

The Week in Review

The Financial Debate has closed, its final incident being, appropriately, a vigorous defence of the general financial policy by the Prime Minister, coupled with a powerful denunciation of the actions of those who persistently seek to discredit the standing of the Dominion in money matters. Sir Joseph, unfortunately, was not in a position to quote from letters in his possession that would have disclosed the identity and the methods of those persons who, for selfish ends, sought to "bear" New Zealand stocks on the London market, especially when fresh loans were being floated. He was, however, able to quote from a letter written by Mr. John Duthie, of Wellington, and published in the London "Finance Journal," in which an attack was made on the finances of New Zealand. Mr. Duthie is a gentleman who is deservedly respected for his public spirit, and no one doubts the genuineness of his convictions; but his diatribes against the Government's finance are marked by a bitterness and partisanship that must largely discount their influence. So strong is his partisan feeling that he apparently does not pause to consider what the full effect of his statements may be; therefore it becomes necessary for the Colonial Treasurer to reiterate, what the atcock quotations show to be the fact, "that there is no finer security in the world than is offered by New Zealand for the money she borrows." Sir Joseph Ward also showed in the course of his Budget reply that private money-lenders had lately made a concerted attempt to increase the rate of interest charged by them on loans. This attempt, it is hoped, will prove unsuccessful. Should there be a danger of the tactics succeeding, the Government must, by special effort on the part of the Advances to Settlers Department, neutralise it and prevent any check being given to the development and prosperity of the country.

The resignation of the High Commissioner for the Dominion in London comes at an opportune time, and cannot be viewed as altogether a matter for regret. The New Zealand office in London had got out of intimate touch with this country, had not been kept up-to-date, and it was widely recognised that there was need of its being thoroughly reorganised. The recent reappointment of Mr. Reeves for a further term of two years therefore carried with it an element of disappointment, inasmuch as it seemed that the improvement of the London office had been postponed for that period; but now that Mr. Reeves is relinquishing his duties in about three months' time, hope is once more revived that New Zealand's representation at the centre of Empire will be immediately placed upon a more satisfactory footing. In all this there is not the slightest reflection intended upon the ability, fitness, and devotion to duty of the present High Commissioner. He has filled the position with every credit, and by his high literary attainments has shed lustre upon the Dominion. For the unsuitable location of the offices, and for the antiquated methods upon which they are conducted, he is in no way responsible. Perhaps, if all were known, he has been the most strenuous advocate of more progressive methods in the matter of New Zealand's representation in London. Mr. Reeves is to be warmly congratulated upon the honourable and lucrative appointment that he has received as Director of the School of Economics and Political Science, in connection with the London University. His special attainments and bent of mind make him admirably fitted for the post. The fact of a native of New Zealand being selected for such an important position

should be particularly gratifying to all patriotic people in the Dominion. Almost quite as pleasing is the reported statement of the Prime Minister that he hopes to appoint a New Zealander as High Commissioner in succession to Mr. Reeves. Rumour has associated Sir Joseph's own name with the office. If he does not wish it, the best man upon whom the choice of the Government could fall is Mr. T. E. Donne, general manager of the Tourist Department.

Last week we remarked that Aucklanders were an emotional people, and were not always quite rational in their emotionalism. Since then, events have provided proof of the truth of the statement. The time-table of the express train over the North Island Main Trunk railway has been announced, and the discovery that the express will leave Auckland late at night has produced a perfect torrent of indignant protest from Mr. Massey, from his Auckland newspaper organ, and from a number of residents in the Auckland rural districts traversed by the line. The objections offered to the proposed arrangement are silly and puerile in the extreme. Tourists will not see the beautiful scenery; country people will get to their homes in the middle of the night; women and children will be incommoded, in order that a post-card may be carried more rapidly to Invercargill, etc., etc. All this is most irrational, because tourists will not use the express if they want to see the scenery, but will go by the day train, that will run on alternate days; the women and children and settlers will do likewise; business people and mails will be carried quickly by the express, and nobody will be incommoded in the slightest degree. The only way to satisfy the objectors is indicated in the following rhyme:—

TRAINS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT.

For many years rose Auckland's wails
And pleadings for a road of rails;
For years did Auckland block the way,
Calling for routes that ne'er would pay;
Now, when the boon is well in sight,
She weeps—"The trains will run by night!"

Quick railway travel was the cry
Through all these weary years gone by;
The Auckland-Wellington express
Is timed to stop six times or less,
And now the mighty cry is heard—
"Not stop at Waybackville!—absurd!"
But, of all blows, the saddest quite
Is this—"The trains will pass by night!"

Hodge and his brood had hoped to view
The passengers who travelled through—
To see them "rush," with thirst-parched
tongue,
The shanty-pub of Brother Rung.
At least they hoped their eyes to cast
Upon the swift train rumbering past!
Crushed are their dreams of keen delight,
The trains won't stop; they pass by night!

Can't Auckland wake up Sammy Vaile,
That great reformer of the rail?
He could evolve some plan, I guess,
By which a special fast express,
Rushing along by night and day,
Calls at each station by the way,
And everywhere in broad daylight—
We won't have trains that pass by night!

"We and our children may not live to see it," said the Prime Minister the other day, in prophetic mood, "but there will some day be a fight to decide whether the white races shall govern Australia, New Zealand, and other islands in the

Pacific. If at that time we could have as our ally America, with her powerful fleet, we should be very glad to have them fighting shoulder to shoulder with us." In these words Sir Joseph Ward has crystallised the hopes and fears which animate many thinking people in connection with the approaching visit of the American fleet to this country. It is a wise saying that "one cannot have too many friends," and the "entente" which we hope to establish with our American cousins may stand us in good stead when the naval Armageddon of the South arrives. There is, therefore, every reason why our welcome should be as warm and enthusiastic as we can make it, and why our visitors should receive a pleasant and lasting impression of the friendliness of this country and its people. Anglo-Saxon Federation may be a dream to-day, but dreams have a way of coming true, and no one knows how soon the great crisis may arise that will find England and the United States in the same camp, fighting for the supremacy of the white race and the principles of Freedom and Justice. When that day comes, "the crimson thread of kinship" will bind us all the more firmly if we in the meantime weave ties of friendship and common interest.

In a recently published novel, "The World's Awakening," the epoch-marking struggle for the mastery is fixed to take place in 1920, when Japan and Germany in alliance will fight against the British Empire, the United States and France. The author makes the "casus belli" arise in Sydney over a riot between Sydecytes and Japanese men-o'-war-men. By that time the Anglo-Japanese alliance is assumed to have been terminated, because of Australia's objection to the influx of Japanese that has taken place on account of it. Sydney is bombarded by Japanese cruisers; Western Australia is invaded; the Philippines, backed by Japan, rise in revolt; and the natives of India and Egypt attempt to throw off British rule. Then, when England has declared war against Japan, Germany invades Great Britain. The British China Squadron is annihilated by the Japanese, who afterwards seize and destroy the Panama Canal; whereupon America takes up arms on the side of England; and, of course, the ultimate result is the triumph of the Anglo-American forces. The moral of the story is that Britain should pay timely heed to the representations of Australia and New Zealand in the matter of Asiatic immigration, and thus avert a terrific, sanguinary and prolonged war. The author declares that failure to heed such warnings led to the war. "For many years a few far-seeing English statesmen had continued to point out the dangers arising from the development of Japan as a world power in trade and armaments. But only in Maori-land and the Commonwealth had their views been seriously considered. Britain lay too far from the centre of the impending typhoon, and, moreover, revelling in the height of her present frenzy of magnanimity and abnegation, she was insensible to symptomatic nerves." These are the thoughts that are passing through men's minds to-day; and as "coming events cast their shadows before," it would be well for all to guard against the impending cataclysm or be prepared to face it.

The questions of immigration and population received some attention from members of Parliament in the course of debate in the House on Friday last. The first speaker was Mr. Wilford, the genial Wellington gentleman who thinks that a sane and hospitable welcome to the American fleet would be provided if the Prime Minister came along to Auckland to receive the Admiral in command. Mr. Wilford showed that his parochial ideas embraced more important matters than the greeting to be accorded the naval representatives of a great and

friendly Power. He argued that, with regard to Government employment, preference should be given to persons born in New Zealand. To enable this to be more easily done, he held that immigration should be restricted, that no more artisans or domestic servants or farm labourers should be granted assisted passages—that, in short, only farmers with small capital should receive Government aid. This is surely the very acme of narrow selfishness. It is also distinctly uncomplimentary to the young New Zealanders, among whom Mr. Wilford is proud to rank himself, for it carries the implication that these are unable to hold their own in competition with imported artisans and others. This slur upon the youth of the Dominion and upon our system of popular instruction is entirely unwarranted, and in Parliamentary phrase, Mr. Wilford "ought to be ashamed of himself" for casting it. Mr. Massey endorsed his remarks to the extent of saying that immigration should be controlled, so as not to swell the ranks of the unemployed in the cities, which is a fairly sensible view to take of the matter.

Then Mr. Baume and Dr. Chapple had something to say about the need for increased population in the Dominion. Mr. Baume lamented the declining birth-rate and the growing scarcity of young people, and urged the advisableness of the Government giving encouragement to those who bring up large families. His only practical suggestion was that the State should give free travel on the railways to children, and also to young people going to work; but it is by no means self-evident that this would confer any benefit upon either the parents or their off-spring. Dr. Chapple, who is a careful and capable student of the population question, held that immigration must be encouraged. He recalled the fact that ancient Sparta increased her population by enacting laws assisting large families, but he considered that process too slow to meet the requirements of New Zealand. By way of reply to the arguments against encouraging immigration from Great Britain, Mr. Tanner, one of the ablest Labour members that has ever sat in our Parliament, pointed out that three-fourths of the immigrants to the Dominion came, not from the Old Country, but from Australia. "The last speaker has put his finger on the right spot," declared the Hon. Hall-Jones, who went on to say that many immigrants of the less desirable sort came here without Government assistance, while others were sent by charitable institutions.

The middle line of truth and safety is not difficult to discern between these conflicting views. "Young New Zealand" should be encouraged—not by preference of employment, however, nor by any preferential treatment in the matter of travel. He should simply be encouraged to be born; and the way to do this is to impose a special tax on bachelors and spinsters above a certain age, and to give a bonus to all parents with families exceeding three in number, with a graduated increase for large families. Immigration should also be encouraged, but assistance should only be given to those classes of people of whom this country stands in need; and there should at the same time be a more rigid test of fitness applied—moral as well as physical—before people are admitted to the Dominion. This test should be enforced in the case of persons coming from Australia as well as from the older lands, and in every case preference should be given to those of British stock. To carry out these ideas would involve some increase of machinery, but the results would justify the trouble and expense. It is to be hoped that a Population Bill on these lines will be prepared and presented to the House by some thoughtful and patriotic legislator.