

of drawing the Government's attention to the necessity of providing every possible facility for minimising the dangers of navigation. The country mourns the loss of the unfortunate victims, and sympathises to fulness with their grief-stricken friends. There is now no doubt that cases of distress will meet with that prompt assistance and help which in all times of disaster and trouble the public of New Zealand so nobly respond to.

Temporary Insanity.

A CONVENTIONAL LIE OF MODERN CIVILISATION.

An old man, age fifty-five, has recently committed suicide in a most determined manner. That the act was premeditated and fully considered before being put into execution, and was not the result of dipsomania, is abundantly proved by the clear and explanatory letter left to justify his action. The reason given constitutes one of those terrible and constantly recurring indictments against the economic conditions under which we live. It so clearly reveals the unsound state of society, points so directly to the necessity for drastic reform in our institutions, and presages future perils to society of so alarming a character by giving a brief glimpse of the steadily increasing amount of human suffering and anguish lying hidden beneath the surface, that juries, with characteristic nineteenth century hypocrisy, have hitherto endeavoured to obscure such incidents by giving utterance to a series of the most deliberate falsehoods which ever disgraced mankind. In the instance referred to, the deceased in the helplessness of despair at being unable to find employment (fully recognising that under present conditions the right to live by honest toil is, unnaturally, limited), nobly sacrificed himself—quite unavailingly, perhaps—in the interests of younger men. He felt "he had no right to compete with younger men in the labour market." That a man of such character should object to have his memory impugned and desecrated by his act being made the subject of the usual stereotyped lying formality of "temporary insanity," fully accounts for the touching appeal to the jury. It is to be hoped his request was granted, and the usual conventional perjury abstained from.

It is, upon reflection, extremely singular that, by tacit consent, coroners, juries, witnesses, and even journalists, should nearly always conspire to prevent publicity being given to the true nature of the causes of such acts, and to shield "society" by casting odium on the deceased. Were it possible to obtain reliable accounts of the true cause or motive in every case of suicide, there can be but little doubt that those committed in a state of sanity would largely predominate over all others. The hackneyed idea that self-immolation must necessarily be the outcome of mental aberration, is fast losing ground. So many instances have come to light in which fear, disappointment, incurable disease, shame, loss of position, poverty, despair, jealousy and many other motives have operated without there being evidence of any kind to justify the charge of lunacy, that people are becoming somewhat cynical in the reflections on the intelligence and pro-

bity of the average juryman. There can be no doubt that murder in many cases is as equally entitled to be attributed to "temporary insanity" as suicide. But even where a parent suddenly develops homicidal tendencies, and slays his children, it is extremely difficult to obtain the remission of the capital sentence, or even the fair consideration of any Court of justice, on those grounds. There always appears to be a savage brutal feeling (not altogether illogical from a utilitarian point of view) that, mad or sane, the homicide would be a trouble to society, so he is better hanged out of the way. In cases of this sort the injustice is aggravated by the fact of investigation, and proof being possible, which is not always so with suicides.

Charles Jenkins has certainly rendered society a service in two ways. He has given a warning. His act is practically nothing more or less than the "handwriting on the wall." It is a widely spread advertisement of shameful social conditions, which it is hoped will arrest the attention of the thoughtless, and the prosperous—who think that life at the present time is "all love and all law." He is the natural obverse of the bomb-throwing-anarchist. Each is a birth of the times. The one is driven to despair and martyrdom; the other to revenge and criminality. Both are effects, and may act as purgatives for an impure state of society. The difficulty at the present time is to make people think. They will "eat, drink and be merry," live for the hour, and for "self," remaining totally unconscious of the weltering human misery beneath them; rotting the very foundations of the social structure, and which at short notice may plunge them into tribulation and despair equal to that of the unfortunate individual who afforded this object lesson. But considered as an exposure of the time-serving-hypocritical spirit of conventional fraud and deception which pervades the whole of society, and as a scathing rebuke, the lesson which Jenkins has given is invaluable. Others have preached Truth, and lived. He spoke once and died. He should be as much honoured as a teacher and martyr as those who died upon the stake. It is to be hoped the incident may in some measure be beneficial in shaming juries from continuing the practice to the extent it has hitherto prevailed.

Session ended. Thank heaven!

Will the Government get through next session? That is the question.

Look out for a five million loan and a general "splodge" next year!

And then, in two years more pack up your "porkmantle" and travel. New Zealand will be the best country in the world—to live out of!

Who is to be the new Minister of Railways? Pinkerton?

Whoever may be the marionette, "Dick" will pull the strings. You bet on that!

Some of the big bugs in the railway service are very anxious about the future. They are afraid that the Black List is shortly to be operated upon. Some of them won't be much missed, anyhow.