

# RETIRING PARLIAMENTARIANS

*Patriots who have Devoted many of their Best Years to the Country's Service are now retiring from Active Politics*

LIKE time, the will of the people brings its revenges. Every general election takes toll of the gentlemen who have made the country's laws for the preceding three years. It is calculated that the political mortality rate among members of the New Zealand House of Representatives at each election is from 20 to 25 per cent. Happy those members who after years of service are

ity, which shone in times of conflict "like a good deed in a naughty world." The gracious figure of Lady Rhodes, seen with such regularity

supporter of Mr. Seddon, and later acknowledged the leadership of Sir Joseph Ward. Neither Mr. Witty, nor the electors of Riccarton, would hesitate to describe the member for that electorate as "rough and ready." He never aspired to wear the mantle of a statesman or an orator, but no one in the House looked after the interests of his constituents with

from his obligations as a Methodist minister in order that he might promote the cause of prohibition and social reform generally as a member of the legislature. Mr. Isitt, after his election for Christchurch North, certainly fulfilled his intention, but it must be admitted that his voice in Parliament on the subject of prohibition was always rather like that of one crying in the wilderness. In later years he earned distinction as one of the "dauntless three" already referred to, and as an uncompromising opponent of what he always termed "extreme Labour." He repeatedly introduced his Religious Exercises in Schools Bill, and as often saw it defeated. Mr. Isitt will be remembered as almost the only orator in the successive Parliaments he adorned.



Hon. J. A. Hanna



Sir Heaton Rhodes



Mr. L. M. Isitt

LAST on the list comes the Hon. D. H. Guthrie, Minister Without Portfolio, and previously, from 1918 to 1924, Minister of Lands. Mr. Guthrie made his debut in 1908 as member for Oroua, and from 1911 to 1918 was a useful Reform whip. As Minister of Lands he was assiduous and capable, and did much to develop swamp country in the north by means of drainage. Among visitors to Parliament he was best known as one of the two speakers whose remarks were inaudible in the galleries, the other being Mr. T. K. Sidey, of Dunedin. After 1922, owing to persistent ill-health, Mr. Guthrie took no part in debates, but his experience and advice, when he was able to attend, were greatly valued by his colleagues in the Cabinet. His benign figure will be missed by all who have business to transact in Parliament House.

Which of the five members will be elevated to the Upper House is uncertain, but some at least of them are due for that honour. The chosen, it is good to know, will be able to sit in the Legislative Council gallery and join the cloud of witnesses with which the House of Representatives is compassed about.

able to retire with all the honours of war.

Among such legislators this year are five men well known the country over. They include three ex-Ministers, and their aggregate Parliamentary service amounts to over a century—111 years, to be exact. Each has had the distinction of serving one electorate without intermission for the whole of his career in the House. All five are among the best-known figures in the elective chamber, and they will be sadly missed.

Two of them tie in years of service, and of these it is fair that Sir Heaton Rhodes should be mentioned first. It is safe to say that no minister of the Crown in recent times has earned warmer personal respect than the retiring Minister of Defence. A native of New Zealand, but an alumnus of Oxford, he represented in Parliament the older political tradition, not of conservatism, but of service. Sir Heaton belongs to one of the wealthiest families in Canterbury, and had he seen fit he might have led all his days the life of a country gentleman upon his estates at Tai Tapu. Instead, he sought election to Parliament for Ellesmere in 1899, and represented it as a private member until 1912, when the accession of the late Mr. Massey to power elevated him to the Cabinet as Minister of Defence. During the war he obtained leave to visit Egypt and other war zones as a commissioner of the Red Cross, and in 1920 his public service was rewarded with a knighthood, which his personal qualities fitted him well to carry. All parties in the House will miss his unvarying good humour and urban-

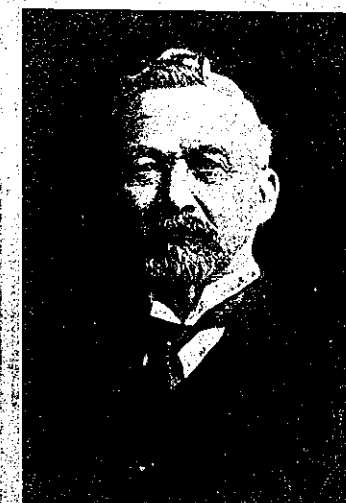
day by day in the ladies' gallery, will be missed no less.

The Hon. J. A. Hanan entered Parliament in the same year as Sir Heaton Rhodes, but took his seat upon the other side of the House. His electorate was Invercargill, and has been ever since. Few more earnest and assiduous members than Mr. Hanan have ever made their voices heard from the Liberal benches. He was ever a doctrinaire, and humour rarely found its way into any of his speeches, but his undying enthusiasm for Liberalism earned him a tribute of respect from comrades and opponents alike. Mr. Hanan attained Cabinet rank in the short-lived ministry of Sir Thomas Mackenzie, who made him Minister of Education. When the National Cabinet was formed, he took up the same portfolio again, and that of Justice as well. Most Ministers of Education are loquacious; they have to be, both inside and outside the House. Mr. Hanan, however, is still remembered among educationists for the number and length of his speeches at that time. In later years he was best known by the perseverance with which he advocated the elective executive. Session after session he introduced his Election of Ministers and Party Government Reform Bill, a measure which never achieved its second reading. The member for Invercargill was a distinct personality, and his departure will be a loss on that account.

MR. G. WITTY, known to everybody in the House as "George," is a veteran whose service goes back to 1902. He entered Parliament as a

greater care. Three years ago Mr. Witty came into prominence as one of the three men, not in the Reform ranks, who pledged themselves to support the Government upon all no-confidence motions, and by so doing kept it in office. Mr. Witty served over twenty years as chairman of the Railway Committee of the House, and it is common knowledge that before Parliament dissolved he received a handsome presentation from his fellow-members as a mark of their warm personal friendship.

MR. L. M. ISITT is too well known to require any introduction. His Parliamentary career began in 1911, when he was released



Hon. D. H. Guthrie



Mr. G. Witty