup>	„

The chief characteristics in the demography of New Zealand are, then, the perfect acclimatisation of the white race, the extraordinarily low death-rate, and the correspondingly low birth-rate.

The first of these needs no explanation ; and the English have adapted themselves to the climate of the Antipodes so quickly and so thoroughly that we can never doubt the fact. The second characteristic is only a particular case of the first ; the settler's life is extremely healthy, and contains all the factors that make for health. The towns, which in other countries are generally unhealthy centres of disease, are here astonishingly healthy. For there has been no lack of land to build on, and the business quarters are the only slightly crowded ones. The residences, on the contrary, spread out to infinity in the suburbs, which have wide streets and are full of vegetation, air and light ; large boarding-houses are unknown, and everyone, from the richest to the poorest, has his own home. As far as this goes, then, all is well, and the New Zealanders have nothing to fear for the future.

The only bad point is the decreasing birth-rate, which, together with the falling-off in immigration, is a

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 353.

direct menace to the numerical growth of a population which already is not very numerous.

The causes of this decrease in the birth-rate must no doubt be looked for in certain tendencies of the New Zealanders to which we alluded in a former chapter. The conception of the country as a cake, which it is to one's interest to divide among as few mouths as possible, seems to be almost universal in the Colony. We know with what ill-grace new-comers are received, and with what jealousy the colonists wish to keep for themselves, and for themselves only, this large country, which is inhabited by less than 800,000 souls. This same tendency has come to light everywhere in Australasia (except, perhaps, in Queensland); and it is certainly taking a very narrow view of things to wish merely to keep the ground that has been won without any thought of the more distant future. It is certain that the first cause of the declining birth-rate is to be found in this view—we might say, in this conviction—which is so deep as to be by now nearly unconscious. There are, besides this, some secondary reasons, which, after all, are only aspects of the first, such as the later age for marriage, due to the lack of position of many men and to the increasing number of lucrative employments open to young women.

“A blot and a menace” are the first expressions that come into a Frenchman's mind when he thinks of a phenomenon which he quite naturally considers to be dangerous and alarming. But this point of view is purely French, and the New Zealander does not look at the matter at all in this way. I never heard anyone in the Colony express the least fear on this point; I never was able to discover that the pessimistic moralists—who nevertheless exist over there—saw in

this diminution of the birth-rate a transgression of divine law ; Malthus, so decried among us, has still a great many disciples at the Antipodes.

We may add that from the political point of view the question of population has not the same setting as it has in France. We always consider the possibility of a war in which our rivals might be able to put into the field more combatants than we could, and our low birth-rate causes us, with great reason, serious apprehension in this respect. The problem is not the same for the New Zealanders. Their colonial wars would not require them to put a great number of men into the field, and for that matter it is unlikely that they ever could. But it must be confessed that they take a narrow view of the economic struggle. They are 800,000, and the idea of their being a million does not fill them with enthusiasm. They ask themselves if they would be happier than they now are ; in any case, they think, wages would have a downward tendency. Thus they console themselves for being so few in number, and for increasing so slowly, as almost to remove any dreams of a great future :

1886	-	-	-	-	578,000 inhabitants.
1891	-	-	-	-	626,000 ,,
1896	-	-	-	-	703,000 ,,
1901	-	-	-	-	772,000 <sup>1</sup> ,,

A great thinker once said that the worst famine for a land was a famine of men. Those who control the Government of New Zealand might, and should, remember this saying. They should realise that a young colony which, in spite of its youth, is already trying to

<sup>1</sup> Not counting the Maoris, *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, p. 210.



preserve itself rather than to expand, is by that act condemning itself. It is true that in Oceania there is no question of providing soldiers for war, but rather of providing producers and consumers for the economic struggle. New Zealand can only furnish 800,000 souls : in our days that is a small number to play its part in the world !

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SNOBBISHNESS IN NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY.

SNOBBISHNESS has, in the last few years, taken or re-taken such a hold all over the Anglo-Saxon world that it is impossible to leave this curious state of mind out of account when we are studying the psychology and tendencies of any portion of British society. For a long time, however, it was possible to think that only England was affected by it, and that her distant and democratic colonies, free from the direct influence of royalty and the peerage, had escaped the contagion. Australia and New Zealand in particular seemed to Europe to be the very type of the future democracy, freed from tradition and from prejudice; their reputation as "advanced" countries, ready for the most audacious political reforms, had made even America's renown fade before it. No one doubted that the vain and archaic distinctions of the old world had been replaced at the Antipodes by the most complete and open equality.

This was, in truth, to think of the Australasians as, like us Frenchmen, sons of the French Revolution, republicans and disciples of the three great principles, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It was rather too hasty a conclusion to draw, from the audacity of some

of their reforms, that they had finally shaken off the dust of the past and the respect for its antiquated forms. For snobbishness, like imperialism, has found at the Antipodes a soil peculiarly favourable to its development.

At the time of its origin New Zealand thought of little besides the arduous and absorbing task of colonisation. It is only when it became, as it were, a parvenu that it felt the touch of worldly cares. The first settlers were modest, unpretentious people ; they certainly did not belong to the poorest classes of the population, for they had been carefully selected and generally brought with them some capital ; but their first care was to gain their living, and, as they had left Europe without hoping to return, they were but little affected by the thousand petty vanities of older societies.

Later on the Colony became organised into a regular society, and the New Zealanders, formerly pioneers, became what are known to-day as *colonials*. They received political autonomy and, following an evolution which we described in the earlier part of this work, they abandoned, little by little, the government of moderates, and fell under the influence of Mr. Seddon and the liberal-labour coalition. Wealth came to them at the same time ; there was general ease ; society (in the narrow sense) began to flourish and to show less indifference to hierarchies and honours. But the labour party, fully occupied with its reforms and with the organisation of power, as yet hardly thought of the arrogance of wars and the glamour of imperialism. This was not, however, because the internationalist and humanitarian spirit ever flourished among the Australasians—it is too much opposed to the exclusive tendencies of Anglo-Saxons and to their narrow national spirit.

But England herself was evolving. Gladstone was about to disappear; traditional liberalism was losing ground every day, while at the same time imperialism was born and began to spread over the whole empire. Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders felt themselves moving in the orbit of a great nation, and their pride was gladdened. Thus it was that New Zealand, leaving the path of peace, which it seemed essential should be also her path, was won over, even more willingly than the other colonies, by a policy of megalomania strangely disproportionate to her real importance. The salutary modesty which so well befits a young and small community gave place to English pride with all its consequences.

The development of imperialism coincided in the mother-country with an appreciable weakening of the parliamentary régime, and a corresponding strengthening of the Crown and the nobility. This change could not fail to make its influence felt to the utmost confines of the Empire. We can see to-day that the idea the New Zealanders have of the Constitution of the Empire is not exactly that of the orthodox parliamentary régime. The King is more known to them than the House of Commons, and far from regarding the latter as more important—though they think its position a safe one—they delight in thinking of the English nobility as a sort of tutelary body of a higher order, whose disappearance should never be required. In their eyes, however strange it may appear, the halo of Member of Parliament (M.P.), which was once so brilliant, now pales before that of the first lord that comes along. When our New Zealand democrats come to London, they find themselves immediately and without any effort on the best of terms with all the most conserva-

tive instincts of the nobility. Imperialism has served as a bond of union between them. Under the shelter of this large new flag, the conservatives of the old world allow into their midst radicals who but yesterday would have seemed to them wild and dangerous. On their part the democrats of the Antipodes, at first, perhaps, a little suspicious and reserved, end by giving their tacit approval to the existence of social hierarchies and aristocratic influences.

In fact, Australasia has not yet thoroughly learnt what social equality is. The old English conception of the hierarchy of classes is not as dead there as one might think. In political life, there has been an almost complete *tabula rasa* ; but in social life it is an understood thing that the rich man is entitled to more consideration, and the nobleman to more respect, quite without any consideration of personal value. The notion of respectability, which marks for the people the man adorned with the semblance of fortune, good form, and official virtue, is known and admitted by everyone. It is a strange thing that in this land, which in politics is so advanced, the mixture of classes does not proceed so easily as one might think, owing to the reserve of those above as much as to the almost resigned humility of those who are below. The curious thing about this English hierarchy is that while the class which is called upper admires itself, the class called lower admires it still more. In the political arena, there is a strong opposition to wealth ; in Parliament, wealth is a subject for inflammatory speeches ; and yet in every-day life it is given a consideration which would be quite natural anywhere else, but which seems paradoxical in these new democracies.

The admiration for titles is hardly any less than it is

in England. There was a time when it was the fashion to laugh at the "honours" which the Crown distributes among its faithful subjects in the form of the titles "Sir" and "Honourable." This time is long past; to-day there is hardly one colonial who at heart and by a kind of instinct is not ready to give homage to the least among the peers of the realm.

The King enjoys an undisputed position and a prestige which we run no risk of exaggerating. It would be very difficult to find a single republican in the whole of New Zealand. The attachment of the colonials to the King is of a complex enough nature. While they think of him as the political representative of the Empire, they also regard him as a kind of social leader. The British citizen, in fact, whether Australasian, Canadian or English, is always ready to fall into line, and in every act of his political or social life he feels the want of a leader. And is the King not the supreme leader? Is not the Court the Privy Council of elegance and tone?

The Court of England! Can we form any idea of the mysterious and enchanting charm which these words have for the colonials who, at the other end of the earth, pronounce them with so much devotion? The Court is in their eyes the highest and the most brilliant thing in the whole world, and they regard the King as an almost divine being. Though constitutional theory makes of him a mere chairman of parties, colonial opinion, enchanted by distance, thinks of him as deriving his power from a source infinitely more splendid even than the election of a whole people.

The presence of this King certainly contributes greatly to maintaining the prestige of the old country, which from afar off is like a capital city to those world-provincials that colonials are. When they visit London,

regarding it with an admiration that is slightly tinged with veneration, it is certainly because England is their ancestral country, the eternal source of ideas, of fashion, and of capital; but it is also, we must not forget, because there they come nearer to this aristocracy and to this Court which they so piously admire. To come near the Court, to have seen the King, even to have made the acquaintance of some one of his suite, is an honour which is told of for months afterwards, and which gives you in some way a right to respect and consideration.

The governor, who is the official emanation of the royal power, rouses these sentiments in a less degree, and it cannot be denied that a man or woman who has been received at the Palace of Government is accorded different treatment—even though the palace be of wood and the host a lord of recent date. The fact that the posts of governors and the titles of nobility are not within the reach of colonials endows them with a prestige such as our democratic posts will never have. And this is no doubt the reason why Paris, in spite of all its attractions, in spite of the supreme distinction of French civilisation, produces but little effect on Australasians. For them something is wanting, and this something is a king, a court, true nobles, an organised society whose head can be easily found. It is not paradoxical to say that at heart they are a little sorry for us republicans with no king to revere and no nobility to imitate. They think that that constitutes a slight inferiority in us.

The New Zealanders themselves occupy a position intermediate between true republicans and true subjects of a monarchy. They cannot profit by the titles of nobility which the Court distributes year by year. These are high favours which are not made for them,

for the colonial is not *quite* an Englishman ; they understand this, and with a modesty which verges on humility they submit themselves to the fact. But they do not turn up their noses at the crumbs of nobility which England is good enough to let fall from her table. It has been up to now an understood thing, a rule which, so to say, has never had any exception, that colonials should not be given peerages. But the titles of " Sir " and of " Honourable " are liberally distributed, and anyone can benefit by this good luck. A title, even a modest knighthood, represents a certain degree of consideration for the person who receives it. Even though the beneficiary may be a man who for long has been rich and respected, it is none the less true that from the day on which he receives the title he is spoken to in a different way. When Mr. Frederick Williams, for example, becomes Sir Frederick, everyone feels that he has gone up in the scale of human dignity, and his wife is called Lady Williams, with a respect which is tinged with envy. Both of them have received from on high a dignity which makes them greater. Democratic America does not know these joys. The millionaires of New York and Chicago can do everything except become earls or barons ; even a baronetcy is not within their reach, and they suffer much because of it. This is at least one advantage that the Australasians have over them—belonging to a great and aristocratic power, which distributes favours and honours. The true character of Australasian loyalty could not be understood without a reference to this curious snobbishness.

If this attitude and these sentiments had only influenced people of the middle class there would have been nothing so very remarkable in it. The middle



class in all countries has the same pitiable admirations, and the same respect for titles. But unfortunately even the lower classes have been affected. It would seem that its character, so definitely democratic, should protect it from this false respect, this forced admiration for the select of mundane society ; but, in fact, the most advanced New Zealand democrats have shown that, like their English ancestors and contemporaries, they cannot resist these vain and brilliant influences.

It is a recognised fact that English workmen are never happier than when they can get a lord of high degree to preside over their meetings. The members of the London County Council are very proud of having, sitting beside them as their colleagues, some half-dozen noblemen. The Australasian workman is much the same. He adores ceremonies and pomp, and by no means thinks that a democracy should do without them. It is seldom that one hears him speaking against the governor, whose palace is the recognised centre of taste and fashion. No one is more attracted than the workman to the superannuated and slightly ridiculous formalities which mark the opening of Parliament. He much appreciates this brilliant spectacle, and his pride is a little tickled by the thought that he is in some way connected with it. He could doubtless be induced, with a little pressure, to confess that the event would be incomplete without the member of the aristocracy who controls it, for in his heart he thinks that certain things can only be done properly by a lord. Though the workman will never give up the audacity of his ideas, this audacity, which is so firm in attacking the foundations of things, becomes a strangely respectful timidity as soon as there is question of touching empty forms. The New Zealanders are democrats without

being republicans ; pitiless to the plutocracy, they have not a single word to say against the nobility.

There are, however, a few people who oppose the pomp of these aristocratic forms ; but they are seldom to be found, and day by day they are getting fewer. In 1897 and again in 1902 Mr. Seddon was offered a knighthood. He believed that he ought to refuse it ; and his refusal was generally approved of among democratic Europeans, who thought it quite natural. But public opinion in New Zealand does not seem to have regarded it as a meritorious action. It was apparent that his acceptance of the knighthood would not have caused any murmuring : no one would have said, or even thought, that Sir Richard Seddon was throwing over the ideas of Mr. Seddon by taking another handle to his name. He would have been simply congratulated, and no one would even have smiled.

New Zealand democracy has then allowed itself to be a little seduced by the ostentation of aristocratic England. Following in the wake of personal snobbishness came the snobbishness of war. To keep its place in the Empire and to walk in the footsteps of the old world, the young Colony thought it her duty to become bellicose. There was no longer talk of universal peace, of pacific propaganda ; and her narrow nationalism leaves no room for humanitarian ideas.

The Transvaal war was for the New Zealand neophytes of imperialism a first opportunity of fighting by the side of England. It seems to them now that there they won their spurs, and the fight for the Empire has made them greater in their own eyes. To-day their loyalty is blended with their snobbery ; for these two sentiments are but one, when both relate to a king.

The visit of the Duke of York in June, 1901,

in the course of his great voyage through the British Empire, gave New Zealand an opportunity such as she had never had before of showing her sincere attachment to the Crown, to all who represent it, to all who come near to it. The whole people of New Zealand affirmed its respect and its love for the heir to the throne. The entertainments that were organised in his honour had an ostentatious character such as is almost unknown in our European democracies. The most civil functionaries donned gold-laced uniforms, which would have been more in place in the most formal of monarchies than in such a young and democratic society. And not only was no voice raised to protest against this new affirmation of the monarchic principle, but it seems that, on the contrary, this great manifestation had the result of driving still further away from New Zealand the true republican spirit.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT.

NEW ZEALAND was the first Australasian Colony to give to women the right of voting in political elections. South Australia followed in her footsteps, and now this reform is in general application throughout the Australasian federation. It may be asked why New Zealand was the first to give reality to a conception which the Australian States seem to have long regarded with indifference. The only answer that can be given is that it is entirely a matter of chance, of circumstances, and of personalities.

The conservative obstacles at the Antipodes are so fragile and so few that no very violent shock is necessary to overturn them. But yet there must be some one to give this shock, there must be men and agitators to start things moving. The influence of individuality among Anglo-Saxons can never be exaggerated. One apostle (and with the English every campaign soon takes the aspect of an apostleship) is often quite enough to bring about the passing of a motion which would otherwise have disappeared amid general inattention. To this must be added the interests of party, and that love of novelty and advertisement which makes everything possible in Australasia ; and there we have the

principal causes of this feminist movement, which, without having any deep roots in New Zealand, sprang up there almost suddenly and, we might say, to the astonishment of everybody.

We shall not, then, in order to explain the origin of this legislation, endeavour to find fundamental reasons going to the very heart of things. It would be labour thrown away, for, as Mr. Reeves said, with cruel irony, "there are no doubt excellent reasons for giving women the right to vote, but these are not what determined Stuart Mill." We should rather say that New Zealand came across a group of men and women determined to realise the idea of woman suffrage, who, after a few unsuccessful efforts, at last managed to overcome the indifference of the many and the opposition of the few.

In 1893 New Zealand women became electors. Before that date the history of feminism in the Colony was hardly more than that of a small group of women and of politicians whom they had won over to their cause. No great amount of public feeling had been aroused, nor had there been any national demonstration. Therefore the surprise was general when Parliament decided to pass a law which doubled the number of electors, and for the first time admitted women into the counsels of the State.

The feminist party was not, however, entirely a thing of the future. For many years previously it had shown signs of vitality, and its few members made up for their fewness by their burning enthusiasm. There were at first a few pioneers who gave themselves up entirely to their work, like good Anglo-Saxons. Mrs. Muller, wife of a resident magistrate of Nelson, was one of the first women who demanded the right to vote. This was about 1865; the time for parliamentary

action had not yet come, and the feminist agitation, if this name can be given to very limited manifestations, consisted in practically nothing beyond articles in the papers, declarations and petitions.

Little by little, a few men were converted and brought the new idea before Parliament with an enthusiasm and insistence which made them be regarded as faddists—that is to say, as enlightened. Dr. Wallis was the first of these. In 1877 he moved a resolution in the House “that the electoral incapacity of women should be entirely abolished.” He counted a little on the support of Sir George Grey, then head of the Government and noted for his advanced ideas. But the latter, without openly opposing the resolution, was able to make use of one of the thousand subtleties in procedure to adjourn it *sine die*. In 1879 the feminist party made a new recruit in the person of John Ballance, the future prime minister, who managed to secure on the question a minority of 19 votes against 27.

These efforts were, however, of slight importance. The public received them with indifference, and for many years after these reverses, woman suffrage fell into the deepest oblivion. In 1887 the Stout ministry, no doubt under the influence of John Ballance, put the proposition on the agenda of the day, and managed to bring it through up to the second reading. But public opinion remained cold, and it was soon evident that nothing could be done.

We mentioned just now the campaign made by the so-called faddists. Their repeated assaults had produced hardly any results, because they acted in a vacuum and built on sand. Votes for women, in fact, could not become a real question until its supporters made an appeal to interests and formed into strong

organisations. Circumstances and the interestedness of certain parties made possible in 1893 that which a few years before had been quite impossible.

First, there was a rapid formation of associations called the Women's Christian Temperance Unions (W.C.T.U.). Feminism soon got into touch with them, which was a very clever step, for in Anglo-Saxon countries there are no more powerful allies than Christianity and Temperance. These unions were skilful in organising their propaganda. The different branches were entrusted to special committees. One of them, presided over by Mrs. K. W. Sheppard, was to deal entirely with woman suffrage. Mrs. Sheppard availed herself of all the resources of an English "agitation": papers, pamphlets, petitions, conferences, public meetings—nothing was omitted. By the side of the W.C.T.U. new societies sprang up, composed of the same, or almost the same, elements. There was the Canterbury Women's Institute at Christchurch, and there were similar groups in the other towns. The propaganda then was not languishing. But the movement developed in intensity more than on the surface, and it was far from having made an impression on the country as a whole. It was in consequence of a union of groups rather than of any popular pressure that the House passed, in September, 1893, the reform now under discussion.

The Act was due to circumstances, and not at all to a vote of principle. As Mr. Reeves said, Stuart Mill's arguments convinced few people. But on the eve of the general elections of 1893, the different parties each thought that women might be useful allies for them. The workmen hoped to make their wives vote with more regularity than those of the rich, and thus

proportionately to increase the strength of the advanced party. Prohibitionists saw in the female electorate a powerful ally against alcoholism. The Government had no strong conviction either way (Ballance had died in April, 1893), and it was in response to pressure from its adherents that it supported the Bill, expecting it to be thrown out by the Upper House. To everybody's surprise the Bill went through, and the next day more than 100,000 women found themselves in possession of voting papers.

Having traced the origin of the feminist movement in New Zealand, we must now enquire how women in general have received the reform which officially gave them a place in the State. As might have been expected, the reception given it has not been great in all classes of society. Many "ladies" hardly trouble themselves to go to the ballot-box, and affect to despise this new right which has been conferred on them without their asking for it. But this abstention is merely an affectation, ridiculous enough, which they are gradually dropping. Nowadays it is much more common than it used to be to see well-dressed women at the polling-booths. The wives of working men are not so indifferent; but as a rule they have no ideas of their own, and follow their husband's opinion—an event which these husbands had, in fact, foreseen.

The only women who vote with personal and reasoned conviction are, in short, those who may be styled intellectuals: graduates of universities, the teaching body, publicists, philanthropists, and also many women who are enabled by the leisure of widowhood or celibacy to busy themselves with political questions. It is from this class that the first feminist associations were drawn; and the Women's Christian Temperance Unions also



provided a great many voters. They take a most serious view of their rights, or, as they like to say a little pompously, of their duties. They vote regularly, enrol themselves in clubs or political associations ; in a word, are active citizens in the full sense of that term. At the same time they are only a small minority, and could not be considered faithful representatives of the female sex in New Zealand.

In fact, we must neither exaggerate nor underestimate the importance of this movement. It has not been the beginning of a new era, as some enthusiasts hoped it would be. Since the time that women began to vote, next to nothing has, in fact, been altered ; the number of voting papers has doubled, but the respective proportions of the different parties have remained the same. But, on the other hand, we must not regard it as a trivial and unimportant event ; for woman suffrage has gradually and, it would seem, permanently, entered into New Zealand life.

A glance at the statistics for the elections of 1893, 1896, 1899 and 1902, will show that the women voters were numerous :

Year.	Number of adult women.	Number of women on the register.	Proportion per cent.	Number of voters.	Proportion per cent.
1893	139,471	109,461	78	90,290	85
1896	159,656	142,305	89	108,783	76
1899	171,373	163,215	95	119,150	75 <sup>1</sup>
1902	195,783	185,944	95	138,565	74 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1901, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Figures supplied by the Agent-General of New Zealand in London.

The intervention of women gives to the electoral campaigns a certain novelty, because the candidate is obliged to undertake the political conquest of the female electors, many of whom are influential and not very easy to deal with. Often he finds that his wife and daughter are rather better at this work than he is ; and then the electoral tournament goes on with them as champions, visiting in turn families, society and tradesmen. But the customs of the English result in this state of things being considered quite natural ; no one is surprised by it, and no one complains that there is anything eccentric about it.

The women generally bring into the battle all the qualities of their sex. When they are won over to one party they spare neither their time nor their efforts to support it. Their resources are infinite in number ; they even go so far as to put pressure on their servants and cooks—whom, however, it is very difficult to convert, because the female proletariat of the hearth generally takes its political mission very seriously, and can hardly be turned aside by promise or threat. Some women have an organising and tactical ability which more than one man might envy them. Mrs. Sheppard, for example, who was for a long time secretary of the W.C.T.U., attended to elections and to the dealings of these unions with Parliament in a manner which won for her the respect of all and no doubt the fear of some. To complete this brief picture of the electoral activity of women in New Zealand, we shall quote Mr. Reeves's description of the first ballot in which they were called upon to take part :

“ The eventful morning (November 28th, 1893) was bright and fine almost everywhere. The women began to vote early—at about nine o'clock—and by amicable

arrangements were allowed to have certain booths pretty much to themselves until noon. In several districts the committees took care that a woman's should be the first vote recorded. Workmen's wives 'tidied up' at home, put on their best clothes, and walked to the nearest poll. Sometimes their menkind escorted them, for it was a general though not universal holiday. More often the women of one or two neighbour families made up a party and sallied out together. Between noon and two o'clock, dinner postponed politics; in the afternoon the women again thronged the booths, and had almost all comfortably voted by tea time, when the rush of workmen, which in the colonies begins an hour or so earlier than in England, began to flood the polls. All things were done in courtesy and order, without rudeness, hustling or hysteria. Good-natured neighbours took it in turns to look after each other's children while the voting was being done. Each woman armed herself conscientiously with her number, and, on the whole, the novices went through the ordeal with much credit. When the polls closed at seven o'clock, 90,000 women had peacefully voted." <sup>1</sup>

As may be seen from the splendid picture we have just quoted, the large majority of New Zealand women vote peacefully and in silence, without bringing any great passion to the fulfilment of their duty. But the small minority whom just now we called "active citizens" are far from showing the same reserve. In all the towns of any importance these female citizens have formed feminist associations whose definitely political nature cannot be doubted for a second. One of the oldest, formed at Christchurch in 1893, is the Canterbury Women's Institute. At Auckland there is

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *State Experiments*, i. 122.

the Women's Political League, and at Wellington, the Women's Democratic Union. The members of these societies form the most influential and the most enterprising portion of the class of political women. They have united to federate their associations and to centralise their efforts ; in 1896, at the instance of Mrs. Wells, secretary of the Canterbury Women's Institute, a convention of representatives from feminist societies met at Christchurch, and there followed the constitution of the National Council of the Women of New Zealand.

This national council is an institution which represents, if not all New Zealand women, at least such of them as take an active part in politics. Its purpose is to federate all the women's associations, and to give a single authoritative expression to their wishes, without, however, interfering in the very least with the work of the local unions. Every year the council meets in one of the four large towns, Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin, turn and turn about. Each affiliated society sends its delegates, on the basis of one for every hundred members, two for every three hundred, and three for every five hundred members. At the congress, reports are read and discussed, and the collection of resolutions then adopted forms, as it were, the official programme of the feminist party. The really interesting thing about these meetings, and what distinguishes them from similar meetings that might be held in Europe, is the fact that the New Zealand women, being electors, have real power in their hands, for their wishes, backed by their own voting papers, may very easily reach Parliament, and there become transformed into laws. There is something more than an academic discussion here ; and in these meetings women are, as it were, serving their parliamentary apprenticeship.

The National Council of Women has already held many congresses. I had the opportunity of being present at the Congress of 1899, and I shall attempt to describe its character and the chief tendencies manifested.

On the 12th of April, 1899, the Auckland papers announced that the National Council of the Women of New Zealand would hold its first sitting that very evening at the Town Hall in the meeting hall of the municipal council. At half-past eight exactly the congress was opened. There were some thirty women seated round the horse-shoe table, which generally serves for the deliberations of the municipal councillors. The president, Mrs. Daldy, a white-haired woman, wearing a small lace bonnet, was seated in the mayor's chair. A numerous, attentive and unexcited audience filled the hall.

Most of the members of this congress are married women, as can be told from the official list of the delegates. Few of them are young; the statutes do not lay down any age minimum, but, in fact, many of these women are grey-haired. Fashion is not absolutely banished, and in that some delegates tacitly consent to recognise that the right to vote and eligibility to Parliament are not the only ornaments which a woman of the future may allow herself.

Discussion began, and the congress lasted till the 20th of April. Each day many subjects were dealt with in reports read by members and in short discussions afterwards. These discussions were the most interesting part, for they allowed individual opinion to express itself freely, with the imagination and sincerity of improvisation. Four or five members had a real talent for speaking; not that they settled down, like men, to

making and refuting objections, for women seem to be orators rather than debaters ; but they expressed themselves with facility, often with great vigour. An Irishwoman brought into the debate the caustic spirit and the vivacity of her race. Another—isolated enough, it must be confessed—struck a note of great common sense, which is always wanted in an assembly of reformers. Another represented the ideal ; while a group of raging feminists went into the most trivial administrative details, the boring monopoly of which they would do well to leave to men. The learned and philosophical touch was not wanting ; I heard quoted not only Carlyle and Ruskin, but even Darwin and Westermarck, the author of a work of 800 pages on the origin of marriage ! This surfeit of documentation, often superficial and ill-digested, is one of the characteristics of New Zealand feminists.

The way the discussion is conducted is perfect, and everything goes on with the utmost correctness ; not a whisper ; from time to time a little discreet applause marks the end of a speech ; another woman then rises and begins, addressing the president, as is the English custom : “ Madam President . . . ” The replies, though often lacking in animation, are interesting and agreeable to follow ; in such a congress everyone is more or less of the same opinion, and there are only slight divergencies ; and hence most of the voting is monotonous in its unanimity.

But it is probable that things would be different if men were admitted into the congress. Nothing is more curious than the tone adopted by the delegates when they speak of the strong sex : it is a tone of strict politeness which is barely courteous. It is apparent that, in spite of everything, man is looked on by them as an

opponent. One member having spoken of "the gentlemen," corrected herself to "the men." It is because men are so discouraging to feminist pretensions; the women know it, and know also that they will have to cut for themselves a place in the sun at the point of the sword. Hence there is a certain coldness, a certain ill-dissimulated contempt when they speak of their rivals. There is in this something a little ridiculous, and the common sense of the public does not fail to point it out, either in witty caricatures or in slight raillery—for it must be said to the honour of New Zealand that all these discussions and the polemics to which they give rise, are conducted in perfect quiet and with absolute propriety.

Which way are the leaders of the feminist movement tending? In a conversation with Mmes. Sheppard, Wells, Sievwright and Williamson, whom I met at the end of one session, I gathered their views. "We do not wish for revolution," they told me, "but we do wish for evolution, for development, for growth. We do not believe that woman's interests are contrary to those of man; but we do believe that when things have taken their real shape, man and woman will only be able to work with and through each other. But we have not yet got to that point, and humanity has not yet seen man and woman come to their full and harmonious development. We are working for the human race as a whole, and not solely for woman; we do not wish to drag man down, but, on the contrary, to raise woman to his level. The State is a hearth on a larger scale, and what is a hearth without a mother?"

In her introduction to the pamphlet containing the business of the congress, Mrs. Ada Wells confirms the words given above: "In working to acquire liberty,

social, economic, civil and political, the aim of woman is in no way egoistic. The cruel system of economic competition which reigns everywhere has logically led her to the conclusion that she should take her place in the counsels and the governments of this world. If she does not do this, there will be universal ruin. . . . This rude awakening of woman to her duties and to her responsibilities has made her conscious of her own servitude. . . . Before she can hold her place by the side of man, as a companion and associate, she must be relieved of the burden which drags her down ; and this is why she has set about to organise societies to secure that cohesion, coherence, and unity of method which are necessary to enable her to break her chains." <sup>1</sup>

These philosophical generalities, which are so dear to the New Zealand women and which are to be found in nearly all their speeches, have nothing very definite or characteristic about them. To get some idea of the real programme of the members of the party, we must follow Mrs. Wells and her colleagues through the detail of different reports, whose subjects and conclusions we shall briefly run over.

What first strikes us in the list of questions discussed is that most of them are political questions. The National Council is composed of women who never forget that as electors they can put in their word on the affairs of the State. The general meeting of a political party would no doubt put down for discussion just such subjects as these.

Politics, then, had the upper hand. In a first paper, called "The Reform of Local Institutions," the view was put forward that universal suffrage should be

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet of the 4th Session of the National Council of the Women of New Zealand, 1899, pp. 3 and 4.



extended to the municipal elections, for which it is not yet in force. An amendment, brought in by Mrs. Sheppard, made women eligible to sit on municipal councils. Another motion demanded the admission of women to the administrative councils of hospitals. A short discussion followed, in the course of which an irritated voice was raised to declare that "women have been Cinderellas long enough, and the reason why men are so obstinate in refusing women admittance to their counsels must doubtless be that they have more than one dishonest act to hide there." Another view, supporting the municipalisation of all industry, was next adopted, after a few timid objections and a slight and unimportant discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Coming to general politics, the council adopted a resolution which was directed to no less a result than the abolition of the parliamentary régime. The party system, with its necessary and sometimes contemptible compromises, is evidently hated by the upright and thoroughly genuine minds of the New Zealand women. They have come to the conclusion that it is anti-democratic to allow the governor to choose the prime minister, and to allow the latter to choose his colleagues. The election of the ministry seems to them a better course. Mrs. Wells defended this system in a prejudiced speech, and the motion was carried almost unanimously, only five dissenting.<sup>2</sup>

A little further on, the Upper House comes under discussion: its members are at present nominated by the Government. The Council would like to see them elected by the people. It seems that the leaders of the congress had a deep distrust of authority, and this

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet cited Session of 13th April, pp. 16 and 17.

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlet cited, pp. 30 and 31.

distrust after all could be nothing but a distrust of men.

Two papers deal directly with the condition of women, one by Mrs. Sheppard and the other by Miss Stella Henderson. The first is on "The Economic Independence of the Married Woman." In it Mrs. Sheppard develops the idea that the woman, having accepted the duties of marriage (and the writer gives rather a gloomy account of these duties), should get in exchange economic independence. By economic independence must be understood, according to the author, the right of the woman to use a portion of the family revenue for her own needs. There are six good reasons for this : (1) It is just ; (2) It is necessary for the woman's protection ; (3) It is necessary for the children's protection ; (4) It is necessary to protect the man against himself ; (5) It would improve the condition of the married woman ; (6) It is a question on which depends the future of the race. If the married woman were to gain this independence, Mrs. Sheppard concludes, she would be spared the humiliating obligation of asking for money, and she would obtain her real position as wife and mother, instead of being, as she is to-day, a child or a toy.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Stella Henderson, a lady lawyer, deals authoritatively, in a long paper, with "The condition of women in the workshops."<sup>2</sup> A great many other resolutions are carried, of which the most important is one demanding for women the right to sit in Parliament. Others condemn militarism,<sup>3</sup> ask for new schools to be opened, and

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet cited, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> We must, however, observe that this resolution did not come up again in the Congress of 1900, most of the New Zealand women being in favour of the Transvaal War.

ask for the more effective protection of apprentices. The number of problems dealt with is overwhelming, and if all the resolutions were put into practice New Zealand would be upside down in a few hours.

This political, economic and social discussion enables us to study the psychology of the leaders of feminism, and through them of one whole section of New Zealand women. What first strikes us, even in this audacious New Zealand, is their radicalism. English politicians would not express this hatred of compromise, this fondness for general solutions, this contempt for the vulgar necessities of practice. It is strange that their influence or their example should not have taught more of their political common sense to the New Zealand feminists.

In fact, the members of the National Council of Women belong to an entirely different school, and the ultra-republicanism of their principles is more akin to continental than to English radicalism. They are led to this first of all by their woman's outlook, hostile as it is to half-measures, which are regarded as treaties with either evil or error. Next to this comes the influence of Protestant nonconformity, narrow, strict, and unyielding, which shows itself on every page of their writings and in every sentence of their speeches. Many delegates say that they are admirers of Spencer or of Marx ; but for all that they have not yet freed their minds from the old English religious attitude which makes moral questions take precedence of all others, and which prevents them from making any concession in the matter, since they regard any such concession as an act of weakness and treason. This attitude is in sharp contrast to that of the male New Zealander, and is no doubt largely responsible for their

not having yet succeeded in acquiring any appreciable influence.

The National Council of Women cannot, then, be regarded as an important factor in New Zealand politics. Moreover, the reform of 1893 has not, in a general way, realised the hopes of those who expected a sort of millennium to come from it. The enthusiasts have been gravely disappointed as far as this goes. But, on the other hand, it would be unjust and untrue to deny that women have gained a certain position in the political life of the country. At the present day no one disputes their right to citizenship. That which in 1893 was regarded as slightly ridiculous is now treated as a very natural state of things, and no one is surprised to find women voting, making speeches, in a word, taking their part as citizens in public affairs. It can therefore be said that the feminist movement has left the heroic age, and is now in the era of slow and practical realities.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN.

LIKE most Anglo-Saxon countries, New Zealand has not been afraid to tackle the problem of alcoholism. Many reasons drew the attention of the New Zealand public to this difficult and important question. In the first place, there was the actual danger of drink, even more menacing in the colonies than anywhere else ; then there was the religious spirit, which in Australasia is so developed, so unbending, so aggressive, and which regards this campaign as a crusade against sin even more than as a matter of hygiene ; and, lastly, there was the interventionist tendency of the New Zealand State, ever on the watch for reforms to be brought about, and for new experiments to be tried.

The politicians who championed this cause did not, moreover, show the timidity with which they delight in charging Europeans. They did not spend much time on theories and in the discussion of principles, but passed on to action with quite colonial courage. The last general elections were the occasion of very lively contests, in which the supporters of abstinence and their opponents were able to make themselves heard.

The two parties realise that a decisive battle is in

progress between them, and consequently they are thoroughly organised and carefully disciplined.

The trade and their party see, more and more at every public conference, that the right to drink is seriously threatened ; and it is to defend this right that they fight so resolutely. In New Zealand, whisky is the most general alcoholic drink. Wine is rare, and is hardly ever drunk ; beer is already increasing its circle of admirers, but whisky is the faithful companion of a large number of New Zealanders. Neat, or mixed with soda-water, it has its regular consumers, who get through the boredom and the monotony of a long day by frequent visits to the nearest bar. As in America and England, people drink standing ; and this is a reason for them to drink more quickly and to come back more frequently. The bar-keeper does not remain inactive : he keeps his client company by drinking with him. The proprietor of a small inn, who was enthroned behind his counter, told me one evening that he had just taken his fifteenth glass of whisky, and he added " This is a quiet day." The bar has thus become what the drinking-places of every country are, a rendezvous where business matters are discussed and where voters are recruited.

On its part, the better society makes no profession of abstinence ; in a less crude and more restrained way than the lower classes, it boasts that it, too, in its leisure moments can drain a few good bottles ; and it loves to think that John Bull has a ruddy face and that Scotland is the revered fatherland of " good old Scotch whisky." It must be admitted that the clubs are not temperance schools ; and there can be little doubt that the anti-alcohol propaganda will not find many supporters among their members.

The harsh climate of the Southern Island to some extent lessens these abuses ; but the warm temperature of the Northern Island makes this habit of drinking a very harmful one—a habit that many brought with them from England, and which the colonials only too quickly picked up.

Public opinion has, however, been aroused, and an important party of abstainers has been formed, which is growing every day and beginning to make its influence felt both in the political arena and in private life. Individual initiative started the movement, and it immediately found a great many sympathisers. For there are always three powerful enemies of alcohol : the Churches, lay abstainers and women. The Churches appeal to conscience and to duty ; the abstainers plead in the name of health, common sense, and (what is stronger still) religion ; women wish to protect their homes from the invasion of this scourge. All three have been enabled by circumstances to make their voices heard and to acquire real power in the Colony. The Englishman stops and listens when anyone speaks quietly to him of his interests : and if personal interest is not enough, an appeal to great religious principles is almost certain to succeed with him.

Long before the Seddon ministry came into office associations of all kinds had been started, with the purpose of spreading the knowledge of the dangers of drink among the public. The strange thing was that their counsels were followed more by the poor than by the rich and well-to-do classes. The quickness with which they realised the importance of this question is a proof of the people's intelligence. Instead of laughing at it and deriding it, they saw clearly that it was a question of real benefit to them ; and, some yielding

to religious motives, others to reasoned argument, they enrolled themselves in temperance societies. In their thousands the workmen, the employees, even the peasants and small farmers, became abstainers; temperance hotels and restaurants were founded and were well received by a large part of the population. The movement, far from remaining confined to a relatively limited class, spread over the whole country from the top to the bottom of the social ladder.

The programme of most of these associations was complete abstinence; wine, cider and beer were prohibited as well as spirit. The Anglo-Saxons, generally so tolerant of compromise, such lovers of the halting solutions of common sense, are, as a rule, quite intractable over this question, regarding temperance as a snare and abstinence as a necessity. The almost universal use of tea gives valuable assistance; in most workmen's households wine is unknown; in the morning, at noon, and in the evening the teapot is a strong competitor of the decanter on the table of every New Zealander.

The Church plays an important part in this crusade by blending abstinence with religion. Every new convert to the Gospel is simultaneously converted to anti-alcoholism, and his zeal as a neophyte serves to combat drink as well as unbelief. Many whole-hearted believers do not care much about the hygienic arguments, and only take part in the movement because they feel themselves impelled by a categorical imperative which orders them to combat evil and to purify mankind. In such a religious country as New Zealand the Church is not a factor to be despised.

Mention must also be made of those indefatigable apostles, so numerous in the British Empire, who often



devote a whole lifetime to the cause which they have taken up, or rather which has taken hold of their mind. The Reverend Leonard Isitt, for example, did not rest before he had in every sense scoured the country, preaching in towns, in villages and hamlets the "good news" of abstinence. Two ex-premiers, Sir William Fox and Sir Robert Stout, did not spare their aid or their sympathy to the movement. There was, then, something more in it than the enthusiasm of a few isolated persons, and events were not long in proving this.

In fact, soon the party found itself strong enough to extend its activities. It thought that the time had come for it no longer to be content with individual propaganda, but that it should make an assault on Parliament, to enter the legislature and dictate the law. The abstainers became a political party, and organised themselves with that practical spirit, that sense of reality and that strict discipline which have always characterised the English. Their purpose was to get elected to Parliament some adherents of the total suppression, or at least the reduction in number, of public houses. Instead of forming an alliance with any group they loudly proclaimed their independence, and offered the premium of their votes to anyone, conservative or liberal, who would undertake to support their policy.

And they did not confine themselves to vague manifestoes. A secretary, paid by them, was specially charged with electioneering and with all dealings with Parliament. Knowing in each constituency the number of votes on which they could count, the secretary was able to go and see the candidate and put the contract in his hand. They knew how to find the weak spot in a politician's armour. Their number, their discipline,

and the money which they used made them immediately valuable as friends and inconvenient as foes. They soon showed that when they had chosen a candidate they would not hesitate to support him by every means in their power, going so far in some cases as to pay his electoral expenses. These tactics were successful; thenceforward the abstainers had to be reckoned with as a powerful party.

In 1893 a new factor came in to further their cause: women became electors on the same basis as men. The influence of the anti-alcohol party had had something to do with the passing of this measure; it hoped to find in the female sex a powerful ally, and it was not deceived. Many women who, perhaps, would have been left cold by political struggles were delighted to put their votes at the service of a cause which they deemed so excellent. The candidates were soon compelled to take account of this modification in the electoral body; more than one among them, to be more certain of success, pretended to have suddenly discovered convictions of abstinence—a strange spectacle, to which the electoral campaigns of Europe have hardly accustomed us.

Moreover, in 1893, there were women in New Zealand who were no longer novices at politics. Mrs. Sheppard, one of the leaders of the feminist movement, had been for a long time parliamentary secretary to the prohibitionist party, and would have been able to give points to many a man, as far as electoral experience goes. The abstainers had, then, a most capable executive, and their rank and file burned with the most genuine enthusiasm. They let slip no opportunity of making their presence and their power felt in the political life of the Colony.

To understand the evolution of New Zealand legislation on the subject of drink we must go back some twenty years.

Before 1881, the license to open a retail shop was granted by the Government. The recommendation of the magistrate of the district was certainly requisite ; but the good pleasure of the Government, sensible to the worst influences, nearly always obtained it.

This state of things did not last. The Act of 1881 took from the Government the right to grant licenses, and gave it to committees, elected by universal suffrage, in each parish. The committees could not abolish existing public houses, but were empowered to refuse any new license.

The Act of 1893 marked a new step in advance. It was, so to speak, the Great Charter of anti-alcoholism in New Zealand. These are its principal provisions : Each electoral constituency forms a licensing district. At each general election, that is to say, every three years, the electors have to give their opinion, at the same time as they choose a representative, on the three following questions :

1. Is the existing number of public houses in the district to be maintained ?
2. Ought this number to be reduced ?
3. Ought all public houses to be suppressed ?

In other words, maintenance, diminution, or suppression ?

The suffrage is universal, both for men and women, but in view of the gravity of the interests concerned the rule of the absolute majority is not always applicable ; it has been modified in the following manner :

1. If the absolute majority of people voting declares

for the maintenance of the existing public houses, this majority is sufficient to guarantee it.

2. The absolute majority is similarly sufficient to bring about a reduction in the number of public houses.

3. A three-fifths majority is necessary for the suppression of all public houses.

4. If an absolute majority has not been obtained on any one of the three questions the *status quo* is to be maintained.

Every elector can vote on two of the questions proposed. For example, a prohibitionist voting "aye" on the third question can give a second vote in favour of reducing the number, which he implicitly supports, for he who wants the greater also wants the less. All these regulations make voting much more complicated, and in many cases the voters have not at first understood them.

We must observe that an increase in the number of licenses is not even contemplated. In fact, such an increase could not take place; the law would not recognise it. If a reduction in the number of licenses is carried, it must be not less than 5 per cent. nor more than 25 per cent. of the total number of licenses. And if complete abolition is decided on in any district, no sale of spirits, either wholesale or retail, is allowed, and no compensation of any kind is given.

Such was the law of 1893, which was the first really serious legislative effort of the prohibitionist party. To ask the people to free themselves from the scourge of alcohol is a policy whose daring is at first sight surprising. But the New Zealand legislator thought, with justice, that in a thoroughly democratic country a measure as serious as the suppression of public houses, or even the reduction of their number, could only be

taken with the authority of universal suffrage. The New Zealanders then turned courageously to the elector, the source of all power ; and English education is still so powerful in this distant Colony that the decisions of the majority are not disputed, and the minority calmly submits, hoping for revenge at the next election.

The conditions of the vote, which we gave above, make any practical result difficult enough. A majority of two-thirds is not easily obtained, and the *status quo* generally benefits. If we add to this the complications of the law, which result in many misunderstandings for which the ill-will of opponents is often responsible, we can understand why it is that the results have, up to now, been unimportant, in spite of the large number of prohibitionist votes.

The prohibitionists, however, have had marvellous success with their propaganda ; the elections of 1894, 1896, 1899 and 1902 show that the number of their supporters is rapidly increasing :

Year.	For the <i>status quo</i> .	For Prohibition:	For Reduction.
1894	42,429	16,096	48,993
1896	139,580	94,555	98,312
1899	142,443	107,751	118,575
1902	147,000	134,000	160,000

Thus after four appeals to the electorate the prohibitionists have succeeded in gaining a majority. But it does not follow from this that the voting has had much practical effect, for they have not gained the necessary two-thirds majority. Nevertheless, in the general

election of 1902, reduction was carried in six constituencies and total suppression in six (Ashburton, Bruce, Matama, Newtown, Port Chalmers, Clutha). This, a real triumph for the cause of anti-alcoholism, will bring about, according to the Rev. Leonard Isitt, the closing of 200 of the 1600 bars which New Zealand contains.<sup>1</sup>

Prohibition is a new experiment in most of the districts we just mentioned, but in Clutha it has been in force since 1896. Clutha is a farming district of the Southern Island, inhabited for the most part by middle-class Scotsmen. As a result of the poll all the bars, to the number of sixteen, were closed. The new state of things did not mean that there was no longer a single drop of wine or of spirits in the district ; but it did mean that they could not be bought wholesale, nor could one get served by retail with a single glass of whisky, beer, wine or cider. All eyes were immediately turned with interest to this experimental ground, but after six years it is really difficult to say whether the experiment has been a success or not.

All of a sudden this peaceful little district of Clutha became the subject of discussions, of disputes, of terrible quarrels. The abstainers assert that the results have been splendid, while their adversaries say the very opposite. There are few people in New Zealand who view the question with impartiality. Clutha is for political parties a flag which each makes use of for its own purposes. The party for abstinence was naturally prepared to find the experiment a complete success. Numerous testimonials from clergymen, schoolmasters and employers extol the happy results of the suppression of public houses. Trade in general, they say, has not

<sup>1</sup> *The British Australasian*, December 2nd, 1902, p. 2096.

suffered in the least ; and crime of all sorts has considerably diminished. At least that is what the abstainers say.

But on the other side their opponents, who are not all toppers, say with a scornful smile that there has never been so much drinking in the district as since the prohibition. It is true that it is no longer possible to buy a bottle or to get a glass in a public house ; but there is nothing to prevent any person from ordering a dozen bottles from some place outside the district and drinking them in his house. In these circumstances the consumption of liquor may be less apparent, but it is none the less real. The railway which runs through Clutha continues to bring in the same quantity of wines and spirits as before.

The police magistrate of the district, Mr. Hawkins, was bold enough, in an official report made in 1900, to declare himself strongly opposed to absolute prohibition, asserting that it did not prevent the secret sale of liquor, and that it encouraged hypocrisy and dissimulation. Poor Mr. Hawkins ! He soon experienced the fury of the abstainers and the hostility of the water-drinkers. They replied with passion that the author of the report was dangerously prejudiced, and that he treated the police agents charged with the execution of the law as no better than vagabonds. They assumed that the magistrate had himself violated the provisions of the law, and that his testimony should be treated as valueless.

Such was the tone which this controversy took. Seldom has any question aroused so much discord and passion in New Zealand, and it is difficult to draw any conclusion from such divergent testimony. " In the author's opinion," Mr. Reeves writes in *The Long White*

*Cloud*, "an opinion given by him without much confidence, the consumption of beer and wine has been greatly reduced, that of spirits, hardly at all. There is less public drunkenness."<sup>2</sup> In his book *State Experiments*, which appeared in 1902, the ex-minister confirms the opinion already expressed by him, but with the same reservations. In fact, it must be understood that the condition of Clutha is not that of a district entirely shut off from alcohol, since the importation of it remains free; in consequence of this, prohibition loses much of its efficacy. It is only when New Zealand as a whole becomes prohibitionist that it will be possible to judge with any accuracy the results of this policy.

The anti-alcohol propaganda, however, continues with greater zeal than ever. Not content to rest on their laurels, the abstainers are dreaming of new conquests. Congresses, meetings and assemblies are increasing in number over the whole country. There is no village, no hamlet, no camp in the bush which is not visited several times each year by the apostles of prohibition. Temperance hotels are well patronised; and with the zeal which every Englishman, fearless of ridicule, has for preaching any propaganda, the quietest people draw aside the first-comer to explain to him what a panacea this prohibition is. Everyone gives something of his personality, and it is thanks to their combined efforts that the astonishing results of the 1902 elections were secured.

As may be seen, this propaganda very closely resembles an apostleship; in this lies its strength, but also its danger. When an Englishman allows himself to be dominated by a fixed idea into which religious sentiment enters, further discussion is almost impos-

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *The Long White Cloud*, p. 365.



sible. The New Zealand prohibitionist party seems to be becoming a constant menace to anyone who goes so far as to indulge in the use of cider, beer, or wine. Loudly proclaiming its independence of mind, it ends by not seeing the world except in the light of the reform whose praises it sings. Who knows that one day it will not adopt the famous formula, " Let the Colonies perish rather than a principle ! "

Already the Act of 1893, which contains a great deal of compromise, does not seem strong enough to the prohibitionist leaders. They now claim that a mere absolute majority should be sufficient to bring about the complete suppression of public houses in a district. Curiously enough, they also want the vote on reduction to be abolished, so that people should vote entirely for maintenance or suppression. Their radical and whole-hearted spirit is ill-satisfied with half-measures, and comes near to regarding them as opportunities for misunderstandings and for dishonest compromise.

Such is the curious psychology of the abstinence party and its powerful action. The effort that it has made since 1893 is one of the finest in the history of New Zealand. Seldom has a more disciplined, a better organised, and, above all, a more thoroughly convinced party been seen. Seldom also has there been an army in which the soldiers' zeal has so well seconded their leaders' resolution. The effect was soon seen ; and though the prohibitionists have not yet gained the two-thirds majority, which is for the moment the object of their efforts, it cannot be doubted that the immediate future will see their number and their power grow even greater.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### RELIGION AND THE CHURCHES.

No tradition has remained so strong in New Zealand as the religious one. Churches swarm there; the papers—a decisive proof—never close their columns to ecclesiastical news, and every New Zealand editor must be able on occasion to take up his good theological pen and discuss in a leading article transubstantiation, the rights of the established church, or the legality of ritualism. In shop windows, on the stalls at railway stations, religious books meet the eye, and it is evident that these matters are universally and constantly in people's thoughts.

We had occasion several times to point out that the English transported to the Antipodes their mode of life, their homes and their institutions. Like Æneas and the Trojans, the pioneers of these distant regions brought with them from England their household gods, in the form of churches, clergymen, sects—in a word, of everything in which the religious life of the Anglo-Saxons consists.

Long before the country was officially taken possession of by the Crown, numerous missionaries had gone among the Maoris, facilitating the latter's coming into

contact with European civilisation. Wherever settlers pitched their tents, the missionary found his place by their side. In the Southern Island, which was colonised later, the Church played a still greater rôle. Canterbury was founded under the auspices of the Anglican Church ; Otago under the auspices of the Presbyterian. The first immigrants landed to the sound of hymns, and named the streets of their towns after their bishops. The tradesmen of Christchurch and of Dunedin no longer open their day's business with hymns and thanksgiving ; but they remain faithful to the convictions of their fathers, and the number of their places of worship is there to prove that the Colony does not belie the traditions of its pious origin.

Religious activity in New Zealand has retained a purely English form. It has split up into a number of sects, in which the slightest shades of thought are represented. Under the influence of this environment, the least orthodox—we might say the least Christian—doctrines have in the end themselves assumed an ecclesiastical form. The fact of not belonging to any ecclesiastical group seems to be quite unbearable to the New Zealander. The man without a religion is regarded with little sympathy by public opinion, and “ society ” openly dislikes him. So when anyone abandons one chapel, he generally enters another immediately, unless he decides (there have been cases) to start on his own account a religion of which he is the apostle. Hence results a veritable forest of denominations, the statistics of which are not lacking in interest, for they show to what extent English Protestantism has found in New Zealand a soil favourable to its development :

Church of England	-	-	315,000 members.
Presbyterians	-	-	176,000 „
Methodists	-	-	83,000 „
Baptists	-	-	16,000 „
Salvation Army	-	-	8,000 „
Congregationalists	-	-	7,000 „
Lutherans	-	-	4,800 „
Roman Catholics	-	-	109,000 <sup>1</sup> „

But these are only the principal cults. To get an accurate idea of the religious physiognomy of the Colony there must be added to these the minute sects which, by dozens, spring up alongside of the large churches. We may mention the following chapels :

Unitarians	-	-	468 members.
Society of Friends	-	-	313 „
Disciples of Christ	-	-	6,105 „
Plymouth Brethren	-	-	7,484 „
Christadelphians	-	-	989 „
Seventh Day Adventists	-	-	864 „
Mormons or Latter-day Saints	-	-	272 „

But we are not yet at the end of the list, and the crumbling goes still further. We come next to sects all of whose disciples could be contained in one room, even on one sofa, like the members of one famous party :

Church of God	-	-	247 members.
Believers in Christ	-	-	31 „
Evangelists	-	-	21 „
Nonconformists	-	-	61 „
Students of Truth	-	-	33 „
Church of our Father	-	-	41 „
Undenominational Christians	-	-	201 „

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book, 1902, p. 224.*

Conditional Immortalists	-	33	members.
Gospel Mission	- - -	31	„
Advance Guard Movement	-	29	„
Central Mission	- - -	26	<sup>1</sup> „

This religious imagination sometimes assumes ridiculous forms, and the officials charged with making the census must often wonder whether they are not being hoaxed. The following lines, written by Sir Charles Dilke, although referring to the Colony of Victoria, are too well applicable to New Zealand for us not to quote them :

“ One person claims to belong to the sect of the Waldenses, one returns himself as a Huguenot, one as a member of the Church of Sweden, one as a member of the Reformed Church of Switzerland, one as a Sankeyite, one as a Borrowite, one as a Millerite, one as a Walkerite, one as a member of the Brotherhood of the New Life, one as a Theosophist, one as a Man of God, one as a Believer in parts of the Bible, one as a Friend of Justice and Liberty, one as a supporter of Free Religion, one as a Silent Admirer, one as a Humanitarian, one as a Positivist, one as an Immaterialist, one as a Fatalist, one as an Iconoclast, one as a Heretic, one as a Sceptic, one as a Worshipper of Nature, one as a Believer in Free Trade . . . ” <sup>2</sup>

But it must not be supposed that the people who give themselves such extraordinary names are fools or even merely eccentric. Public opinion has no contemptuous or deriding smile for the manifestations of their faith. Any idea, in the colonial surroundings of Australasia, takes on a religious form so easily and so

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, pp. 225, 226.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, p. 593.

naturally that no one is surprised to see men who in everyday life are most commonplace merchants or politicians become, as soon as there is any question of religion, enthusiastic and sometimes slightly ridiculous apostles. The usual indifference of the New Zealander, in fact, becomes an excessive sensibility as soon as religious affairs are involved. If, for example, he hears one day an eloquent clergyman or evangelist of the name of Brown or Parker say some stirring or sentimental phrase which takes his fancy, it may very well happen that with his Anglo-Saxon mind, always ready to follow a leader, he should afterwards call himself a Brownite or a Parkerite. Cases of this sort are frequent, and cause no amusement.

In these Lilliputian sects there is, however, an extraordinary instability, which shows that they are liable to disappear as suddenly as they sprang up. The census of 1896 recorded 142 adherents of the Gospel Mission of Temperance, 24 of the New and Latest House of Israel, 26 members of the Free Church, and 22 of the Body of Christ. No trace can be found of these small Churches in the census of 1901. In other chapels the numbers of their adherents rose or fell in almost laughable proportions: the Church of God fell from 663 members to 247; the Church of Our Father from 80 to 41; the Conditional Immortalists from 88 to 33, and the Students of Truth from 340 to 33.

Though the sects and chapels are infinite in number there are only some half-dozen churches of any importance from the point of view of strength. These are the Church of England, whose adherents represent 40.84 per cent. of the population, the Presbyterian Church (22.87 per cent.), the Catholic Church (14.23 per cent.), and the Methodist Church (10.86 per cent.). We shall

say a few words about the more influential of these creeds, in order to show their relative importance and the part they play in the life of the Colony.

The Anglican Church is not, as in the mother-country, an Established Church. It has no official connections with the State, although the early history of the Colony has left some traces of the close union which at one time existed between them. In the province of Canterbury, where it played a great part about 1850, the Church of England has still some temporal property remaining from its connection with the first administrators of the Settlement of Christchurch. But this is only a relic of the past. Public opinion in New Zealand to-day is absolutely hostile to the idea of a State Church. There are some tendencies in history against which no resistance is possible; and the question of establishing an official union has never been raised in this land where separation has given none but good results.

But, in spite of this, the Anglican Church is not looked on in New Zealand quite as an ordinary Church: it retains a certain prestige from the fact that it was once established. This prestige is the outcome of the very English sentiment of respect for authority and of beatific admiration for the creed that is followed by the King and the great men of the earth. In the colonies, as in the mother-country, the Anglican Church is, in fact, the one chosen by rich and well-to-do people. It is enough to have been present at one of its services, in one of the stylish and fashionable buildings of which it has the secret, to understand the prestige with which it is endowed in the eyes of a certain portion of the society of the Colony. For, even in these new countries, there is a large class of moneyed people whose snobbishness delights to find in divine service some few of those

aristocratic ceremonies whose last refuge is Government House and certain Anglican temples.

As in England, the worship is very formal, but it does not seem that the evolution which has led a complete section of the Church in the mother-country to the very threshold of Catholicism has made itself felt in New Zealand. The polemics of ritual are followed there with an interest to which the papers and reviews bear witness, but the High Church Party hardly exists at all. Nowhere in the Colony is there any sign of prayers for the dead, of confession, or of any of the other semi-Roman practices which arouse so much opposition and scandal in the mother-country.

As for the number of its adherents, the Church we are now discussing had 107,000 members in 1871, which rose to 203,000 in 1881, 250,000 in 1891, and 315,000 in 1901. The proportion of Anglicans to the total population has remained almost stationary. It was 41.8 per cent. in 1871, 41.5 in 1881, 40.51 in 1891, and 40.81 in 1901.<sup>1</sup>

The Presbyterian Church is the second in importance. It has preserved its traditional character of Scottish austerity, and, in fact, its influence has remained most powerful in the Scottish province of Otago. For a long time the South of New Zealand, and especially its capital, Dunedin, was practically held in fee by Presbyterians. They disliked the intrusion of any stranger, understanding by that word the Irishman, the Catholic, and perhaps even the Anglican. The discovery of gold put an end to this close orthodoxy; but, in spite of everything, Dunedin still retains the Presbyterian stamp of former times; and Presbyterians are proportionally more numerous in New Zealand than in any other Aus-

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Officia Year Book*, 1902, p. 224.



tralasian Colony.<sup>1</sup> Their austere influence is a very wholesome one, and they seldom fail to intervene whenever it is necessary to defend the rigorous observance of the Sabbath or the rights of morality.

The Catholic Church comes third with 109,000 adherents, or 14 per cent. of the population. It naturally contains a great many Irish, fewer English, and an almost infinitesimal number of Scotsmen. The Catholics are spread all over the country; but they are relatively less numerous in the South than in the North, where Irishmen are more frequent. The Irishmen in New Zealand do, however, form a distinct population, as they do in America. They have retained many of their traditional characteristics, their love of politics, for example, and their fondness for employment in the police or military. But in a general way they have become merged with the rest of the population; and they have not given their stamp to any of the towns in the Colony—they are too scattered for that.

The Catholic Church, however, has been able to preserve the unity which is lacking in the Irish race in New Zealand. Although the influence of the priest is no longer what it once was, the 109,000 Catholics almost always act together when their Church is in danger. In this they have a strength which the Protestant creeds do not possess; for the latter are split up into infinitely small factions, which, if not actually hostile to each other, are at least rivals. For this reason the Catholics, in spite of their limited number, have a strength which must be reckoned with.

Up to the present, however, they have not attempted

<sup>1</sup> Proportion of Presbyterians in the Australasian Colonies, figures of 1891: New South Wales, 9.7 per cent.; Victoria, 14.7; Queensland, 11.6; South Australia, 5.7; Western Australia, 4; Tasmania, 6.6; New Zealand, 22.6, *The Seven Colonies of Australasia*, 1897, p. 75.

to form a Catholic political party ; but they join other associations, and are content to make obstinate demands for the abrogation of the education legislation which set up State schools.

We cannot think of going into the position and attitude of all the New Zealand sects. There are too many of them. We shall only speak of one form of worship which has had considerable success in New Zealand—the Salvation Army. After that we shall take a type of those Lilliputian sects which flourish at the Antipodes, and many of which have not even a counterpart in England.

The Salvation Army has only 8000 adherents in New Zealand. But its activity and its influence greatly exceed the importance of this number, and it helps to a great extent to give to the towns of the Colony that stamp of Anglo-Saxon religiousness which is characteristic of them. The Salvation Army's method of procedure is the same there as everywhere else. In the evening, before or after dinner, a band of Salvationists in uniform goes out into the streets, marches through the town to the sound of drum and bugle, halts, and forms into a circle, stopping traffic. The leader, often a strong young man, clothed in a uniform which makes him at a distance look like a soldier, begins a speech vibrating with artificial passion, punctuated with hymns and rolls of the drum. A crowd gradually forms ; then a collection is made with feigned enthusiasm and to the sound of blatant music. Then the Salvationists form up into a column, with the band in front, begin to march, and try to draw the crowd towards their place of worship. This classic and well-known scene goes on night after night in the larger towns, where the public is quite accustomed to it, and shows most complete respect. It is evident that this form of worship answers

to a definite need of the colonial Anglo-Saxon's soul. The Englishmen of the Antipodes love this somewhat far-fetched sentimentality, this enthusiasm, these hymns, these prayers which move and impress them. No raillery, no interruption, no insult comes to trouble these meetings, and the ridiculous side of this propaganda seems to be entirely unnoticed by its habitual audience, who look on it as a normal episode in the life of their towns.

The Salvation Army has other reasons for its success. It is charitable and democratic. Its service of help is very well organised, and it does excellent work among the poor. Besides this, the people feel at home with it. It has no stylish and aristocratic hierarchy ; poor and rich are equal in its eyes, and even the front benches are not paid for in gold. For these reasons the Salvationist assemblies are generally very numerous. In the large towns they have vast temples ; but in many small villages they have a hall where daily worship is held. The number of their adherents is not large, but the number of those who come and listen is much greater. We may therefore consider the Salvation Army as one of the national sects of New Zealand.

Though the use of philosophic thought does not seem to be characteristic of the New Zealander, yet at least theology is one of his dearest pastimes. Just as every movement readily takes a social and ecclesiastical form in New Zealand, so every philosophical theory tends to come to the front under the appearance of theology. As we said just now, the New Zealanders can only leave one church to fall back immediately into another.

“ Our Father's Church,” which we mentioned among the least important churches (it has less than fifty disciples), is a curious enough example of this theological

philosophy. Should it be called a sect? Its members do not want it to be so styled, and, on the contrary, try to make out that their doctrine is as wide as the world. For all that, they built a church, thereby once again proving that the tendencies of the Anglo-Saxon mind are irremediably ecclesiastical.

The founder of Our Father's Church was a former clergyman of the Anglican Church, Mr. Hoar, who rebelled against its abuse of formalism and the narrowness and individualism of its outlook. He felt that he could not remain much longer in his benefice, and his conscience persuaded him to regain his liberty. Evolutionist philosophy had made a strong impression on him; but he remained deeply religious, and could not be content with not belonging to any Church. So, with the support of some friends who shared his doubts and scruples, he founded at Christchurch this sect of Our Father. In it two influences, strangely enough blended, are apparent: on the one side, there are the evolutionist ideas of Spencer; on the other, there is the religious sentiment, which appears with its full strength, in spite of everything, in a vaguely pantheistic form. There are also evidences of a distrust of authority in matters of faith, and of the free man's desire for independence of the soul, with a hatred of any religious bondage.

But was there anything in all this out of which a Church could be constructed? Mr. Hoar and his friends thought so. They set up seven principles (they do not say seven dogmas), which were to sustain them in the daily struggle. Here they are, as given in a small pamphlet called "The Ideal":

1. The fatherhood of God, who is the essential and internal life of the universe.

2. The brotherhood of men for sympathy and service.
3. The constant development and progress of the human race, through struggle and possession, sadness and joy, death and life.
4. The establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven over the whole earth.
5. The unreserved recognition of the sacred character of all secular things.
6. The constant inspiration of man by God.
7. The constant communion of initiated souls.

Such is this doctrine, which bears traces of the most diverse influences. It is neither especially original, nor especially curious ; but the really original and curious thing about it is the fact that it gave rise to the need for a Church. The disciples of this new worship meet every Sunday. They have neither temple nor priest. But their true priest (in the strictest sense of the word) is Mr. Hoar, whose lofty ideals and splendid personality have attracted more than one individual, to the great scandal of the recognised Churches.

And now we shall deal with one last aspect of New Zealand religion—the external aspect. There again England has been taken as a model, and sometimes the pupil has surpassed his master. The religious buildings are in the same style as those in the mother-country ; and the ministers preach on the same lines.

As for the observance of Sunday, it is even more thorough than in England, as thorough as in Scotland. From the early morning there is a deathlike stillness ; trams hardly stir ; trains do not stir at all. Of course, theatres and shops are closed ; the football ground and the cricket field are undisturbed. If some athletic association were to select this day for its games or meetings, public opinion would not for an instant

tolerate such a scandal ; nor would it put up with any other breaking of the Sabbath.

Some years ago excursion trains were run on Sunday, but an almost imperative petition from certain clergymen resulted in their suppression. The Government yielded, realising that, with regard to public opinion, the clergymen were the stronger. To-day the respect for Sabbath peace is more powerful than ever ; all classes of society insist on it. A merchant who came to his office on Sunday would be thought very little of ; a shopkeeper who opened his shop on Sunday would lose much custom. A strange narrowness which seems anchored to the very depths of the New Zealand soul, which perhaps regards it as a social and national tradition even more than as a religious one !

Thus, in New Zealand society religious duties form part of life itself, and public opinion suffers no one to lay them aside, or at least to infringe them. The general agreement on this subject is astonishing. It is not only the rich and conservative classes who are attached to these remembrances and traditions of the old country, but also the workmen, the small farmers, and even those democrats who are boldest in their political conceptions. England has put its mark on this new country, a stubborn mark that generations will not wipe out. Later on, when time has wrought its work of separation, and when New Zealand will perhaps have passed from autonomy to independence, it is more than probable that this unity of custom and of belief will remain one of the strongest bonds between the mother-country and that one of its colonies which, more than any other, has been made to its own image and likeness.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION.

THE press of a country generally reveals accurately enough the public mind, for, after all, it is representative, and a people has only those newspapers which it needs. It is not by mere chance that the sensational *New York Herald* flourishes on the banks of the Hudson, or the *Times* on the banks of the Thames ; nor will it any more be chance if we find serious and well-informed papers at Auckland, Wellington or Dunedin.

There are 211 publications in New Zealand, of which 55 are daily, 64 weekly, and 27 monthly. The daily papers are, of course, *the* political ones ; and each of the four large towns has two of them. Centres of secondary importance, as a rule, have only one daily newspaper, while the small towns of third or fourth rank generally have only bi-weekly or tri-weekly publications.

As in all new countries, the newspaper has a very high place in New Zealand. Everybody reads it, and there are few people ignorant or old-fashioned enough not to be interested in the news.

It must also be said that most of the colonials, not having spent all their life in their little town, their village, or their farm, know that the world does not end where their horizon stops, and are anxious to know

what is going on outside of their limited circle. The peasant who has never been out of his district is an unknown type in Australasia ; and similarly the man who has never travelled is an exception. Those who have not been to England have at least visited Australia, and there are innumerable citizens who, not having been born in the Colony, can at least imagine an existence other than that which they lead in their new fatherland.

Many New Zealanders began by being settlers in South Australia, Victoria, or New South Wales ; others have searched for gold in many lands. How could they fail to remember their past, and sometimes to think of the relatives or the friends whom they have left far away in other parts of the world ? How could they cease to be interested in the lands which they have dwelt in and departed from ? How could they shut themselves off, without regret, in seclusion from the outer world, in the monotony of a colonial, which means a provincial, existence ? This results among the New Zealanders, as for that matter among most of the dwellers in new countries, in a remarkable widening of the horizon. Even those who have but little education have an astonishingly open and well-informed mind. They have, it is true, a great many false ideas on a great many subjects, due to their too exclusively Anglo-Saxon education ; but few of them have that apathy which is so frequently met with in Europe in certain classes of society. They need, then, and they have, a press which tells them of things wider than the various events in their little country.

As public opinion is, for the most part, formed in towns, we can use as types the papers of Auckland, which are, it is true, the best in the Colony, but never-



theless are an accurate enough representation of the general spirit of New Zealand journalism.

Auckland has two excellent dailies, the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Auckland Evening Star*. The first is conservative, but conservative in a way that is possible only in the colonies ; it is the paper of business men and of the middle class, a kind of *New Zealand Times*. The second is more advanced, and has always upheld liberal-labour policy ; its readers are drawn more from the working and lower classes. It is inferior to the *New Zealand Herald*, not in the tone of its polemics, which is always restrained and dignified, but in the greater poverty of its news and the greater popularity of its articles.

The most noticeable thing about these papers is their deeply serious nature ; and next to this, their entirely English form and spirit. The *New Zealand Herald*, for example, very closely resembles a large provincial paper of the mother-country. It has eight pages ; the first and the eighth, forming a cover, are given over to advertisements, as are also the second and the seventh. The third page contains Australasian news, various events, generally reduced to a very small compass, and the personal and social notes, always very much read, especially among English people. The fourth is the page for editorials, as a rule very well written. The fifth is reserved for the telegraphic news of Europe and of the world ; and, lastly, the sixth is for sport, which in Anglo-Saxon countries is never shut out. The size is almost exactly that of the *Temps*, but the outside look of the paper is more suggestive of the *Times* or the *Manchester Guardian*.

The principles and attitude of the English press are also those which rule in the New Zealand papers. In

spite of the relative proximity of the United States, the American spirit has had but little influence up to now. The sensational press, that "yellow press" which makes so much noise with its extraordinary telegrams, its various improbable or scandalous reports, the vulgarity of its tone, has not crossed the Pacific. There is not the least trace of all this to be found in New Zealand, and in general, American papers are not read. In no club, not even in any hotel, is the *New York Herald* or the *Examiner* of San Francisco to be found. The *Times* is everywhere given the preference, although it comes from much further away.

This preference is easily accounted for: for the New Zealanders are almost all English. In fact, they have but little in common with the people of the United States. The American public, agitated, restless, nervous, always in a hurry, wants to find in its newspapers sensational and unexpected news; it is a public formed of spectators, not of citizens; mysterious crime interests it more than political bulletins; the leader bores it; it reads quickly and badly, and only half cares to know whether what it reads is true or not; it is a youthful and in many respects almost infantile public. The New Zealander, on the contrary, is neither very impressionable nor very impulsive. Like the Englishman, he is slow, and at heart rational, even though he is capable of becoming passionate and of losing all control over himself. Like the Englishman also he is intensely fond of politics, and he prefers a good telegram from Europe to many isolated facts. On the whole he is, then, of a peculiarly serious turn of mind.

The New Zealand press reflects all these tendencies and keeps in its columns a preponderating place for politics. There is especially the leading article, which

is devoted either to some colonial question, or to general politics, or more particularly to English politics.

The tone of these leaders is generally much the same as in London. The tirade, long classic in England, on the dangers of German or American competition, turns up periodically in the New Zealand papers, whenever a sensational order for rails or for locomotives comes to gladden the hearts of the Pittsburg or Philadelphia manufacturers. The game is well known, and most often it is nothing but a game ; people pretend to be terrified, when in reality they are hardly frightened at all. Public feeling in New Zealand usually receives the warnings of these Cassandras with an exaggerated calm. It remains convinced that England is invincible ; its error lies in only getting its information from English sources, and in believing like a dogma in the eternal and universal superiority of the British Empire.

Alongside of English affairs, the problems of China, of the Far East, and of Oceania give rise to similar discussions, carried on in the same spirit. There, where we should have expected to find provincials of a kind, taken up only with their trivial interests, we find citizens of a mighty empire, giving their attention to the great affairs of the world.

The same spirit rules in the choice and in the editing of bulletins. Almost all the news comes from London. As in the leading articles, England takes first place.

The sittings of the House of Commons are reported at length ; the speeches of ministers and of the most prominent politicians are generally given in full ; in this way their words and their influence are carried to the Antipodes in a few hours. It is apparent from reading these papers, as from a thousand other signs, that it is London which is the true capital for New Zealanders

and that they derive thence their ideas, their fashions, and their watchwords.

Next come bulletins from other colonies, from the Cape, from Canada, from India. Lastly, a few telegrams inform the reader, as a rule very imperfectly, of events on the continent of Europe. The attention of Englishmen is turned towards the world rather than towards Europe, and as the Australasians hardly view Europe except through their intermediary they are singularly ignorant of it. Although they travel a great deal, and sometimes even come over to the old world, they steadfastly continue to regard certain European countries as being slightly behind the times, the light of Anglo-Saxon civilisation not yet having penetrated to them. It is a doubly insular sentiment, which is very easily accounted for when we realise the depth of the intellectual dependence in which even to-day the *Colony* of New Zealand remains.

Such is the character of the daily papers in New Zealand; they are excellent at Auckland, a little less good at Dunedin and at Christchurch, passable at Wellington. They are above all carriers of information; and in internal politics their influence seems small. The country is small enough for the public not to need advice from its papers in order to form its opinions on local matters. Moreover, the parties are active, and take care to instruct the electors. In accordance with the English custom the speeches of their leaders are published and read everywhere. When Parliament is sitting everybody follows the debates. The press conscientiously performs its part in supplying information; but the influence of each party is not to be measured by the number of papers it possesses. The Seddon Ministry, which was the strongest New Zealand has

ever known, never had a majority of the large papers at its disposal.

The dailies are far from representing by themselves the whole press. The weekly publications have an influence unknown, we may say, anywhere else. And the type of the weekly review is very well suited to the New Zealand population. News by post does not come from Australia every day ; from Europe it comes only two or three times a month. It is consequently more suited to periodicals than to daily papers ; and consequently, by a sort of natural division, the mere brute fact goes into the dailies, while the flow of public opinion, wider and slower, finds more exact expression in the more comprehensive and less frequent publications.

The *Auckland Weekly News* and the *Otago Witness* are therefore more than mere reviews of fact. Of course, news is given great prominence in them ; but the literary or doctrinal side of things also finds expression. It is felt that the laconic telegram which appears every day needs some explanation and comment. The review thus becomes the natural complement of the newspaper :

“ It is almost necessary,” Sir Charles Dilke writes, “ to speak of the colonial weekly newspapers in connection with popular education in the colonies ; for their encyclopædic information, if carefully studied, as it is studied in the bush, constitutes a considerable amount of practical teaching. The heavy toil of the up-country stations leaves little time on weekdays for reading or for keeping up in any way the excellent primary education which has been given in the colonial schools ; but Sunday is, as a general rule, carefully observed as a day of rest, and largely spent in reading the weekly productions of the colonial press ; and the horticultural,

agricultural, musical, artistic, literary and popular scientific information given in these huge journals is of a formidable kind." <sup>1</sup>

We have just reviewed the chief sources of political information which the New Zealanders possess. They show us to what extent this people has up to now remained colonial. It is always narrowly dependent on the mother-country, and it is thence that it draws its life and progress. It was British immigration that made New Zealand ; English capital gives it the means to utilise its wealth ; and, lastly, English thought instructs New Zealanders on the opinions they ought to form as to the rest of the world. In their customs, their talk, their papers, this influence is striking. Every morning the Colony knows what London was doing the day before ; each week, each month, brings it detailed accounts of what the people in the mother-country did and said. Political tendencies, new economic ideas, movements in religious thought are thus rapidly echoed at the Antipodes. A strange example of intellectual domination by telegraph, right across the world ! But a natural enough domination, when we remember that the New Zealanders are English, and that, for all their being colonials, they have not ceased to regard England as their fatherland and London as their capital.

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Greater Britain*, p. 574.

*PART V.*

NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND.  
IMPERIALISM.





## CHAPTER XXVI.

### NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION.

AN event of capital importance turned the Australian colonies along a new path. Federation, long hoped for and anticipated, but indefinitely retarded by the jealousy of some and the indifference of others, became an accomplished fact. We must not speak of Australasian, but merely of Australian, federation; for in the Commonwealth which has just come into existence New Zealand has no place. In the course of the long negotiations which preceded the formation of this new nation, New Zealand did indeed on many occasions have something to say, but she was always rather shy, and finally she drew back, afraid of the decisive step.

This withdrawal, although perhaps it may not be final, marks an important date in the history of New Zealand, for it is clear evidence of the tendencies in what we may call her foreign policy. There comes, in fact, a time when even the colonies that are most submissive to the sovereignty of the mother-country are led by the force of circumstances to regulate for themselves their relations with the outer world. Their political domain widens to include new territory, and although still bearing the name of colonies they are on the way to becoming nations.

New Zealand has reached this phase in her development. Having affirmed her autonomy by means of daring and original legislation, it was necessary for her next to define her attitude to the outside world, and especially to this Commonwealth which was set up by her side. The solution which she gave to this grave problem, in deciding to remain outside, enlightens us as to the position which she hopes to fill. It enlightens us at the same time (and this is not the least interesting point about it), as to the character of this small people of 800,000 members lost in the Pacific, which, it seems, regards its isolation as the greatest of its advantages.

There is no need here to examine the long genesis of the federation. That would be Australian, not New Zealand history. New Zealand's intervention in this business was always marked by distrust and reserve. She allowed things to take their course without any interference on her part. Then, when all was over, she desired to absolve her conscience, as it were, by justifying to herself her refusal. A long inquiry was begun in 1901 on the advantages and disadvantages of union with Australia. The result was that the policy of separation, which had till then been the tradition, was reaffirmed for a new period.

It would be an error to suppose, as certain attacks might lead one to suppose, that this decision was solely due to the private opinions, we might even say to the private interests, of certain ministers. On the contrary, seldom has there been such unanimity in approving or rejecting a measure. Perhaps some day the New Zealand people will alter its point of view: it has not entirely burnt its boats and may yet change its mind. But for the time being its attitude is definite,

and it delights in an isolation which, though not splendid, is no less complete.

In order thoroughly to understand the policy which we have just indicated, we must realise that this isolation is not merely moral, but also material. We should be making a great mistake if we thought that Wellington and the Australian towns were close neighbours. "The shortest route between New Zealand and Australia is that from Wellington to Sydney. In a straight line, it is 1200 miles. The Tasmanian sea is deep, bare of any shelter, and swept by terrible storms, and the voyage takes no less than four and a half days." <sup>1</sup>

This is a serious ground for separation. The natural consequence is that there is but little communication with Australia, which is little talked about in New Zealand; and in general people are much less interested in Australia than in England. Although a fair number of New Zealanders have visited Australia, and although some of them have even lived there, few have any real knowledge of it. "New South Wales," Mrs. Stella M. Allen writes, "is spoken of as a free-trade country; Victoria is known through the 'Melbourne Cup'; Queensland is associated with the idea of negro labour; and South Australia produces a good impression because it has followed, in matters of legislation, the 'good example' of New Zealand. And this is all." <sup>2</sup>

We have several times had occasion to speak of how satisfied the New Zealanders are with themselves. This is evidently one of the motives which led them not to mix with people whose evil contact might lower the standard of the civilisation of which they are so proud.

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, "Attitude of New Zealand," *Empire Review*, February, 1901, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Stella M. Allen, "New Zealand and Federation," *United Australia*, October, 1900.

There is nothing ironical, we may say, in this remark. They do not all, or almost all, think as Mrs. Allen gently reproaches them with thinking: "We are a special people, assuredly a little superior to others, and destined to guide the world in the path of social reforms. . . . Our destiny is to remain isolated."<sup>1</sup> And they do not entirely approve of Mr. Reeves when he writes, with genuine patriotic enthusiasm: "The New Zealanders are proud of their lonely and magnificent country, of its romantic beauty and of its great future. Most of them love their Government. To preserve their autonomy in its integrity, even at the cost of some temporary sacrifice, seems to them, it is true, a matter most worthy of attention."<sup>2</sup>

After this how can we be surprised that ignorance and indifference should have been the chief characteristics of public opinion with regard to federation? It has been said that the fault lay with Mr. Seddon, the tyrant of New Zealand, who, in his desire to keep for himself alone the sovereignty of his island, deliberately neglected to enlighten his fellow-citizens. It is true that the prime minister's personal interest was calculated to make him a resolute opponent of federation. But is this fact enough to explain the general apathy? Most certainly not. Moreover, had the least movement in favour of federation appeared, Mr. Seddon, who was a fine politician, better still, a politician of the first rank, would certainly not have shown the least resistance to it, and, seeing the trend of events, would have given in willingly or unwillingly. Mr. T. H. Taylor, who was a supporter of federation, admits this: "The attitude of the Prime Minister," he wrote in 1899, "will be governed by circumstances. He never resists a popular

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Stella M. Allen, Article cited.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves, Article cited.

movement, and if public opinion in an unmistakable way demands that there should be a plebiscite on the question, it will be taken. And if this plebiscite reveals a movement in favour of federation, the Prime Minister will bow to it.”<sup>1</sup> But nothing of all this took place. While the agitation in Australia was at its height, New Zealand remained calm. No “movement” took place. In the elections of 1899 the candidates hardly mentioned the question; the Government did not mention it at all.

Two years passed, and in the month of February, 1901, Mr. Reeves was able to write the following lines, which proved that the situation was unchanged: “From the point of view of sentiment the project of federation has as yet hardly touched New Zealand. The wave of public opinion which, with increasing force, has covered the South and East of Australia, has been checked by the deep gulf of the Ocean. Federationist orators have not visited our islands and have not even tried to stir up feeling among us. Their pamphlets and their papers have hardly reached us. The Australian papers, that fertile source of agitation, have not created special editions for our benefit, and for that matter, the programme, ‘One continent, one nation,’ implicitly shuts us out.”<sup>2</sup>

The New Zealand Government and people then were very careless about this vital question, and almost refused to take any notice of it. Having let slip the opportunity of entering the federation as an “original state,” they asked themselves, very late in the day, if it was worth while to enter as a “new state.” The commission of inquiry, which was appointed for this

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Taylor, *New Zealand and Federation*.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves, Article cited.

purpose in 1901, and which gave a negative opinion, furnishes very precise information as to the reasons which the New Zealanders gave, and gave to themselves, for continuing in their policy of isolation.<sup>1</sup>

The first and not least in importance is a reason of a political nature : it is the jealous need for independence which most New Zealanders feel. The insular nature of their Colony, their long familiarity with isolation, have made them hostile to any alliance which might tend to diminish their autonomy. Such is the attitude of England towards the European Continent. The comparison has been often made, and not unjustly. Accustomed to solve their own problems for themselves, the New Zealanders would be loth to allow themselves to be governed from Sydney or from Melbourne. They fear absorption, from the legislative, financial, and administrative points of view ; they are afraid of tying their hands and of never more being able to do as they like. In these circumstances, the Australian constitution seems to them riddled with objectionable points. Each article seems to them to hide some snare. They maliciously pick out the concessions which are required from the individual States ; and they grieve to think of losing the very least of their liberties.

Thus the federal Parliament is empowered, under section 51, paragraph I. of the Constitution Act, to legislate on the commercial relations of the Commonwealth with the foreigner, or between the States. The New Zealand Commission of Inquiry found these terms

<sup>1</sup> This Commission was appointed December 26th, 1900, consequent on a Parliamentary resolution of October 18th. It first met on January 19th, 1901, and it held 52 sittings, ending on May 18th, in different New Zealand and Australian towns. Its Report was published under the title of " Report of the Royal Commission of Federation, together with Minutes of proceedings and evidence and appendices, 1901."

dangerously vague. By virtue of this article, the federal Parliament might one day take it into its head to make a law about the merchant marine, or about the conditions of seamen's labour. This would be a direct attack on the sovereignty of the New Zealand Parliament. The same objection applies to taxation, immigration, customs, the post office, the military and the marine, and above all to the railways.<sup>1</sup>

It will be replied that the assumption of these powers by a central Parliament is the natural and necessary consequence of federation. Well, these natural and necessary consequences are just those to which New Zealand objects.

From the financial point of view the danger will be the same. Financial autonomy is one of the forms of independence to which the colonies, as a rule, are most attached—and most reasonably. To waive their claim to a portion of the revenue of the budget is to consent to a partial abdication. Well, federation demands this abdication in so far as it claims to have a free hand with the customs, for example. That would be two million pounds sterling which federation with the Australian Commonwealth would remove from the sovereign disposal of the New Zealand Parliament. It may be answered that New Zealand would find these two millions again somehow, and that at the closing of the accounts she would lose nothing. She would lose nothing except a fraction of her sovereignty—but even that would be too much for the jealous pride of her statesmen.

As for the administration, it is evident that with 1200 miles between "the island" and "the continent" it could only be carried on conveniently with a strongly

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, pp. 10 and 11.

decentralised—we might go further, and say autonomous—régime. To be governed from Australia might be satisfactory ; but for her whole administration to be carried on by an office situated in either Melbourne or Sydney would be something absolutely impossible. It would be a relapse into the errors of the old colonising powers, and would be to renew the mistake which caused England to lose the United States of America. It is certain that a federated New Zealand would never cease to discover oppression in the decisions, even when they were justified, which came from the other side of the Tasmanian Sea. In spite of the most effective constitutional guarantees she would often feel that she was a vassal country that obeyed a stranger. And, on the other hand, what business could it be of hers to mix herself up in the government of this distant Australia, of which she knows so little ?

“ The sea,” Mr. Reeves writes, “ is a barrier between the commonwealths. For example, in what way is New Zealand interested in the administration of Australian railways, in the problems of irrigation or of navigation in the large continent, in the colour of the labourers who work in the sugar plantations, in the improvement of its coasts or in the commerce of its ports? . . . When the tariff question has been settled, the greater part of the Parliament’s time will be taken up in discussing matters which hardly concern New Zealanders any more than the disputes of Americans and Canadians on the subject of Alaska, or the grievances of Newfoundland against France, with regard to the ‘ French Shore.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

All these arguments can be summed up in one : New Zealand is autonomous, her own mistress ; she can only

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, Article cited.



diminish her liberty and her prestige by entering into a federation in which she will always play but a secondary rôle. This is what the New Zealanders felt ; and the higher their position in the Colony, the more they felt it.

The reasons we have given so far have been purely political. But it must never be forgotten that among Anglo-Saxons, and in particular among Australasians, the arguments from personal interests, that is to say, economic arguments, are the most powerful. A workman questioned by the Commission of Inquiry, made the following naïve avowal : “ When any scheme is submitted to the workman, he has to ask himself one question only, but that one of vital importance : will this scheme result either in increasing wages or in lowering the cost of living ? ”<sup>1</sup> Let us transpose this opinion into colonial language, and we shall have the opinion of the planter, of the manufacturer and of the merchant : “ Will such a measure pay or not ? That is all I want to know.” The whole problem of the economic advantages or dangers of federation is then narrowed down to this simple question : “ Will federation pay or will it not pay ? ” The general opinion was that it would not pay. We shall see why.

From the economic point of view federation means inter-colonial free trade. Well, has Australia become, or may it become, a customer of first-rate importance for New Zealand ? Up to the present, statistics would not allow us to hope for anything of the sort :

Total trade of New Zealand (1902)	£24,971,700
„ with England - -	16,302,100
„ with Australia - -	4,399,645

<sup>1</sup> “ Report of the Royal Commission,” Deposition No. 102, p. 295.

So that it is with England that New Zealand does the greater part of its business (65 per cent. of the total). The dealings with Australia are of secondary importance (17 per cent. of the total). It is, then, England and not Australia which New Zealand has to humour. Let us see, however, what are the general conditions of the agriculture, commerce, and industry of New Zealand, and in what way they would be affected if federation were realised.

From the farmer's point of view, would inter-colonial free trade result in opening in Australia an important market for New Zealand products, or, on the contrary, would it mean that the Australian producers would have an outlet in New Zealand? The problem is open to discussion, and, in fact, planters are almost the only class among which are to be found any supporters of federation. There are some of them who have for long been doing business with Sydney under the free-trade régime, and they fear to find all the Australian colonies closed to them. This, for example, was the opinion of Mr. W. E. Reynolds, a grain merchant of Dunedin, who expressed himself before the Commission as follows: "If the Australians set up a protective tariff, that would certainly injure us. Up to now Victoria has been protectionist at heart, whilst Sydney has been free trade. New South Wales buys regularly from us a large quantity of products; Victoria also, but chiefly for re-exportation. If a general tariff is set up and all the Australian colonies are on a footing of equality among themselves, if Victoria, for example, has free trade with New South Wales, and New Zealand has not got it, the thing cannot fail to be prejudicial to the whole of our trade." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Deposition No. 46, p. 125.

This method of argument seems, at first sight, full of wisdom. However, most people do not speak in this way. They seem to doubt the possibility of increasing their exports, and, on the other hand, are afraid of opening their home market to invasion. It cannot be said that they are very daring and that their way of thinking corresponds to the idea one generally has of colonials. The opinion given by this latter class of people was, however, the one which made most impression on the Commission, and its report practically amounts to a summing up of their depositions.

What are, then, the products which would benefit by inter-colonial free trade? In the first rank must be mentioned oats, which, before protectionism settled down over Victoria, had found an important market there. Would this market be reopened with federation? It is not likely; for Victoria, like the other colonies, has gone in for growing oats, and now produces enough for her own consumption. The only chance New Zealand would have of selling there would be in years of drought. But it does that in spite of the tariff; for in years when supplies are short the Australians are forced to buy at any price. What we have just said about oats may be said of all cereals. Australia is a large producer who thinks much more of exporting than of importing.

As far as sheep-rearing and farming goes, New Zealand is evidently in an excellent position; but here again she finds herself confronted with a whole continent, which not only produces for its own consumption, but even exports. "From the standpoint of frozen meat, milk, butter, wool," a Christchurch farmer said, "I believe that federation would not bring us the least advantage. Now and then we get rid of butter

in Australia, but that is when the season there is bad. In normal times Australia produces and exports everything that we produce here. I heard the figures given before the Commission, and I was astounded at them. I had not the least idea that Australia produced wheat in such quantities. The only thing, as far as cereals go, that we can really export is a little oats. But this advantage is counterbalanced by the danger of finding ourselves inundated with cheap wheat and manufactured articles.”<sup>1</sup>

This deposition well expresses the farmers' attitude. England is their great market, and their first thought is of it. On the other hand, they send only a tiny portion of their exports to Australia, and, without any great hope of developing their trade in this direction, they are, on the contrary, afraid of seeing their neighbours encroaching on their domain.

We have found reluctance among the planters. Among the manufacturers there was a regular outcry. New Zealand industry undoubtedly lives only by means of protection. Would it be able to maintain its position if a barrier no longer shut it off from Australia? And who would guarantee that the federal tariff would remain high enough to protect it even from European or American competition? The New Zealand manufacturers are hampered by a social legislation which, to a certain extent, paralyses their activities. Would it be necessary to abandon certain parts of this legislation, in order to compete effectively with the foreigner? The employers, certainly, would ask nothing better. But neither the workmen nor public opinion would agree to it. The maintenance of the tariff is the point on which there is least disagreement among New Zea-

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Deposition No. 112, p. 311.

landers. As federation is a direct menace to this tariff, it is not strange that it should be to many a perfect bugbear.

It will be said that these New Zealand manufacturers have good reason to be afraid. The repeated proofs of the employers' fears drew from Captain Russell, the former leader of the opposition, a similar remark. "I am surprised to hear all the employers telling us the same story, and saying: We cannot fight with any other country. Do they think, then, that we can't export anywhere?"

Captain Russell might well be indignant, for, apart from the metallurgists, the language of all producers was uniformly pessimistic. We produce, they maintained, in costly conditions; wages are high, and the hours of labour are short. Besides, federation will inevitably develop, round the large Australian towns, huge concentrated factories, economically run, on the American principle. What can we do against them, with our small workshops and our modest capital? We cannot dream of competition; and we demand that our present protective tariff should be kept up.

Such are the usual complaints of the manufacturers. Here, for example, is an extract from the deposition of a woollen manufacturer, Mr. Glendinning of Dunedin: "I believe that it would in no way suit us to join the federation. The Australians have larger enterprises, greater advantages, and lower freights, and we cannot compete with them. Their labour is cheaper and their markets larger. . . . In the woollen industry, in particular, we pay higher salaries for a shorter day's work. I think federation would be disastrous for us."<sup>1</sup>

The shoe industry is even more pessimistic. "I am

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Deposition No. 23, p. 66.

opposed to federation, from all points of view," Mr. Allan, director of Skelton Frostick & Co., said in his deposition. "It is especially as a manufacturer that I am opposed to it, for I believe that federation would result in concentrating round Sydney and Melbourne all the enterprises that could be concentrated there. We cannot hope in New Zealand, with our present scattered industries, to fight against this system. . . . In fact, we should be absorbed. Q. Do you think that other industries would suffer by federation? A. I am convinced they would. Many industries would be overwhelmed in a few months. Among the first to suffer would be the soap and candle trades. Biscuits, clothes, printing, bookbinding would next be affected."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, fear of world competition, if the federal tariff should not be high enough; fear of Australian competition consequent on inter-colonial free trade: these were the arguments of the manufacturers, arguments which were the more readily listened to because for once in a way the workmen were in complete agreement with their employers.

There is no need to remind the reader, in this chapter, of how powerful the New Zealand workmen are. More than one law has been made by them and for them. If they had pronounced in favour of federation, perhaps it would have had some chance of success. From the moment when, in agreement with their employers, they put it aside, the question might be considered as settled.

In conclusion, however, let us see the reasons which determined the workmen's attitude. What they were most afraid of was the loss of their social legislation. They have, indeed, every reason to believe that it would be threatened by federation; so they give their verdict

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Deposition No. 57, p. 178.

against federation. Will it, however, be possible for the federated colonies to keep their social legislation? In theory, yes; but in practice? No, the workmen very justifiably reply; for with a system of inter-colonial free trade, a kind of equilibrium must be established: either then the States which have no social legislation must form one, or those which have one must give it up; to fight with unequal weapons in the keen competition of these days would be out of the question. The problem as thus presented by the workmen is very well put; and the answer is evident. If federation has to be paid for at the price of even slight damage to social legislation, no federation. If the policy of the Seddon cabinet is incompatible with inter-colonial free trade, let us remain faithful to this policy, and throw overboard any schemes which threaten it.

This state of mind among the workmen, which the Commissioners' Inquiry reveals, is a very strange one. It seems that they have become the most conservative class in the country. In fact, it is they who have benefitted most by the social policy, and that means that it is they who have most at stake in it. Federation threatens their patrimony, and they watch over it jealously. Here, for example, are some extracts from the deposition of a shoemaker of Invercargill, representing several trade unions of that district: "Q. You believe that federation would have the result of lowering wages? A. Yes, for it is necessary either that wages should rise over there or that they should fall here. . . . *This country, I contend, is the best in the world, and we should continue to go along our own path.*"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Slater, secretary of the Trade and Labour Council of Dunedin, was of the same opinion. "Q. You believe

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Deposition No. 3, p. 9.

that under the federation régime social legislation would receive a set back? A. Yes, my personal opinion is that New Zealand would go back ten years.”<sup>1</sup>

Almost all the workmen consulted used similar language. Their replies are those of well-informed men who have read much and who look at things from a strictly business point of view. The only expression of sentiment or enthusiasm to be found among them is their national pride as citizens of New Zealand. They are convinced that their country is the most advanced one in the world ; and they ill conceal the scornful pity which they feel for other countries and other régimes. Isolation remains the policy which they prefer, for they have gained enough to make them care more for preserving what they have than for making new conquests.

We are now able to understand the reasons for New Zealand's abstention. We have seen planters, employers and working men reject, with equal decision, the idea of federation. It is then probable that for many years to come the Colony will persist in its attitude of isolation. But the door is not yet closed to it, and under the title of a *New State* it may some day become the seventh state of the Commonwealth. But this day seems still far distant ; and, while the Australian continent is forming itself into a nation, New Zealand remains alone, in the distant regions of the South Pacific, there at its ease to play the part, which it loves so much, of modern Salentum.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission. Deposition No. 21, p. 59.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### NEW ZEALAND AND ITS PROJECTS OF EXPANSION IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

THE New Zealand Commission charged with making an inquiry into Australian federation wrote in its report: "It has been alleged, as a reason for New Zealand's adherence to the Australian Commonwealth, that federation would consolidate British interests, and would thus tend to promote imperial unity. But it is possible, in the future, that imperial unity may be even more encouraged by the existence in our seas of two British Powers instead of one."<sup>1</sup>

The hope of the Commission has been realised. There are in Australasia to-day two British Powers, the Commonwealth and New Zealand. Their individuality is strong enough for all the efforts made, up to now, for the purpose of uniting them under one government, to have failed. Perhaps the Australians would have been glad to take into their federation such a flourishing people as the New Zealanders. In any case, what we know is that these latter did not wish it, and that their refusal to join has confirmed the existence in the Pacific Ocean of the two British Powers to which the Commission alluded in its report.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Federation, p. 16.

To this duality a duality of policy necessarily corresponds. Australia and New Zealand have activities which, if not contrary, are at least distinct. Their sentiments of loyalty are indisputable; but they have neither the same character nor the same intensity, and we shall have occasion to see, in the following chapter, the quite special line which New Zealand imperialism tends to take.

In the sphere of Oceanic policy their distinct action is again evident. The programme of the two colonies is similar, but each goes along its own lines. New Zealand prides herself on her imperial policy; but at the same time she also claims to have her private attitude to Oceania. Following Australia, she gives herself up willingly to a colonial jingoism that might be called Australasian imperialism.

There are, in fact, at the present time, two distinct currents of imperialism in the English colonies of the Pacific. One, that of the greater imperialism, so to speak, brings Australasia more and more into the orbit of the Empire, associates her in its policy, in its wars, in its dreams of greatness; it is the imperialism of Chamberlain and of Rosebery, which seeks to unite, in one single union of forces, all the British citizens in the world. The other is, as it were, a local imperialism, the product of exclusivism and of racial pride, which seem to be becoming more and more characteristic of Anglo-Saxon colonials.

These two currents are distinct from one another, but are not opposed; there is superposition, not antagonism, and local patriotism blends wonderfully well with British patriotism. England remains, in the eyes of Australasians, the pre-eminent nation, the chosen worker of any civilising conquest. The colonials,

an integral part of the superior race, work by its side. An army corps of a great army, they think it a glory and a duty to fight, on their stage, for the supremacy of their race—the idea of race tending, by a curious transformation, more and more to take the place of the idea of nation, among most English peoples.

The Australasians, then, were very well prepared to sympathise with the imperialist movement, and to draw from it, for their own ambitions, local applications. According as the policy of colonial expansion developed among the Powers, they realised, as a sure instinct had from the very first warned them, that it was necessary for them to remain, as far as possible, alone and without troublesome neighbours in the South Pacific. In this way the programme “Australasia for the Australasians” developed into “Oceania for the Anglo-Saxons.”

This susceptibility with regard to any foreign conquest in their regions is not a new sentiment among the English in Oceania. Australasian imperialism came long before British imperialism. For a long time protests have been raised, in Sydney and Melbourne, against the presence of the French in New Caledonia. It seemed to the Australasians that a territory which by right should belong to them had been stolen from them. “What are these French Catholics doing,” they murmured, “in a part of the world which Providence has certainly reserved for Englishmen and Protestants? Why did the British Government allow these intruders to come into a region where, with a little foresight, British isolation might have for ever remained absolute and indisputable?” Such were their recriminations in the middle of last century; and they have only become more insistent as the years have passed.

Whenever a European Government has attempted to get a foothold in Oceania it has found itself face to face not so much with England as with these jealous and never-sleeping watchdogs, who mount guard at the entrance to these seas.

These nationalist sentiments are, however, extraordinarily complex, and political and religious prejudices are strangely blended with them. Colonial jingoism is, by its origin, violent and exaggerated. It does not know the obstacles and it ignores the difficulties of European diplomacy, and wishes on all occasions to sever with a single blow the tangle of all Gordian knots. Thus it is that in questions regarding Oceania the colonials have always urged England to take a firm line, apparently without any great thought of the consequences. Moreover, religious sentiment exercises an undeniable influence over them. The English Protestant becomes, by natural propensity, a convinced imperialist, since the interests of his faith are in no way opposed to those of his Empire. Each new English conquest seems to him the opening of a new field of action for the propaganda of his creed. The success of its missions seems to him, on the contrary, to be compromised whenever the regions where they have carried on their apostleship pass under a foreign flag. In these circumstances, he desires a British Oceania ; he is won over to the policy of expansion.

New Zealand adopted this way of looking at the Pacific problem. Over and over again Mr. Seddon, her interpreter, declared that British civilisation could rely on her as on a vigilant guard. On many occasions he expressed his fear of seeing the foreign element acquire too great importance in the Pacific. He was even careful to point out at the same time that Australia

and New Zealand could not have divergent interests in these regions, and that they should work side by side with the same object in view.

“ I think,” he said, for example, “ that the European nations are being allowed to get too firm a foothold in the South Seas. Our recent action with regard to Fiji and other islands must not be considered to prove any rivalry with Australia : its only purpose was to block the way to European Powers.” <sup>1</sup>

The meaning of these words was, in short, that it was New Zealand's duty to establish herself in certain islands, before the nations who were rivals of England had succeeded in getting a foothold there. This was the expression, made simply and without bluster, of a policy of conquest, to be carried out as a mere safeguard. Fortunately or unfortunately the temptations offered to the imperialistic appetite of the New Zealanders were not numerous. They had to search for hundreds, almost for thousands of miles, before they found any land that was worth the trouble to annex. Fiji, the Cook Archipelago, and Samoa were all that remained, at the beginning of 1899, at the disposal of their annexionist desires. Those who were most enthusiastic, however, did not despair of forming a special and local federation out of this somewhat scanty material, and of transforming little New Zealand into “ Greater New Zealand.” Thus a second Commonwealth was to have been formed in Southern Seas. But the trend of events was not favourable to this superficial and precocious combination. The Cook Archipelago did indeed become a part of the New Zealand patrimony in June, 1901, but Fiji has up to the present remained a Crown Colony, and Samoa has for ever escaped British influence.

<sup>1</sup> *Sydney Daily Mail*, February 4th, 1901.

The loss of Samoa has left an irremediable sorrow in the hearts of the New Zealanders. To have allowed the United States, and still more Germany, which is not an Anglo-Saxon power, to establish themselves in an archipelago of Oceania, seems to them an irreparable mistake, almost an act of treason, on England's part. It is necessary to have been in Oceania to realise to what extent neighbours seven to nine hundred miles away can be thought annoying. It is, however, a fact that the New Zealanders looked on the establishment of two foreign powers in islands which they had hoped to acquire, or which they had at least hoped would fall into the hands of England, as a blow struck at their supremacy in these seas. There was a great deal of feeling aroused when in April, 1899, the happenings at Apia came to light, followed by German-Anglo-American intervention, and finally by the negotiations which ended in England's standing aside. The young Colony then smelt powder ; there were many who wanted only to go and fight. Mr. Seddon made an offer to the English Government of volunteers to look after British interests in Samoa.<sup>1</sup> The affair came to nothing. In a pompous despatch the Secretary of State for the Colonies thanked New Zealand for her loyalty, but refused her aid ;<sup>2</sup> and to the general vexation of New Zealanders Samoa was turned aside to other destinies.

From that time Mr. Seddon's Government was actively occupied with the two other articles of the diminutive imperialist programme which we mentioned above.

It began by approaching Fiji, and making proposals

<sup>1</sup> Appendix to the *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1900, vol. i. A. 1, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* A. 2, p. 8.

of annexation which were discussed during the year 1900. Fiji had for a long time been in the position of the small republic which is willing to hand itself over to anybody, and which everybody refers on to the devil. The Australian colonies, and later, in 1885, New Zealand herself, had been asked, but without success. Since then there had always been an important party in Fiji which was anxious for union with Australia or New Zealand. It was chiefly composed of merchants, who wished to open up a wider market in the Colony which should consent to receive them. It was also composed of people who were dissatisfied with the régime of a Crown Colony, and who hoped in this way to put an end to it.

But the Government of Fiji looked at the question from quite a different point of view. The Governor, Sir William O'Brien, entered into a lively correspondence with the New Zealand Premier, and did not hesitate to try to alarm the natives of Fiji, foretelling for them a most unhappy fate if they should fall into the hands of the conquerors of the Maoris. Speculating on the dangers of a possible revolt, he took strong action in London, perhaps also in Australia, and succeeded in bringing to nothing the proposal for union which seemed so promising to Mr. Seddon and his party, but which did not fail at the same time to provoke the jealousy of Australia and the stolid opposition of the Colonial Office.

This check was a great disappointment to the megalomania of the New Zealanders. They found some compensation in the annexation of the Cook Archipelago, which was proclaimed on June 11th, 1901, in the presence of the Duke of York, the present King.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The annexation made by New Zealand in June, 1901, comprised the following islands: the Cook Archipelago (Rarotonga, Mangaia,

taking possession of these islands did not add much to the territory of New Zealand, especially as England already exercised her protectorate over Fiji only through the intermediation of New Zealand. This annexation was, in fact, only made to satisfy their pride: it answered to a real need of public opinion. The imperialists-on-a-small-scale of this young Colony were enabled, in the course of a ceremony which was performed with all the pomp desirable, to have the illusion that they, too, were making conquests, and taking their share in the immense scramble for lands and peoples of which Europe gave them the example.

In the next chapter we shall see to what extent British imperialism benefited by this new tendency in a democracy which seeks to win its spurs on ground other than that of social reforms.

Atiu, Aitutaki, Mauke, Mitiaro, Hervey Islands); Nive, Palmerston Island, Penrhyn Island, Manahiki, Rakaanga, Danger Island, Suwarrow Island.

*New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1902, pp. 15 and 16.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### NEW ZEALAND AND ENGLAND. IMPERIALISM.

NEW ZEALAND may with justice be regarded as the English Colony which is most faithful to the mother-country. Australia has had her moments of ill feeling, openly, sometimes coarsely expressed, towards England. Canada has more than once allowed herself to look with favour on the United States, and even to regard union with the great American democracy as a possible hypothesis. An unflinching cordiality has, on the contrary, marked the New Zealander's relations with the mother-country ; and I think that not the slightest trace of a separatist tendency can be found in their history for the last half century. In the concert of bombastic and blatant eulogies which marked the spread of imperialism, Mr. Seddon, speaking in the name of his people, declared most resolutely to all who cared to listen that if ever imperial federation should come to pass it would have no more enthusiastic adherent than the Colony of which he was the responsible leader.

We have had occasion above to note the indifference, almost the ill-will, with which the ministers at Wellington have always approached the schemes for Australian federation, and the unanimity with which public opinion finally dismissed the idea of union with the great neigh-

bouring Continent. It happens that this distrust of Australia coincides with an unlimited confidence accorded to England. The fear of being absorbed by the one naturally pushed New Zealand into the arms of the other, and in this sense we may say without paradox that the New Zealanders are morally further away from the Australians than they are from the English. To the former they display a distrustful independence; but for the latter they reserve all their devotion, all their favours, all their gratitude. In this attitude, which is spontaneous and sincere, sentiment coincides with interests; and we should entirely misunderstand the New Zealander if we did not see in him under his colonial varnish, in contrast with the Australian, a real Englishman in race, in heart and in mind.

This firm attachment is most strongly rooted in the memories of the past. The colonisation of New Zealand did not take place too long ago for many of the present colonists to have been born in England.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Seddon, for example, was a native of Lancashire; Sir Robert Stout came from the Shetlands. Many others of the most prominent New Zealanders of to-day once "were English." "To have been English"—is not that to some extent to be English still? For, in spite of the difference in time and circumstances, nationality cannot be discarded like a garment.

In one sense, it is true, these colonials are no longer English; but they keep pious recollections of the "old country," as they call it, and they have for it a deep and real affection. England is still for them the "home" to which all who have the means make a kind

<sup>1</sup> Census of 1901:

Persons born in	New Zealand	516,106	or	66.83	per cent.
"	Australia	27,205	"	3.52	"
"	England	205,111	"	26.56	"

of pilgrimage before they die. Their children, born in the Colony, go on calling themselves, as their parents did before them, English, Scotch, or Irish ; and they also call this land of their fathers, which they regard as their own, " home," even though they may never have seen it. " To go home," to see or see once more the land of his forefathers, is the supreme desire of every colonial, the great scheme which he dreams of as soon as he begins to get a little money. Then he returns to his birthplace, or he visits the village from which his father came ; he gets into touch again, for a time, with that European existence which might have been his own.

England, then, in the eyes of the colonials, is endowed with a halo of romance. She has become for them what Paris is for the provincial Frenchman, or even more than this, a kind of Mecca which everyone should visit at least once in his lifetime. Many go there to study and to drink afresh of the springs of the English spirit, and to bring back to the Antipodes some glimmer of the central glory. Others, having made their fortune, try to mix with the upper classes and take from them a lesson in official snobbishness.

But can it be said that these travellers ever experience the least desire to return and settle again in old Europe ? Not at all. Apart from a few snobs who feel that they cannot live far from the sun of royalty, far from wealth and titles, most of the New Zealanders prefer the wider, freer life of their Colony. But they do feel that England is for ever the reservoir from which they draw their ideas, their capital, their life itself. And they realise that they themselves are for ever colonials, in the strict sense of the word, understanding the need of not severing connections with a mother who still helps to keep

them alive. We should, then, consider this deep sentiment, which every New Zealander has towards England, as something real. It is more than a momentary caprice, more than the very natural emotion which is the product of the recollection or revisiting of a former fatherland. It is the love felt for a country which has not ceased to be his own, and whose troubles he shares as he shares her glory.

These sentimental reasons, however, would not be sufficient to determine in any lasting manner the conduct of a people, especially of an Anglo-Saxon people. That is to say, New Zealand also happens to find her interests in the friendship which unites her to England. In the first place, the New Zealanders have been persuaded, up to now, that they have nothing to fear from the mother-country, and that she would on all occasions respect their autonomy and their integrity. In spite of their respect and devotion, it is clear that they would not tolerate the encroachment of the central power on territory which they consider to be their own. Although they are not so touchy on this subject as the Australians and Canadians, they would certainly drop imperialism if imperialism were to mean sacrifice of autonomy. The English were the first to take this feeling into account, and Mr. Chamberlain was one of the ministers who most energetically maintained the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the colonies.

But, putting aside this aspect of the question, New Zealand knows very well that she would be able to do but little without the support of the great nation which gave her life; and that she is not as yet that fruit ready to detach herself from the tree, to which people compared certain colonies some forty years ago. A

thousand bonds unite her to old England, and as these bonds neither hurt nor annoy her she never thinks even of relaxing them.

The present position seems, on the contrary, to be thoroughly desirable. Anxiety over external relations only weighs on her to the extent that she desires. Does she want to negotiate for herself? The home Government does not stand in her way, and is content to exercise a nominal control. Does she, on the contrary, want to leave the business of negotiation to other more experienced hands? The English Government there again steps in to lend her the support of its experience and its prestige. This Colony is, in fact, a spoilt child, which never suffers for its sins, for a sheltering hand is always there to redeem its faults.

It may then be asked what advantage New Zealand could possibly find in shaking off this yoke which is not a yoke. In such a compact has she not everything to gain, and is it not an invaluable asset to have at her back a proud and mighty people to support her? Most clearly, the Colony's position would be in no way bettered if she had to treat directly with foreign nations, and to defend herself single-handed against the covetousness of ambitious or quarrelsome states.

Mr. Chamberlain made this point abundantly clear in the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902. In his opening speech, in the presence of the authorised representatives of the autonomous colonies, he showed, by a striking comparison, the extent to which the present régime of these young states was exceptionally advantageous to them.

“ We, in the United Kingdom, for centuries past have been holding our house like a strong man armed against all our enemies. We have felt throughout all the period

the burdens as well as the privileges and advantages of Empire. We see now that all other nations are arming to the teeth. I want you to consider for a moment what is the present position of the smaller nations with whom in population you may more closely compare yourselves. What is the position of such nations in Europe as Greece, the Balkan States, or Holland, or the South American Republics? Why, gentlemen, they are absolutely independent nations, accordingly they have to bear burdens for their naval or military defences, or for both, as the case may be, to which yours bear no proportion whatever. I point out to you, therefore, that in the clash of nations you have hitherto derived great advantage, even from a purely material standpoint, from being a part of a great Empire.”<sup>1</sup>

These words sum up with masterly precision the most incontestable argument that can be given to the colonies in favour of their loyalty to the Empire. For these reasons the New Zealanders have never dreamt, at any moment of their history, of political separation from England. The suzerainty of the mother-country is no burden to them, and their pride is not wounded by it. Who can guarantee that union with Australia would give as peaceful results? In fact, there is great reason to fear that Australian suzerainty (which would come to pass, in spite of treaties) would wound the New Zealander's pride to its very roots. Such a child may accept the authority of his father, when he would not take from his eldest brother the least bit of advice which came anything near to being an order. In this way may be explained, quite naturally, the line of con-

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. 9. Papers relating to a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the prime ministers of the self-governing colonies, June to August, 1902.

duct which was instinctively followed by Mr. Seddon's Government : resistance to Australia by drawing closer to England.

Apart from official relations, English influence shows itself in a manner no less effective. New Zealand is not yet rich in men, and, up to the present, she has not been able to afford the luxury of preparing young men for every profession. She has not ceased to need that reservoir of men which the mother-country is to her ; and so, when the Colony wants, for example, an engineer of the first rank or a distinguished professor, it is always to England that she turns to find him. This state of things will no doubt not last for ever. Already numbers of colonials who have been educated in Europe have come back and taken up the highest posts. But it is certainly the case that for a long time still the appeal to the living strength of the metropolis, either for men or for capital, will remain a necessity.

We may next speak of the most powerful of the interests which retain New Zealand in England's orbit—the economic interest. And is this not the factor, with Anglo-Saxons, on which everything turns ? For, although they too are susceptible, like the other races, to fleeting impulses, their return to the clear notions of egoism is quicker than that of others. It is for this reason that a mere sentiment of loyalty would not be enough to explain the fidelity, till now unshaken, of New Zealand. We must find the real cause in the state of economic dependence in which the young Colony is still placed.

The capital, thanks to which New Zealand has been rendered productive, and thanks to which this work goes on to-day, is almost entirely English. Apart from private enterprise, England has lent the enormous

proportion of £44,000,000 out of a public debt of £48,000,000, while the Colony herself provided only £4,000,000, and Australia only the derisory amount of £160,000. As soon as there is any need for money at Wellington—which happens rather frequently—they turn to the obliging mother-country, which always lends and never gets tired of it. This is an invaluable boon ; for if London chose some day to close her chest to them, where would these good colonials be able to find money at 3 or 3½ per cent ?

Besides the loans there is the actual business, and here again it is with England that most of the New Zealand trade is done. In 1902 the exports amounted to some £13,700,000 in round figures, the imports to £11,300,000. The total external trade was £25,000,000. Of this total, the trade with England alone reached the enormous figures of £16,300,000, or nearly 66 per cent. of the whole, New Zealand exporting some £9,300,000 and only importing £7,000,000.<sup>1</sup> The mother-country is then a client of the first rank to its Colony. Would it not be pure folly to quarrel with a buyer who is so rich and who pays so well ?

We cannot then be astonished, after that, if we find New Zealand looking with such favour on the coming into prominence of the imperialist movement. In the first place, it flattered New Zealand patriotism by enclosing it in a larger community, by making a small people, lost in the depth of the Pacific, enter as a member into a great and powerful Empire. Then it increased the chances that New Zealand might have had of finding in England new capital and new clients. In 1887 Mr. Parkin, the precursor and missionary of imperialism

<sup>1</sup> *Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand for the Year 1902*, Part ii. Trade and Interchange, p. 264 *et seq.*



throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, had a wonderful reception at Wellington ; he found there a people from whom the notion of free trade had long since disappeared, a people won over in advance to any opportunist solution, and already looking with favour on the blare of militarism. It was not, then, a case of England's converting New Zealand, but almost the contrary, for the New Zealanders were only seeking opportunities to show their zeal.

In April, 1899, at the time of the events in Samoa, a high-flown despatch, emitted by Mr. Seddon, made known to the English Government and to the world that volunteers from the Colony were ready to set out to defend the rights of the Anglo-Saxon race. The offer was refused, but the effect was great, and Mr. Seddon, clever man that he was, was gratified : it was for New Zealand and for himself a kind of *début* on the stage of the Empire.

And in the autumn of the same year the opportunity was renewed, and this time with more, with too much, amplitude. The Transvaal War began, and the whole of the Anglo-Saxon world, prepared by a skilful campaign, took the side of the mother-country. Of course, the New Zealanders knew none of the arguments put forward by those who opposed the war. The opinion of Europe did not count for them. As soon as there was any talk of war between English and non-English they could not entertain the slightest doubt. Having an opportunity to show their loyalty, they did it sincerely and with enthusiasm, no doubt saying in their hearts that some day England would be grateful to them. On September 28th, 1899, Mr. Seddon moved a resolution in the House, proposing that troops should be sent to South Africa. On this occasion he made an important

speech in which the imperialist policy of New Zealand was solemnly developed. The conclusion, which shows the tone of his speech, deserves to be given in full :

“It has been said by the historian Macaulay that it would be a New-Zealander who, on a broken arch of London Bridge, would recount the ruin of London and the downfall of the Empire. I am sorry for Macaulay, he little knew the New-Zealander. The history of the future will show that the New-Zealander will not recount the downfall of the Empire, but will fight to maintain it, and that he will on that London Bridge recount the fact that New Zealand today took action, and a leading step which will—if followed by the other colonies and dependencies—effectually prevent the downfall of the Empire. See what is going on now in the way of division of territories in the Far East. Look at the nations which are established in China and in the Pacific: I say our strength lies in being an integral part of this mighty British Empire, and that we should help to maintain its unity intact. And the day is not far distant, when, if we take responsibilities and share the burdens and expense of maintaining the Empire, we shall have representatives for this colony and the other colonies taking a direct part in the government of a federated Empire. I assert we shall, before many years have elapsed, be represented in the council of the nation at Home—the New-Zealander will be advising in council, not croaking on London Bridge. By proving ourselves worthy we shall be entrusted with increased responsibility. We must show that we are equal to the occasion. On this opportunity there should be no division of opinion, no hesitation or shirking of duty. Let it go to the Imperial Parliament, let it go to the

world, that we passed the resolution to send help to the Transvaal without a division. We are the first colonial parliament that has been called upon to do so. Ministers in the other colonies have made offers, but this is the first colony in which the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled have been called upon to give a vote upon this question. Let this vote be practically unanimous, and I trust there may if possible be no division taken.”<sup>1</sup>

The troops set out amid indescribable enthusiasm. Public opinion was unanimous in approving Mr. Seddon's attitude, and during the three years that the Transvaal War lasted New Zealand did not spare her support. She sent in all 6000 men, a large contingent considering the size of her population, and higher in proportion than that of any other British colony. Six thousand men, in fact, was in the proportion of eight soldiers to every thousand inhabitants. Canada hardly supplied two for every thousand inhabitants, New South Wales 4.5 per thousand, and England 8.5 per thousand.<sup>2</sup> So the little Colony of the Antipodes made as great an effort in men as the mother-country. This was an undeniable proof of the sincerity of the New Zealand imperialism. From this moment the Empire's attention was drawn to this Government of Mr. Seddon, which was showing such marked zeal; and on her side New Zealand declared herself ready to study the most immediate and most practical problems of imperial federation.

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, vol. cx. p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902*, Blue Book, p. 43.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### NEW ZEALAND AND IMPERIAL SCHEMES FOR COM- MERCIAL UNION.

EVEN in the midst of the most enthusiastic manifestations of her imperial patriotism New Zealand was not unmindful of the practical advantages which she hoped to gain from a closer union with the mother-country. We know what a splendid market England is for her Colony. The efforts of the New Zealanders should naturally have tended either to open this market still more widely to them, or to get colonial products protected there against foreign competition. In default of such important results they certainly hoped to gain a few small benefits here and there, perhaps even, to use Bismarck's brutal phrase, to get some small tip as a reward for the zeal of their loyalty. By the side of more disinterested reasons these vulgar arguments influenced throughout their devotion to the imperialist policy.

Of course, as sensible and practical people, Mr. Seddon and his friends were well aware of certain difficulties. But this did not prevent them from speaking with the most perfect confidence, in which colonial "bluff" was blended with some slight perfume of Americanism. They knew full well that the policy of commercial union was a difficult one to realise. But

they proposed in any case to make some study of the question, foreseeing that in thus setting themselves up as protagonists, as the advance guard of the movement, they were certain to attract public notice.

It was already with this in mind that Mr. Seddon came to London for the first time in 1897, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's second Jubilee. At this time the colonies were as yet little known to the great mass of the public, and their ministers, as a rule, were absolutely unknown. A skilfully managed campaign launched them forth, as it were. Mr. Seddon left England known if not famous, and with a wonderful understanding of the attitude which it was necessary to adopt in order to flatter public opinion. To speak often, so as not to be forgotten, to take part in all the imperialist demonstrations, to make large offers, knowing well that he would not be forced to keep to them, as a good colonial, that is to say, as a good braggart—such were his tactics. He naturally thought that a time would come when he would be able to ask for many favours in return for his neophytic zeal. The isolation of New Zealand, its more distinct personality, helped him to appeal more to the English imagination than, for example, Queensland, or South Australia, which are often confounded with the neighbouring states by the ignorant European. Thus it was that, little by little, New Zealand became known in England, and her premier became, in the eyes of the public, the most ardent and authorised representative of imperialism in the southern hemisphere.

There was nothing astonishing, however, in Mr. Seddon's evolution. We were careful, on several occasions, to note to what extent Australasian democrats differed from European ones, and how frequent was the alliance

at the Antipodes of social boldness and political nationalism in the same man. The type, exceptional enough elsewhere, of the radical independent or radical nationalist is a common one in New Zealand. Mr. Seddon was the most perfect example of this. Without giving up a single one of his social ideas Mr. Seddon was able to become the purest of imperialists, and his party followed him without the least hesitation.

And most of the New Zealanders were only too willing to walk in this path. From the day on which they clearly saw that the key to their interests lay in London, imperialism had hardly a single adversary among them, and their premier was able to offer to the mother-country a New Zealand which was devoted, united, and ready for any advances and concessions.

The second voyage that Mr. Seddon made to England, for the coronation of King Edward VII. in 1902, was a kind of triumph. His clever tactics had borne fruit, and he came back to the metropolis preceded by a well-deserved reputation for loud and convinced patriotism. The great public was accustomed to see his name in a prominent position in the columns of its newspapers; his loyalty had been praised at the time of the Transvaal War; in short, he was likely to become a real favourite. So that when he landed at Southampton in June, 1902, it was a sort of event for the country. Important people came to meet him; numbers of journalists interviewed him, and in them he was most ready to confide; ceremonies and splendid dinners were offered to him; these he graciously accepted, and spoke at them even more graciously, as he belonged to that class of colonial politicians, half-American, who love to secure the public and the press as the confidants of their thought.

Consequently there was no difficulty in seeing that the authorised ambassador of New Zealand returned to the metropolis more imperialistic than ever, more exuberant, more sure of himself, more ambitious of a part to play. With him, then, the champion of social policy began to take the second place, leaving the first to the imperialist and protectionist statesman. We shall follow him in his declarations, which have all the more weight because his fellow-citizens have never for a moment thought of disowning his attitude.

It might at first sight have been thought that, landing in England, and preceded by a reputation as a reformer as well as a patriot, Mr. Seddon would have found himself more at his ease in the liberal and radical world than in conservative circles. But the very opposite was the case. Looked on with suspicion by the traditional liberals, the New Zealand premier soon became the spoilt child of the conservatives. Even the *Times* let itself go in eulogising the socialist Seddon, and setting him up as an example to the Little Englanders whom a superannuated respect for ancient doctrines still kept in disappointed opposition :

“The Prime Minister of New Zealand, and the flourishing Colony whose confidence he commands, must be a sore puzzle to our radical friends at home, whose unintelligent adherence to misunderstood formulas has placed them in a position of essential antagonism to the ideas now dominating the Empire. Mr. Seddon is more radical than our radicals, more democratic than our most democratic theorists, and at the same time more enthusiastic and more thorough-going in his Imperialism than many good Imperialists among ourselves have yet found courage to become.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Times* leader, on Mr. Seddon and Colonial relations.

It is certainly remarkable to find the most authorised conservatives making so many advances to a man whom they should after all regard as extremely dangerous. On the other hand, it is easy to understand that the cheerful opportunism of a Seddon, his undisguised contempt for principles, his almost cynical utilitarianism, should be such as to frighten off more than one liberal of the old school. Many things have changed since Gladstone's time, and when one thinks of the "grand old man" one can measure the vast difference which marks him off from this new type of colonial statesman.

Mr. Seddon no longer spoke as an Anglo-Saxon of old or even recent times. Instead of lauding the classic principle of free competition and the ultimate success of energy alone, the Prime Minister of New Zealand chose not to despise common-place but practical aid from the State. Listen to these words, which official and orthodox admirers of the Anglo-Saxons would be very sorry to find in the mouth of a citizen of the British Empire: "The colonies are quite able to provide all the food supplies necessary for the Empire, and our aim should be to become a self-sustaining Empire. In this lies our greatest security. As for me, I believe that all contracts for imperial troops should first be offered within the Empire. It would then be time, in case of failure, to fall back on other sources. In this respect we should do well to copy the nations of the Continent." <sup>1</sup>

Listen, then, to this other declaration, which shows the distance traversed since Cobden and Bright: "I have great respect for the memory of Cobden and Bright; their doctrines were sound in their own day;

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr. Seddon at Southampton, June 15th, 1902.



but we must view the case from our own time, and if we acted in the way I have indicated we should bring about that state of things which was the heart's desire of Cobden and his school. It is no use, ostrich-like, to hide our head in the sands and say, 'It will all be well.' Some one has said that we are not losing ground in respect to manufactures and to trade. In New Zealand, in 1896, imports from America were a little over £200,000. Last year imports from America into New Zealand were over one million pounds. Why did that £800,000 not come from the mother-country? " <sup>1</sup>

The New Zealanders willingly subscribed to such speeches. Faithful subjects of England, they want nothing but to keep their clients, as long as they have no direct interest in doing otherwise. But in return they have almost got as far as thinking that the mother-country *owes* them preference in its orders, and they are no longer willing to allow her to place them on the same footing as foreigners.

In this way, little by little, the idea of a tariff union was outlined by them. As a similar movement was going on in different parts of the Empire, this question, or at least that of preferential tariffs, ended by passing from the academic stage, where it had long lingered, into the stage of negotiations. In 1897 Canada, by granting, on her own initiative, favourable treatment to goods from the mother-country, opened to imperialism a new path filled with new hopes. And so the problem of a tariff union was given a prominent place in the agenda of the Inter-Colonial Conference, convened by Mr. Chamberlain at London, in 1902.

This problem, when tackled at close quarters, proved to be complex for all, insoluble for some and difficult

<sup>1</sup> Dinner to Mr. Seddon, *Times*, June 18th, 1902.

even for those who were well disposed towards it. The idea of a complete *Zollverein* was soon dropped. When they came to the point the New Zealanders saw that they would not quite like to expose themselves defencelessly to the rude competition of the mother-country. They had refused inter-colonial free trade, such as federated Australia had offered them. Were they going to throw open their ports to an even more dangerous producer? No manufacturer was prepared to do this. For their part, the politicians well knew that the régime of imperial free trade was bound to make a hole in the budget which it would be almost impossible to fill. In our study of New Zealand finance we saw, in fact, what an essential place customs duties filled in the revenue. The tariff of the Colony is certainly of a protectionist nature, but it is at the same time fiscal. Hence the impossibility of doing away with it, and the difficulty even of reducing it. This was a confession which Mr. Seddon was not afraid to make, in a speech to the United Empire League on June 23rd, 1902 :

“A *Zollverein*, differential tariffs, reductions in tariffs, bounties to ships—all of these are possible, and each of these proposals is worthy in itself of consideration, though it must be said that in New Zealand the present state of the finances prevents the possibility of a *Zollverein*.”<sup>1</sup>

The confession is an important one, especially in a Seddon's mouth. Of course, if England could offer, in exchange for differential treatment, any really serious advantages, the problem would be different and the solution would be easier. But this is not as yet possible, for a free-trade England has but few favours to concede, which naturally makes any negotiation very diffi-

<sup>1</sup> *The Weekly Times*, June 27th 1902.

cult. In fact, it is all very well for the colonies to say that they will make sacrifices from sheer patriotism; but it is impossible to rely on such declarations, for they would quickly abandon giving if they received nothing in return.

In order to make any real solution of the problem possible, England must make up her mind to become definitely protectionist. Mr. Chamberlain's perspicacity succeeded in discovering this; his courage dared to affirm it. But although the foundations of the old free trade may be undermined, it is possible that England will hesitate for a long time still before she crosses this Rubicon. Until she has taken this step, a tariff union cannot be realised: without reciprocity it would be a mere swindle.

Mr. Seddon, like the other colonial ministers, fully realised the gravity of these objections. He knew, however, that there was something to be done, at least, to be said. With his usual resolution he took the initiative. In the month of December, 1901, he addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the following resolution:

"It is essential to the well-being of the Mother Country and His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas, that . . . preferential tariffs, by way of rebate of duties on British manufactured goods, carried in British-owned ships, should be granted; and that in the Mother Country rebate of duty on Colonial products now taxable should be conceded."<sup>1</sup>

At the Inter-Colonial Conference New Zealand, through the intermediation of her minister, took up this proposition. The principle was favourably received, for no one cared to make open resistance to the current

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Mr. Seddon in his speech at the New Zealand Dinner, *Times*, June 18th, 1902. Motion adopted by the Inter-Colonial Conference, and given in the Blue Book, p. vii.

of imperialism. But the representatives of the different colonies were obliged to make all reservations as to the possibility of its immediate application. Each individual said that he was impelled by the best intentions ; but everyone felt that it was difficult to go any further than resolutions and motions.

Incapable of any immediate and decisive action, the conference at least voted the following important resolution, which did nothing but take up and develop Mr. Seddon's proposal :

“ 1. That this Conference recognises that the principle of preferential trade between the United Kingdom and His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas would stimulate and facilitate mutual commercial intercourse, and would, by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the several parts, strengthen the Empire.

“ 2. That this Conference recognises that, in the present circumstances of the colonies, it is not practicable to adopt a general system of free trade as between the Mother Country and the British Dominions beyond the seas.

“ 3. That with a view, however, to promoting the increase of trade within the Empire, it is desirable that those colonies which have not already adopted such a policy should, as far as their circumstances permit, give substantial preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the United Kingdom.

“ 4. That the Prime Ministers of the Colonies respectfully urge on His Majesty's Government the expediency of granting in the United Kingdom preferential treatment to the products and manufactures of the Colonies, by either exemption from or reduction of duties now or hereafter imposed.

“ 5. That the Prime Ministers present at the Conference undertake to submit to their respective Governments at the earliest opportunity the principle of the resolution, and to request them to take such measures as may be necessary to give effect to it.”<sup>1</sup>

This important resolution was followed by the enunciation of the bases on which the different colonial governments were disposed to make way for this reform. Canada proposed to develop, for certain articles, the preference of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. which it had already granted to England. The Cape and Natal declared themselves ready to grant a reduction of 25 per cent. in favour of British products. Australia (a significant reservation) said that she could not yet talk of any precise details. As for New Zealand, she promised to give, or at least to consider, “ a general reduction of 10 per cent. on British products, or an equivalent . . .

(a) By reducing Import Duties in favour of the United Kingdom ;

(b) By increasing the Duties on foreign importations ;

(c) By imposing Duties on certain foreign imports now on the free list.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, the question of imperial reciprocity has made rapid progress in England. Thanks to Mr. Chamberlain's adherence to the protectionist policy, the problem has entered into the sphere of realisation. But at the same time the somewhat declamatory enthusiasm of its opening years has given place to a more precise study of the facts. The moment has come to drop talking and to act.

The colonies, New Zealand in particular, are taking

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, pp. ix. and x.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Blue Book, p. x.

steps to fulfil the engagements they entered into at the conference. In November, 1903, Mr. Seddon brought in and got Parliament to pass an important modification in the New Zealand tariff, tending to benefit the mother-country. But as, in spite of her imperialism, the Colony remains more protectionist than ever, the premier thought that he could not suggest lowering the duties, even in favour of England. He fell back on the expedient of raising the tariff, to the extent of between 20 and 50 per cent., on 38 foreign articles. The opposition objected that this scheme was in reality an aggravation of protectionism much more than the application of a preferential tariff system. But knowing better than anyone else the absolute impossibility of slackening the rigour of the New Zealand tariff, even for the mother-country's sake, the Government firmly maintained its attitude, and won on a division by 50 votes against 16.

New Zealand then once more affirmed the ardour of her imperialism. But she let it be clearly seen that in her present circumstances the limits of her concessions to the mother-country would soon be reached. Mr. Seddon loudly declared that he wanted nothing from England in exchange for the preference she was being given. But he added hardly less loudly that he left the question of recompense to the mother-country. He was then expecting some return, and his request for it was hardly dissimulated.

So, like the other colonies, New Zealand is expectant. When the English people has given its decision on the question of protectionism ; when the home Government has made it clear firstly that it intends to offer some advantages to the colonies in return for the favours it asks of them, and secondly what advantages these are,

then only will they enter into negotiations, and will see if they can set aside the objections of their manufacturers and their financiers. Then, perhaps, it may be possible to write the first chapter of the imperial *Zollverein*.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### NEW ZEALAND AND THE ORGANISATION OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

AT the time of the opening of the Inter-Colonial Conference in 1902 the South African conflict had just come to an end, and public opinion was still largely under the influence of this great war, in which for the first time the Empire had collaborated with Great Britain. This formed a precedent which was not negligible, and which the mother-country took good care not to forget. Most of the colonials showed a great deal of reserve. It is true that under the influence of a wave of admirable enthusiasm they had rallied round the flag and fought in the forefront of the battle ; but when the fight was over many of them began to reflect, at the moment of putting their fingers, as they were asked to do, among the spokes of the militarist wheel.

The situation from which the English colonies have up to now benefited offers, in fact, too many advantages for them to be willing to change it. At the cost of some nominal financial sacrifice they benefit by a great Empire's system of defence. Following Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty in the Balfour-Chamberlain Cabinet, reminded the assembled colonial premiers of this : " I hope," he



told them,<sup>1</sup> " that the colonial taxpayer will realise the extent of the advantage he reaps from the existence of one navy for the whole Empire. He is not only relieved thereby of a heavy burden of taxation in time of peace ; but in time of war he knows that to him, if faced by any possible coalition, is furnished the concentrated strength of one navy under one command. . . . As a matter of fact, each of these groups would find itself within the orbit of a great Naval Power. Left to itself, the Dominion of Canada would have to frame its naval policy with a view to the navy of the United States. The Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand would be forced to remember that France in New Caledonia, and Germany in New Guinea, are near neighbours. . . . It is not easy in either of those cases to see how it could be possible to avoid the influence of those forces which have forced Japan to become a Naval Power."

We must come back to the financial side of the question to understand why it was that many colonies did not accept with enthusiasm proposals which merely tended to increase their contributions. Let us hear what Mr. Chamberlain had to say in analysing the military and naval charges of the colonies, and in insinuating, rather reproachfully, that the present system favours them too much to be quite just : " The cost of the armaments for the United Kingdom has enormously increased since 1897.<sup>2</sup> That increase is not entirely due to our initiative, but it is forced upon us by the action of other Powers who have made great advances, especially

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Mem. of First Lord of the Admiralty, Blue Book, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Mr. Chamberlain's speech, Blue Book, pp. 4 and 5.

in connection with the Navy, which we have found it to be our duty and necessity to equal. At the present moment the estimates for the present year for naval and military expenditure in the United Kingdom—not including the extraordinary war expenses, but the normal estimates—involve an expenditure per head of the population of the United Kingdom of 29s. 3d.—29s. 3d. per head per annum. . . . In Canada the same items involve an expenditure of only 2s. per head of the population, about one-fifteenth of that incurred by the United Kingdom. In New South Wales the expenditure is 3s. 5d. ; in Victoria, 3s. 3d. ; in New Zealand, 3s. 4d. ; and in the Cape and Natal, I think it is between 2s. and 3s. Now, no one, I think, will pretend that this is a fair distribution of the burdens of Empire.”

These figures make it easy to understand why the English are slightly jealous of their own colonies. After reading out these statistics, there followed an appeal to the good will of the colonial representatives ; the minister told them quite openly that the time had come for them to share in the charges as they shared in the advantages of the union : “ No one,” he concluded,<sup>1</sup> “ will believe that the United Kingdom can, for all time, make this inordinate sacrifice. While the colonies were young and poor, in the first place, they did not offer anything like the same temptation to the ambitions of others, and, in the second place, they were clearly incapable of providing large sums for their own defence, and therefore it was perfectly right and natural that the mother-country should undertake the protection of her children. But now that the colonies are rich and powerful, that every day they are growing by leaps and bounds, their material prosperity promises

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. 5.

to rival that of the United Kingdom itself, and I think it is inconsistent with their position—inconsistent with their dignity as nations—that they should leave the mother-country to bear the whole, or almost the whole, of the expense. . . . And I would beg of you to bear in mind that you are not asked—your people are not asked—to put upon their own shoulders any burden for the exclusive advantage of the mother-country. On the contrary, if the United Kingdom stood alone, as a mere speck in the northern sea, it is certain that her expenditure for these purposes of defence might be immensely curtailed. It is owing to its duties and obligations to its colonies throughout the Empire; it is owing to its trade with those colonies, a trade in which, of course, they are equally interested with ourselves, that the necessity has been cast upon us to make these enormous preparations. And, I think, therefore, that you will agree with me that it is not unreasonable for us to call your serious attention to a state of things which cannot be permanent.”

These arguments are evidently reason itself. From the point of view of equity they cannot be disputed. It might, however, be remarked that the loyalty of the colonies depends to a great extent on the very favourable and exceptional treatment which England has always accorded them. And these lines of loyalty are like a cord which it is imprudent to stretch too far. Some of the premiers hinted at this, but the Imperial Government was so insistent that they very soon understood that some sacrifice was expected of them, and that they would not be able to escape it.

Consequently, they gave a favourable reception to the requests, as long as they remained vague, of the Secretary of State for the Colonies; but they were in no

hurry to broach practical questions which might have financial results. New Zealand alone seemed to wish to show that her imperialistic zeal was not to be stopped by these obstacles. The fiery Mr. Seddon came on the scene with definite proposals. He was, in fact, so much in agreement with the English ministers that it seemed as if these had found in him a docile and eager spokesman. New Zealand's offer sounded strangely like the ideas in favour at the Admiralty and at the War Office.

Better than any other Colony, the insular New Zealand seems especially suited to understand the importance of the naval problem in such a large empire as the British Empire. It was by no means certain that Canada or Australia could so exactly realise this. "The danger which I fear for the Empire," Lord Selborne declared, "is that Canada, South Africa, and Australia, being, in fact, continents, should become too much continental and too little maritime in their aspirations and ideas. The British Empire owes its existence to the sea, and it can only continue to exist if all parts of it regard the sea as their material source of existence and strength. It is, therefore, desirable that our fellow-subjects in the Dominions beyond the seas should appreciate the importance of Naval questions." <sup>1</sup>

The draft of the resolution, which was laid on the table at the conference by Mr. Seddon, seems an answer to the minister's invitation: "It is desirable that the Australasian Squadron be strengthened:

(a) By increasing the number of cruisers;

(b) By withdrawing some of the inferior gunboats, and replacing them with modern and better class cruisers; and

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. 20.

(c) By adding torpedo catchers or destroyers, if deemed necessary. The extra cost of maintenance entailed to be defrayed in the same proportion as provided under the existing agreements, and on the basis of population.”<sup>1</sup>

To these official and officious suggestions Canada turned a deaf ear. But the other colonies gave in willingly enough, all the more because the sacrifices sanctioned by them were but small. Moreover, long before this the Cape had taken the initiative in offering a patriotic contribution to the British navy. As for Australia and New Zealand, they shared in the expenses of the Australasian Squadron, the former to the extent of £106,000 and the latter to the extent of £20,000. This principle of contribution, then, had to be confirmed and developed alongside of the principle of collaboration.

This was what the conference of 1902 did. The colonies have derived some advantage from it, for at the price of moderate contributions they have shared as associates in the organisation of the British navy, which thus tends to cease being English and gradually to become imperial. The First Lord of the Admiralty made a skilful use of this argument, showing the colonials that in sharing the expenses of the Navy, they were ceasing to be mere dependants, and were becoming collaborators. “At present,” he told them,<sup>2</sup> “there is only one agreement between the Imperial Government and any group of Colonial Governments in respect of naval affairs. . . . I allude to the Australasian agreement. But, like every document that commences a policy, it has faults, and to my mind its greatest fault

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Blue Book, p. 15.

is this, that the relations of the Australasian Governments to the Imperial are simply that of the man who pays to the man who supplies. It does not give our New Zealand and Australian fellow-countrymen the sense of personal interest, of personal possession, in the British Navy, which I most of all desiderate for the future. . . . I want, in fact, if I may use such a term, to increase the maritime spirit of the Empire. . . . I want to see from all parts of the Empire a personal contribution to the Navy, so that it may not only be an abstract Admiralty to govern the Navy, but an Admiralty that has won the confidence of the Colonies, because the Colonies understand its policy, and because in each Colony there are officers and men belonging to the Navy—an integral portion of the Navy.”

These arguments produced an excellent impression, and most of the prime ministers undertook to suggest to their respective Parliaments that their contributions to the Imperial Navy might be increased. The representative of the Cape offered (subject to the approval of his Parliament) £50,000 a year towards the general upkeep of the Navy; the representative of Natal suggested £35,000; that of Newfoundland, £3,000. Finally, Australia, through Sir Edmund Barton, declared itself ready to give £200,000, and New Zealand, through Mr. Seddon, £40,000, for an improved Australasian Squadron and the establishment of a naval reserve. Article VIII. of the treaty between the Australasian Governments and the English Government was drawn up as follows: “The Australasian Commonwealth and the Government of New Zealand will pay respectively five-twelfths and one twelfth of the cost of maintaining the Australasian Squadron, provided that

the amount so paid shall in no case exceed £200,000 and £40,000." <sup>1</sup>

So that from the naval point of view the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902 resulted in the affirmation of the principle of colonial contributions to the fleet, and in the increase of these contributions.

From the military point of view it was far from being such a success. Despite Mr. Seddon's ever-ready zeal, the proposals for the imperialisation of the colonial troops, brought forward by the home Government, and seconded by New Zealand, met with a strong manifestation of the desire for autonomy, which desire showed itself on this occasion to be much more lively than would have been supposed.

As with most of the other subjects discussed, Mr. Seddon played the part of introducer. His proposal was warmly supported by the English ministers ; it was directed to introduce into the organisation of colonial defence a principle which was new, but dangerous to their traditional autonomy. This principle was the creation of imperial reserves which could be used outside the Colony to which they were attached, according to the requirements of the general policy of the Empire.

The idea was a new one, evidently inspired by the recent events of the South African War. New Zealand, however, as usual the initiator, had already tried to bring it into being in the Defence Act Amendment Act of 1900. By briefly summarising the military organisation of the Colony we shall be able to gain some idea of the dangers to colonial liberty which such imperial reserves would involve.

<sup>1</sup> Draft agreement between His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and the Colony of New Zealand. Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. 24.

The military organisation of New Zealand is as follows. The Colony has to undertake her own land defence. England only provides the Commander-in-Chief, who is an Imperial officer. As for the troops, they are composed of a permanent militia of several hundred men and of volunteer corps. There is, then, practically no permanent army. The Government relies chiefly on the volunteers, a real reserve; they can really be relied on, for they are numerous, well-trained, and animated by an excellent spirit.

The forces we have just enumerated were quite sufficient, up to the time of the Transvaal War, for the New Zealand Government; nobody dreamed of modifying their character. The wave of militarism raised by that war at the Antipodes was required to turn public opinion along a new path. Nowadays the idea is very widespread, among the people whom Mr. Seddon governed, that the Colony is required to undergo the consequences of all the vagaries of British policy. No one can regret this; and Mr. Seddon himself seemed to be glad of it. Valiantly and proudly he undertook new tasks, and promised help to the mother-country whenever she might need it. It was in this spirit that, after offering to increase the New Zealand naval contribution, he took the initiative in proposing at the conference the creation of imperial reserves in the different colonies.

The Defence Act Amendment Act of New Zealand in 1900 had already broached the subject. Article 12 of this Act provided that a reserve, styled imperial, might be formed, whose members should be eventually destined to serve outside of the Colony, according to the needs of the Empire. This article, although big with consequences, was easily got through Parliament; and



it seems that no one thought at the time of the gravity of the principle which it sanctioned.

Relying on the unquestioning support which New Zealand public opinion had given to him, Mr. Seddon felt that he could bring forward the following draft resolution at the Inter-Colonial Conference :<sup>1</sup> " It is desirable to have an Imperial Reserve Force formed in each of His Majesty's Dominions over the seas for service in case of emergency outside the dominion or colony in which such reserve is formed. The limits within which such reserve force may be employed outside the Colony wherein it is raised to be defined by the Imperial and Colonial Governments at the time such reserve is formed, and to be in accordance with any law in force for the time being respecting the same. The cost of maintaining and equipping such Imperial Reserve Force to be defrayed in such proportion and manner as may be agreed upon between the Imperial and Colonial Governments."

What this motion involved was of capital importance. It tends to nothing short of modifying the principles which have up to now been admitted throughout the British Empire in the matter of colonial autonomy ; it threatens to draw the colonies into the complications and dangers of the imperial policy. The Minister for War, in a very frank, perhaps too frank speech, showed all the advantages which England would derive from the institution of such reserves :

"A campaign between two great Powers is not fought out solely on the spot at which the quarrel has arisen. In the case of any trouble which threatened our Indian Empire, we are bound to send large reinforcements from here. In the case of war which involved European

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference of 1902, Blue Book, p. vi.

Powers our striking effect would necessarily be exercised on some of their dependencies.

“ That is what Great Britain ought to be prepared to do ; but by propinquity and also from other causes nothing could assist us more, supposing that a quarrel, forced upon us by others, also obtained for us the support of the different Colonial Governments, than that we should be able to count on being able to support our ally in China with a small body, but, at the same time, a well organised body of colonial forces from those colonies which are nearest and which are most conveniently situated for supporting us in China. . . . These troops may be required to reinforce the local troops in any part of the Empire specially exposed to attack. For such a purpose, troops despatched by the self-governing colonies would be of special value : no European Power other than Great Britain is in a position to draw on large communities of white subjects outside Europe for military assistance. . . . But, in order that the operations of the various expeditionary forces should be effectively combined, it is essential that the co-operation of all should be assured, and that each force should be efficient in all respects for the service required of it.”<sup>1</sup>

“ I propose that those men should be trained with a liability to over-sea service, that they should realise that they are a part of the army reserve of the Imperial Force, that their services are absolutely pledged in the event of the Government to which they belong proffering assistance. I would ask that they should receive such training as might be agreed upon between our military authorities and the Governments concerned, and that they should be fully organised and fully

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference, Blue Book, pp. 30 and 44.

equipped with a view to acting together and drilling together in the battalions or regiments with which they would take the field.”<sup>1</sup>

A scheme of this importance deserved the most serious discussion. With its somewhat slight enthusiasm the New Zealand Parliament thought it could adopt the principle, and the discussion, quickly run through, only gave rise to a few slight objections of detail. It seemed as if no one suspected the insidious character of this measure. The larger British colonies had to withhold little New Zealand from the dangerous slope down which she wished to drag them. With her usual prudence, Canada saw at once that such military collaboration, exceptional and voluntary in the earlier stages, would soon tend to become regular and compulsory ; and she realised that the mother-country would too easily get into the habit of expecting reinforcements from her colonies, and would soon be demanding them with most regrettable insistence.

These exigencies, or at least these pretensions of the mother-country, had been hypothetical. Mr. Seddon's proposal suddenly made them definite, imminent, and menacing. The representatives of Canada were in open revolt, and protested in the name of colonial autonomy : “ The Canadian ministers,” they wrote in their memorandum, “ desire to point out that their objections arise, not so much from the expense involved, as from a belief that the acceptance of the proposals would entail an important departure from the principle of colonial self-government. Canada values highly the measure of local independence which has been granted it by the imperial authorities, and which has been so productive of beneficial results, both as

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

respects the material progress of the country and the strengthening of the ties that bind it to the mother land.”<sup>1</sup>

The discussion on Mr. Seddon's proposal revealed considerable differences of opinion among the different colonies. While the representatives of New Zealand, of the Cape and of Natal were disposed to accept it, Canada and Australia entrenched themselves behind the objections we have just summed up. These very serious objections defeated it, and the Seddon proposal came to nothing. This was a great miscalculation on the Government's part, as everyone realised. New Zealand's fervour might be as ardent as it liked, but it could not outweigh the opposition of Canada and Australia. From this incident it is easy to see that in spite of the strength of the imperialist movement, the principle of colonial autonomy, which after all, has made the greatness of the Empire, is still as deep-rooted as it was in the past, and is still as jealously guarded by the principals interested.

Mr. Seddon, however, who had been one of the promoters of the Inter-Colonial Conference, returned to his Colony no less triumphant because of this defeat. Speaking at Auckland on his arrival on October 31st, 1902, he loudly proclaimed that of the twelve propositions which had been accepted by the Conference, seven were due to the initiative of New Zealand. The New Zealanders, though fully realising that their “King Dick” had rather played the part of a busybody, nevertheless received him with wild enthusiasm. At the general election of November 25th, 1902, he was for the fourth time returned to office by the majority

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Colonial Conference, Memo of Canadian Ministers, Blue Book, p. 73.

of the votes in the country. This last and recent victory proves that New Zealand has not for a moment ceased to identify herself with the social and imperialist policy which we have sketched in the course of this book.



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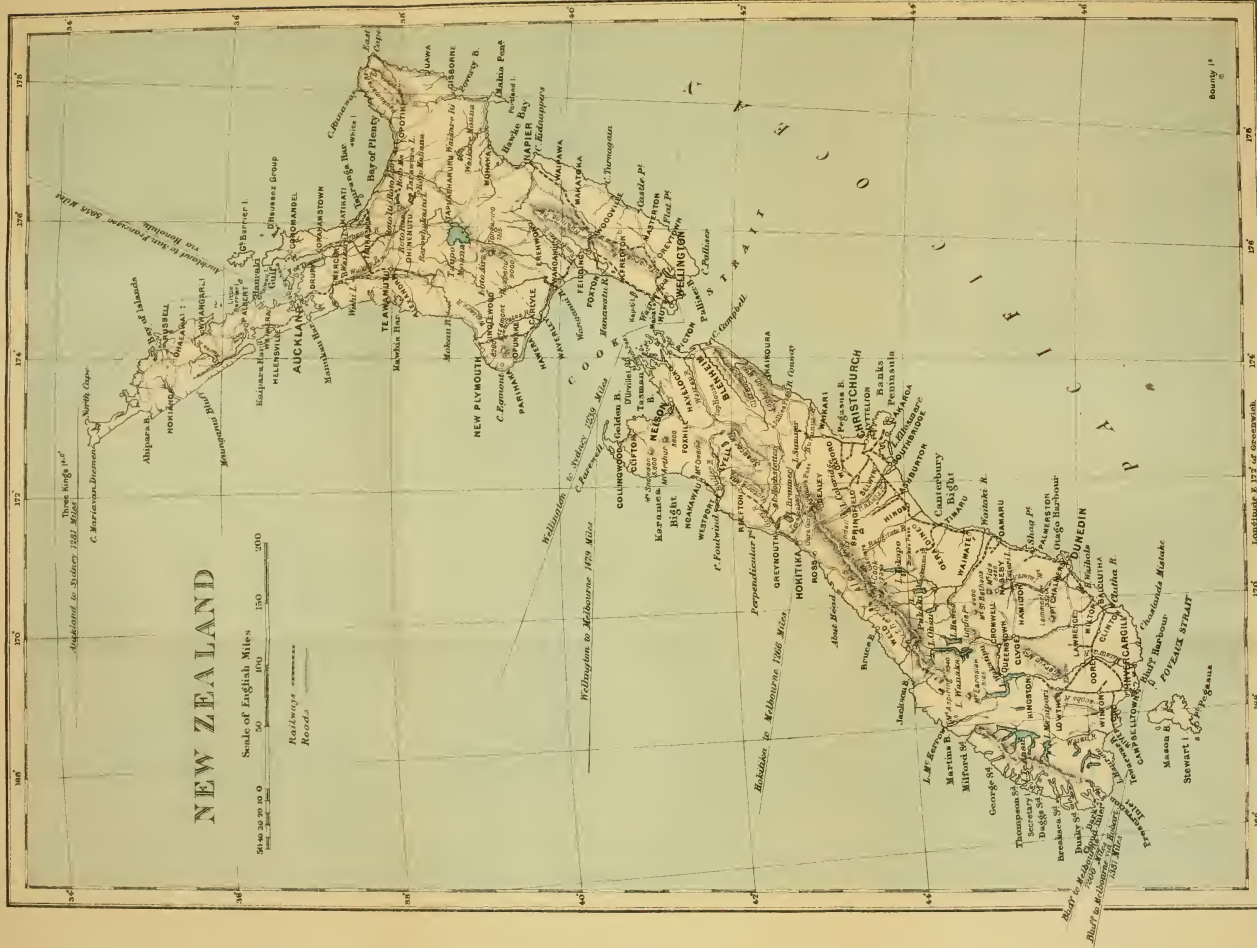
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