

NOTES FROM THE GALLERY.

(By Clarissa.)

Wellington.

ENSCONCED once more in my perch in the gallery, after an absence of many months, I place my note-book on the ledge and take a rapid survey of the personnel of the House. Right gladly do I extend a mental welcome to my old friend Mr Rolleston, whose solid knowledge and keen political judgment entitle him to so large a place in the estimation of the House. Sole representative of bygone days, what memories must your presence recall to Mr Speaker? Memories of days gone by, of foemen worthy of their steel, when Greek met Greek, memories of Featherstone, of Moorehouse, of Fitzgerald, FitzHerbert and Macandrew.

Involuntarily I glance at the chair. Mr Speaker sits there, by time unaltered, alert, impressive, immutable as of yore.

On the Government benches, the Right Hon. Richard, "With that vast bulk of chest and limb as seen."

So oft to men who subjugate their mind, sits lost in reverie, who shall say of what? His massive head thrown back, apparently unconscious alike of all, of bills, of even the environments of the House. Possessed of almost inhuman staying power, with faith in himself that is almost touching in its completeness, who shall say to what heights he soars in his ambitious musings?

Among new tenants of the Opposition benches I notice Mr Wason, air big, and the elect of Waipawa, Mr Hunter, who has already broken a lance with Mr Seddon and proved himself a man of strong convictions, and with the greater ease which comes of fuller self-confidence, will develop into a pungent debater. The present Parliament contains no less than three sons who have inherited the political tastes of their fathers, and perhaps at no distant date they will draw near to the Parliamentary position of their illustrious kinsman, and a McLean, a Montgomery and a Hunter will occupy the Ministerial benches.

With Captain Russell and his gentlemanly bearing and unvarying good manner; with Sir Robert Stout of aggressive manner, and rapid, but telling intonation; with Mr Hutchison, the immaculately groomed and button-holed, with Scobie MacKenzie, ever ready as of yore to delight the House with a sly hit, dexterously dealt, with sometimes just a spice of malice in the quip; with all these and many more, I renew an old acquaintanceship as they file into the House and take their seats, till, with a start, I realise that public business is about to commence. The House has resumed its wonted serenity, but the plumage of the member for Wakatipu is still slightly ruffled, and the whips keep a wary eye upon each other. On the motion of the Minister for Defence, the Financial Debate is adjourned until the evening and private Bills are proceeded with. The second reading of the Municipal Franchise Enlargement Bill, providing for the extension of the Franchise in elections of municipal councillors and mayors to all electors on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll, is moved by Mr Tanner, and procures a rather interesting debate. The Premier advocates the enlargement of the franchise, characterising the present law as defective, and thinks that with an enlarged franchise the municipal bodies would be more representative, and better work would be done. He condemns sanitary matters in the past, and also condemns plurality of votes, and thinks that the residential qualification should be longer than three months.

Captain Russell follows, and unhesitatingly condemns the Bill, which he thinks is a very bad one, the Bill containing in his opinion many palpably unjust provisions that he refuses to support. He will not admit that the principle of one-man-one-vote is a proper one, either as regards the Parliamentary franchise or the municipal franchise, and blames the inordinate desire of the unthinking portion of the ratepayers to rush into large loans, this in his opinion having proved the ruin of many towns in the colony. Messrs Rolleston, Carson, and Allen in short speeches strongly condemn the Bill, Mr McGowan being an advocate of the extension of the

franchise, but to a limited extent, and not so far as the Bill provides.

Mr Scobie MacKenzie twits the Government, who now pose as Liberals, as having firmly opposed the Bill when he had been an ardent supporter of it, and thinks the one effect of the Bill would be that one set of men would provide the money and one other lot would spend it, and moves as an amendment, "That it is inexpedient to pass this Bill until the House has had an opportunity of considering the whole question." Mr Moore seconds this amendment, and strongly opposes the Bill, followed by Mr Bolland in the same strain. Mr Wilson supports the Bill, and Mr Crowther, while opposing it, avers, amidst the laughter of the House, that the Wellington dock scheme was meant to monopolise the trade of Lyttelton, and avows candidly that 'we are all tarred with the same brush,' and 'are always trying to run our own little monopoly for all it is worth.' At 5.30 the House adjourns.

At the evening sitting the adjournment of the debate on the Municipal Franchise Enlargement Bill till that day fortnight is moved by Mr Thompson and agreed to. The "Debate on the Budget" is now resumed to full galleries and an attentive House. Mr J. W. Thompson in opening the debate declares that he had heard things said about the co-operative system that would almost make one's hair stand on end, showing clearly that we were not getting value for our money, and states among other things that the land on which the factories and workshops were erected has increased 17 per cent, and that all over the colony the land had decreased in value owing, the landowners declare, to the administration of the Government.

Mr Montgomery follows, making a telling and forcible speech, marred by an occasional hesitation for a suitable word. Referring to the Budget, he says there are 52 subjects in it, and that he has only 60 minutes in which to deal with them. The last year's estimates he declares were all over-estimated, and the expenditure the same, with six exceptions, and advocates some better arrangement for the future. He draws attention to the fact that for the first time in the history of the colony the Opposition acknowledges that there was a surplus, and defends the system of cash from land sales being taken to swell the surplus, which has been done, he avers, from time immemorial, and tells the Opposition it is a case of the pot calling the kettle black for it to take exception to the practice. He proceeded to show that Mr Ballance had not constructed any more public works out of revenue—strictly speaking, less—than the present Government had done, and defends them from the charge of want of self-reliance, pointing out that during the past six years nearly £300,000 has been transferred to the Public Works Fund from the Consolidated Revenue. He contends that the result of his Parliamentary experience proves that sinking funds were wrong in principle, and that it is not safe to tempt the temptation of this kind within the reach of Colonial Treasurers, preferring on his part the alternative of excess of revenue over expenditure, and warns the Minister that his £200,000 must be expended on rolling-stock, and not in maintenance; and urges the Government to institute a reform and bring down its Public Works before its Financial Statement. Here he looks towards the clock, as time to him is a serious thing, and anxiously inquires of Sir Maurice, "Can you tell me, sir, what time it is?" Mr Speaker relentlessly rings his bell, the delighted House roars, and Mr Montgomery resumes his seat. Mr Richardson and Mr Taylor continue the debate in strong terms of condemnation, averring that the surplus is not a fair one, as it was made up partly by amounts carried over from the previous year and the year before, and partly by the amount derived from the sinking funds, and congratulate the Premier upon the Cheviot Estate, which he thinks is now an assured success.

Mr Herries here moves the adjournment of the debate, which the House agrees to with alacrity, and soon after 12 the House adjourns.

In the lobbies there are numerous and contradictory rumours in circulation re the anticipated disclosures in connection with the dispatches that were forwarded to England by Lord Glasgow prior to his leaving

New Zealand, as these dispatches are to be laid upon the table of the House shortly by the Premier. In reference to Mr Ward's resignation, Lord Glasgow is said to have stated that Mr Ward took the step he did on account of warm and adverse strictures passed upon his commercial conduct by Mr Justice Williams. Dark and mysterious hints are thrown out of Ministers being kept in ignorance of the contents until the Governor had departed from the colony, and of the accidental finding of the documents at Government House. *Nous verrons!*

The Horowhenua Block Amendment Bill and the pairs dispute are, of course, the subjects of discussion in the lobbies, and very strong opinions are being expressed on both sides, and exciting developments in connection with the former are anticipated shortly.

In refutation of the supposed split in the Cabinet, the Minister of Lands convulsed the House the other day by declaring that 'The Premier and I have never had a row,' and when interrupted by the incredulous roars of laughter in the House, resumed, 'Well, there was at times just such a little difference of opinion as a man and his wife might have.' Here he was forced to desist, as the House was convulsed.

Upon the introduction of the solicitors' Fees Bill, introduced by the Premier last week, Mr Seddon explained that it provided, *inter alia*, for making it a criminal offence for solicitors to charge fees in judgment summons cases. Whereupon Mr McGuire wittily retorted, "That the Right Hon. gentleman was not only right honourable, but a doctor of 'common law,' and the House was enraptured with the joke.

Mr Silgo arrived from Dunedin by the Te Anau on Wednesday, and occupies a prominent seat on the Opposition benches.

There was a sense of impending dissipation in the air on Wednesday night, and a vacancy in many benches, which was accounted for by the fact that His Excellency the Governor was giving a parliamentary dinner, the following members being invited: Hons. W. Hall Jones, J. Carroll, R. H. J. Reeves, W. Kelly, W. H. Reynolds, J. Rigg, H. Scotland, J. Shepherd, S. E. Shrimpski, W. C. Smith, J. Kerr, L. Walker, H. Williams, W. Rolleston, W. C. Walker, W. Swanson, J. Jones, T. Kelly, W. Jennings, B. Harris, Sir Robert Stout, and Messrs M. J. S. MacKenzie, R. P. McLean, W. Symes, G. G. Wright, C. Wilson, W. Fraser, T. Parata, H. Kaihau, J. Bolland, H. Brown, G. Carson, H. A. Field, G. Fisher, M. Gilfedder, W. Heeries, J. Holland, J. Hutchison, C. Lewis, R. McKenzie, J. A. Millar, T. E. Taylor, J. O'Meara, R. Monk, R. Moore, M.I.R.'s, and Messrs Fison, Friend, and Willis.

Considerable excitement pervaded the House on Wednesday afternoon, when the Speaker and Mr Scobie MacKenzie engaged in a short sharp passage of arms on the question of order and privilege. Speaking on the subject of Standing Orders, Mr MacKenzie said when quoting from them that questions should be taken before orders of the day, and asked the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker maintained in response, that custom outweighed the Standing Orders in this respect, and decided against the hon. member. Mr MacKenzie again rose, and with some warmth, said he wished to bring a question of privilege under the notice of the Speaker, who replied that having ruled, he could not discuss the matter further, and in adamant tones requested Mr MacKenzie to resume his seat. Upon Mr MacKenzie hesitating to comply with his request, Sir Maurice proceeded, "Sit down, sir; I will have to have recourse to the power conferred on me if you persist in a question of privilege. Sit down; you must not interrupt me." With considerable heat and evident reluctance, Mr MacKenzie resumed his seat, Mr Speaker called on Mr Morrison to continue the debate on the Budget, and the incident ended.

A distinguished author remarks that most of the really brilliant conversations he has listened to have been accompanied by clouds of tobacco smoke; and he assures us that a great deal of the best literary composition of contemporary authors is produced by men who are actually smoking while they work.

MINING NEWS.

SHAREMARKET.

DURING the latter part of the week more disposition was manifested by speculators on the Exchange to invest in Upper Thames stocks. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that the gold returns this week total £19,073, all of which bullion came from the upper country mines. The ore put through this month by both the Woodstock and Waitekauri companies was of better average grade. The Waihi return, on the other hand, while an excellent one, shows a decline in the average value of the ore treated, added to which a less quantity of stone was put through the mill. Notwithstanding this, however, the return for 28 days totalled £11,640, which brings up the output of bullion from this mine since 1890 to £607,241 17s 3d. Important developments have taken place in the Woodstock mine with the result that shares for which 17s 3d was the highest price offered, subsequently sold at 26s 6d and have still an upward tendency. This is due to the fact that exceedingly rich stone is being got from a six-inch leader in the mine, and one ton of stone treated in Auckland yielded £126. As we usually expect to find large bodies of low grade ore in the Upper Thames this discovery is quite a surprise. At the same time it must not be forgotten that in the early days of Karangahake some very rich veins were worked by the original proprietors. Another important development took place in the Imperial mine which adjoins the Woodstock. Here the reef has been cut on the other side of a break and the stone shows gold freely. Assays made from stone got out of another portion of this reef during the week at the bank of New Zealand returned at the rate of from £20 12s 6d to £37 14s per ton. The result was that considerable business was done in shares in this company and the price advanced in consequence. That the Tairua district has a great future before it when the mines are properly developed and crushing plants at work may be judged from the fact that two tons of stone taken from the property known as Fleming's Leases yielded when treated this week at the Thames School of Mines, £30. The Thames mines show little development worthy of note this week and shares have consequently not been in much demand on the Exchange. Coronand stocks were also neglected, but towards the end of the week some of the lower priced ones were inquired for. The Welcome Find Company secured 20 pounds of good picked stone on Saturday, which it is to be hoped was the fore-runner of other pockets being obtained. Good accounts continue to be received from the Hauraki North mine and the crushing return is expected to be a satisfactory one.

WAIHI RETURN.

£11,640 FOR THE MONTH.
TOTAL OUTPUT £607,241.

This wonderful bullion producer of the Upper Thames has now yielded since the crushing began in 1890 no less than £607,241 17s 3d. During the four weeks ending October 16th 3,240 tons of ore were treated for a return of bullion valued at £11,640. This return although highly satisfactory is not equal to the previous month's yield, which, it will be remembered, was a record one, going over £12,000. The falling-off is, however, partly accounted for by the fact that 60 tons less ore were treated for the present return. The average value per ton of the ore treated this month was £3 11s 10d.

The following table shows the return from this famous mine since 1890:—

Bullion Won—	£	s.	d.
In 1890	21,112	13	6
In 1891	23,935	5	11
In 1892	44,888	2	4
In 1893	61,900	10	11
In 1894	82,827	2	2
In 1895	120,334	2	2
In 1896	137,321	8	2
In 1897 (to October)	114,622	12	1
Total since 1890	£607,241	17	3

WOODSTOCK RETURNS.

£2,765 FOR THE MONTH.
£126 FROM ONE TON.

For some time past it has been known that ore was being met with in this Karangahake mine which contained gold that was too coarse to be saved by the cyanide process of treatment. Lately very rich stone has been obtained from the