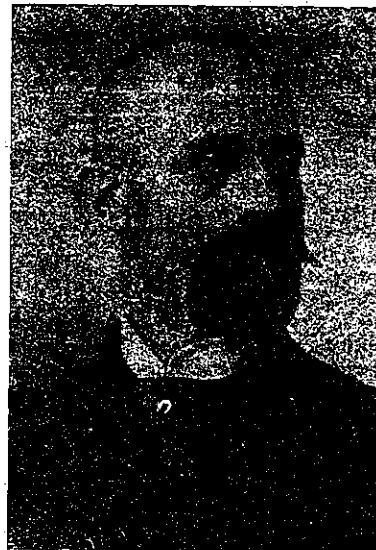


while the power of money or wealth rules the roost, it is, for political purposes, the instrument and slave of the wealthy classes. Under existing conditions, while the starting and maintenance of a daily paper means the outlay of a considerable amount of capitalised wealth, the privilege of educating the people, moulding public opinion, and guiding the destinies of the nation, or exercising those high attributes, of which the orthodox editor is so fond of reminding us, lies solely in the hands of those possessing that wealth. And while the source of their incomes, nay, their very existence, as a class, depends upon a perpetuation of the present system—by which they are legally allowed to live on tribute of rent, interest, and profit drawn from the wage-earners—it is not likely that the organs so controlled should exercise anything but a determined Conservative influence; and while posing as the champions and defenders of popular liberty, are, in reality, its most determined opponents. The Press is, after all, only an instrument in the hands of men. Like the sword, though it has been used to liberate the slave and punish iniquity, yet it has also been used for the purpose of carrying out unscrupulous villainy, and oppressing the weak and unfortunate. When the people of a country really own or control the Press, then it may be considered as the bulwark of their liberties. The power to do so lies in their own hands at the present moment. They have simply to support those journals which have given evidence and allegiance and devotion to cause of liberty, progress, and humanity, and suppress the subsidised, venal organs of the rent-and-interest-monger by leaving them severely alone. So far as the recent injudicious attempt of the Hon. J. McKenzie to effect Legislative restriction by means of the "Newspaper Libel Limitation Bill" goes, we entirely disapprove of such a reactionary and absurd proceeding; but we consider that the persistent hostile malignancy of the capatilistic Press has goaded the Government into many acts of a questionable and ill-considered character, which honest, straightforward criticism would not have provoked.

A Wellington young man, and a married man at that, who has recently fallen a victim to what may be called the Kodak fever, had a disagreeable experience the other day. He came home peacefully to his house, and found his wife in a terrible state of "high strikes." What on earth's the matter, Jane?" he said. "Matter, indeed," said she "I'll show you what's the matter." And she produced a photograph of a woman. "So this, 'sir," she gasped out, mastering her hysterics, "so this, sir, is the termination of our brief period of married existence; this is what I left a happy home for, where I was the joy of my dear mamma; this is all you mean by your hypocritical protestations of affection, which, if I hadn't happened to feel in your pockets to find—er—a box of matches, I might have have gone on blindly believing; this—" "My darling," he interrupted. "Don't darling me, sir!" she cried fiercely; don't—don't dare to use a term of endearment to me again, I—oh, to think that you should be such a brute, such a monster, such a—" "My pet," he expostulated, "pray let me explain for a moment." "Explain? What explanation can you give of the damning evidence of the photograph? Do I not find it secreted carefully in your own pocket? What construction would any sensible woman, any judge and jury put upon such a discovery?" "But, Jane—" "Stop, sir!" she exclaimed. "Have I not said that your excuses are futile? Oh, to think," she added passionately, her womanly spite for the moment getting the better of her dignity, "to think that you could desert me for a thing like this. Look at her!" she cried, holding the photo at arm's length, and glancing at it in magnificent scorn, "look at the brazen jade. Did ever one see such an object before?" She dashed down the portrait and sank breathlessly into a chair. Then the unfortunate man got his chance. "I've been trying to tell you, Jane, only you wouldn't allow me—that the photograph is only the one I took of you with my new camera last week. I did not think, myself, that it quite did you justice, but—" With a wild shriek, the young matron collapsed into unconsciousness.



Mr. T. Ronayne.

Mr. T. Ronayne, one of our Railway Commissioners, is a man in the prime of life. He was born in Ireland in 1848. He left Erin's shores for New Zealand in 1875, and soon after his arrival entered the New Zealand Railway Service as General Manager of the Helensville-Riverhead Railway. In March, 1876, he was transferred to Greymouth, where he was stationed for some ten years. In 1886 he was moved to Wellington, where, for a time, he acted as Resident and Locomotive Engineer. The former position was soon afterwards taken by Mr. W. R. Carruthers, when Mr. Ronayne acted as Locomotive Engineer. In April, 1886, he was sent to Addington as Locomotive Engineer of the Hurunui Railway, succeeding Mr. T. F. Rotheram, who had been promoted to the position of Locomotive Superintendent of the N. Z. Railways. Another move back to Greymouth was made in 1890, where he continued to act as District Manager up to the date of his present appointment as Railway Commissioner in 1894.

Says the *Bulletin* :—"The new Maoriland Legislature is said to be in the aggregate younger, rather better-looking, and much better-dressed than its predecessor. This is obviously one of the first results of female suffrage. The old Legislature was an elderly, slovenly and hard-faced congregation, and about as different from its successor as a bull-dog is from a bird of Paradise." Who's been stuffing our Sydney contemporary we should like to know? The new members are by no means a particularly handsome lot. Some of them are ugly enough to smash a camera if they stood before it, and others, in general get-up would make capital scarecrows in a sparrow-infested paddock. "And what a mean lot," said a Wellington boarding-house keeper to a FAIR PLAY representative the other day. Pound a week I charge mine, too—used to get two notes in the old days—and you should see them eat and hear them growl. Wish to goodness they'd clear out. Members, indeed, I don't want any more of them." The cabbies and shopkeepers say much the same thing—"meanest lot I have ever seen,"

The Comte de Paris, the Orleanist Prince, who is said to be dying of cancer, states his belief that France is yearning for the resatuation of the Monarchy. The last King, Louis Phillippe, was a fat old stupid, who bolted from Paris like a whipped cur in '48; and as for the Republic, it is to-day stronger than ever it was. Strange how these royal fossils cherish the fond delusion that everyone wants them.