

*Fair Play*

AN UNPREJUDICED MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

"FAIR PLAY IS A JEWEL."

PROPRIETORS:

MCKEE AND GAMBLE,

NEW ZEALAND PRESS AGENCY, WELLINGTON.

The SUBSCRIPTION to FAIR PLAY, sent post free to any part of New Zealand, is 6s. 6d. per annum.

THE EDITOR invites contributions in the form of political and social articles, paragraphs, sketches, verse, and newspaper clippings.

Alterations or startings of advertisements must be sent in not later than the 25th of each month.

P.O. Box 240,

Telephone 709.

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WELLINGTON, AUGUST 1, 1894.

## Why the Prosecution?

The Sydney *Bulletin*, referring to a case in which a man named Andrews, being unable to pay a fine of £20, was sent to gaol for three months for selling an in-printless pamphlet—he added his own imprint instead of the printers—says:—"If the law under which Andrews was convicted were enforced against every printer and publisher in the land, from the owner of the biggest daily paper down to the dispenser of theatrical programmes at the door of a tenth-rate "gaff," its radical reform would be achieved within a month. The same process would apply to every other such enactment on the statute-book. And, possibly, while digging among the debris of the musty past, some forgotten law might be discovered which prescribes an appropriate punishment for those authorities who are paid to enforce the law in its entirety, yet only enforce it at their own pleasure and convenience."

Under the same musty, stupid law, the publishers of FAIR PLAY were last week hauled up before the S.M. We are very anxious to know *who instituted the prosecution*. The police didn't, and the Government didn't. The circumstances of the case are explained in the following letter which has been sent to the Minister of Justice:—

DEAR SIR—We have the honour to apply for a remission of the fine of £5—the minimum fine—imposed upon us to-day for a technical breach of the Printers and Newspapers Act, 1868, in printing a certain paper headed "Prospectus of the Phrenological Bank of New Zealand."

Mr. Martin, S.M., in imposing the minimum fine, suggested that no doubt application would be made to the proper authorities for a remission of the fine.

The matter for publication was handed into our office in the ordinary course of business. The manager of the printing department overlooked the adding of the imprint to the circular. This was purely an oversight—an oversight that occurs frequently in every printing office in the colony. When the oversight was pointed out to Mr. McKee, the morning after the delivery of the parcel, he at once called in all the circulars, and the

same day added to the imprint. In reality the circulars were published with an imprint.

The error was rectified six days before we were served with a summons.

We think we can fairly submit—

1. That only a technical and unintentional breach of the Act was committed.

2. That the publication was not of a seditious, libellous, or indecent character, being, in fact, a harmless "skit," which no respectable firm would refuse to print.

3. That immediately the error was discovered it was promptly remedied, and this was done a week before the issue of the summons.

4. The Act as it stands leaves it open for any unprincipled or vindictive person to lay an information against the printer from whose office the most innocent form of "dodger" happens to issue with-out an imprint. Fully 20 per cent. of the printed matter turned out in the colony bears no imprint.

5. The provisions of the Act have not hitherto been rigidly enforced.

We therefore hope that, under all the circumstances of the case, you will be pleased to remit the fine imposed upon us.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours obediently,

MCKEE & GAMBLE.

## Some Points in the Statement.

The Talking Shop is open, the annual farce has begun, and we, like others, must set ourselves to the dreary task of criticising the principal item on the programme—the Financial Statement. Mr. Ward has given the newspaper editors enough pabulum for one hundred leaders. What with the surplus that was so much talked of, but which no one can find—not even its author; the Cheap Money Scheme; the quarter of a million for the land purchase down South, and the other quarter of a million for roads and bridges up North, one is apt to feel like a boy who, having had a half-crown given to spend, went forth with on a mad burst, and bought a pound of coffee, a gigantic slab of gingerbread, a dozen bananas, and a dozen of ginger-pop—and then sat down and blubbered because he didn't know at which particular dainty to make a start.

It seems to us that the Cheap Money Scheme is the most important of all Mr. Ward's proposals, and not only the most important, but far and away the best of them. At present the farmer who has got a good bit of land, and who wants to make improvements, improvements which will repay him handsomely in the way of increased stock-carrying capacity and so on, has to go for his money to the banks or loan societies, who lend it to him at a very high rate of interest, varying from 8 to 10 per cent—we could give more than one instance where the interest has been over 10 per cent. But when he has got it, the farmer is by no means out of his troubles, for, in all probability, after he has had the use of the money for a few months, and has expended it in making the required improvements, the bank gets hard up, or its Australian branches do, which is practically the same thing, and proceeds to call up every penny it can. Or it may be that it is the loan society which, being managed by a lot of men who use their position for their own private ends, comes to grief and has to be wound up. In either case, the result for the farmer who has borrowed is the same—it is pay up, and pay up at once. The poor fellow is quite able and willing to pay the interest, but it is the principal which is required, and which, alas, the borrower generally cannot stump. Whereupon he is ruthlessly sold up by the blood-suckers, and is often ruthlessly ruined. It is to remedy the state of things we have briefly depicted above that the Cheap