

# In and Out of Parliament.

## Notes on Public Men and Affairs.

Mr. F. F. Hockley has consented to contest the Rangitikei seat in the Opposition interest.

Mr. John Driver, who has been selected as Opposition candidate for the Hawera seat, has retired from the contest.

"I object to having cold water shoved down my throat when I want something warmer."—Mr. Rutherford on the liquor question.

The Prime Minister thinks it may be necessary to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of timber duties.

Mr. Laurenson's Bill, seeking to have the Local Option polls determined by a bare majority, was thrown out on the second reading by 54 votes to 8.

"I am opposed to the bare majority proposal, as the greatest tactical mistake by the No-License party."—Mr. F. M. B. Fisher, M.P.

Mr. John Macfarlane (mayor of Tapanui) will probably be a candidate for Clutha in the Government interest at the general election.

Mr. David Buick, a well-known farmer and racehorse owner and breeder, is mentioned as a probable candidate for the Palmerston seat in the Opposition interest.

In reply to Mr. Poland, the Minister for Public Works says that instructions have been issued to the mining inspectors to report on coal seams throughout the Dominion, with a view to their utilisation for State coal mining purposes.

"It is amusing to note what Mr. Harnett, manager of the English football team, said to an interviewer in regard to liquor in Invercargill, in view of the fact that three of his own men fell overboard when leaving Auckland," said Mr. Fisher.

As Mr. Thomas Mackenzie has definitely decided to contest the Taieri seat, Mr. M. Stevenson (Chairman of the Charitable Aid Board), previously spoken of as a candidate for this seat, will stand for Bruce in the Government interest.

"You always find testimonials from clergymen tacked on to these quack advertisements," said Mr. Hornsby to-night, when discussing his Quackery Prevention Bill. "Yes, clergymen and members of Parliament," interjected a member, amidst considerable laughter.

"A citizen army was indispensable and quick mobilisation an absolute necessity. At present there were many volunteer corps in out-of-the-way places drawing capitulation which would be useless in time of war. These should be converted into rifle corps."—Mr. T. M. Wilford, M.P.

Referring to the Government's immigration policy, the Premier said he was not in favour of any kind that would be likely to disorganise the labour market. If the new arrivals were not being legitimately absorbed, the Government would take steps to stop the immigration as far as possible.

Mr. Frank Shaw, a candidate for the Wairau seat, addressed a meeting on July 29, and declared on the side of the Liberal, labour and temperance interests. He strongly supported the Hon. R. McNeil's land policy, and advocated the scheme of labour legislation recently outlined by Dr. Findlay.

"I know a man resident in New Zealand representing a Sheffield cutlery firm who gets a thousand pounds per year and travelling expenses. Yet here we have members of the House objecting to New Zealand's Trade Commissioner being paid a paltry £450 per year. I say you cannot get a first-class man for any sum so ridiculous."—Mr. Laurenson.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Society of Accountants Bill was put through its final stages in the Legislative Council this afternoon. The Coroners Act Amendment Bill was also read a first time. The Council then adjourned until the first Wednesday after next week.

### STATE FLOUR MILLS.

Mr. Hogan (Wanganui) on July 30th gave notice to move: "That the State should take over the flourmilling industry, and conduct it in the interests of the people by fostering grain-growing and cheapening the cost of food to the masses of this Dominion. The member for Wanganui was greeted with a storm of "Noes" and cries of "Impossible."

### PROTECTING STOCKOWNERS.

W. Maddison, of Gisborne, is making application that the Government should investigate and bring into use for the benefit of stockowners in the Dominion an improved system of earmarking live stock, of which he is in possession. The system in question, it is asserted, has been favourably recommended by the Gisborne branch of the Farmers' Union.

### CONSOLIDATED STATUTES.

The Consolidated Statutes Enactment Bill was put through all its stages in the House of Representatives, and passed. The Prime Minister stated that the consolidation of the Statutes, which had been the work of 12 years, comprised five volumes, and could be purchased for 12 guineas a set.

### PROHIBITION THREATS.

"I object to the circularising of members of this House," declared Mr. Hornsby. "We have had a threat held out of what will happen to any member who votes against the bare majority proposal. To anything of this kind I object. I am no prophet," added the member for Wairarapa, "but I say that in 20 years we will have national prohibition in New Zealand. Only bad generalship will prevent it, and such a bill as that before this House to-night is likely to retard the progress of the No-License movement rather than forward it."

### COST OF LIVING.

The Hon. Mr. Barr moved in the Legislative Council that the Government take into immediate consideration the devising of some further practical measures whereby the heavy cost of living at present borne by married workers, as compared with the unmarried, may be lessened, and parenthood thereby encouraged. In speaking to his motion, Mr. Barr said that as a country became educated the birthrate decreased. The only way to assist a natural birthrate was for the Government to devise some scheme of assistance for the married. Consideration of the motion was deferred.

### THE TOURIST DEPARTMENT.

The House sat till after 2 o'clock a.m. on August 1. Exception was taken to the amount on the Estimates for the conduct of the Tourist Department. The Premier, in reply, said last year's figures proved how well the expense was warranted. The direct earnings last year were £20,467, as compared to a total expenditure of £49,802.

Mr. Herrier: "That leaves an actual loss of £29,000."

The Premier: "No it does not; it is estimated at a low computation that not less than £430,000 was expended by tourists visiting the Dominion. An attempt is made every year to decri the services of the Tourist Department, but there is no doubt of the value of the work done."

### LUNATICS OR SCOTCHMEN.

"The sale of nostrums and the quackery practised is going to be the damnation of this country," asserted Mr. Hornsby in the House of Representatives on July 30 amidst cries of "Oh!" and "Strong language!" from members. The member for Wairarapa went on to tell a story of what had actually happened in New Zealand, and the incident, he said, demonstrated the gullibility of the people. A man stood on the street corner of one of the cities of the Dominion, selling a concoction which he claimed to be a cure for almost every human ill. Subsequent investigation proved that the preparation was nothing but a mixture of earth and water, being retailed at a shilling per bottle. When haled off to a lunatic asylum the man's pockets were found to be full of shillings. A member suggested that he must have been a Scotchman. Mr. Hornsby replied: "He was a lunatic; but the incident serves to demonstrate how gullible the public are."

### LESS RACING WANTED.

In assuring the anti-gambling deputation of the improbability of any gaming legislation being brought down this session, the Prime Minister said that he recognised that the Racing Conference supported the Council of Churches in their desire to abolish the bookmakers from the racecourse, but he was quite sure that without a clause giving the bookmakers some legal status the bill would not have passed at all. The Ministry was not interested in the bookmakers or the tote, and wished to do the best thing possible for the country generally. There were people, however, who felt that the bookmakers should not be suppressed entirely while a monopoly was given to another form of gambling. He certainly agreed that the number of racing days should be limited. That had been the intention of the Legislature, and he felt that it was in the general interests that the intention should be made effective.

### "QUACK" AND OTHER DOCTORS.

Mr. T. Wilford kept the House in a continual ripple of merriment on July 30 during his discussion of the Quackery Bill. He ran off a long list of what he alleged to be deadly poisons used as standard remedies by the medical profession, and said he would like to know if any medical men using those remedies would allow themselves to be held personally responsible for the lives of their patients.

A member: "Dead men tell no tales." The House went into uproar over another rally by the member for Hutt. "Whenever a doctor makes a great success," he said, "the world rings with the news of it; but if he fails—well, the earth covers the failure up. That is a gross injustice."

"The member for Hutt is not serious," interjected Mr. Hornsby. "I am as serious as the member for Wairarapa," replied Mr. Wilford, amidst an outburst of laughter.

### DISRESPECTFUL CHILDREN.

"What steps do the Government intend taking to counteract such a tendency of things as was described by Judge Kettle in Auckland recently?" asked Mr. Aitken, on July 20, in connection with the strictures passed by Mr. Kettle on the deplorable disrespect of children for their elders and lack of reverence for things holy. "It appears to me," said the Hon. Mr. McGowan, in reply, "that the statements made in the paragraph referred to are somewhat overdrawn, and that in any case the question is one that should be dealt with by the Churches, religious associations and educational bodies, who possess all the necessary machinery for exercising a beneficial influence in the desired direction rather than by the General Government, which has no special means at its command to deal with the evils complained of."

### AWAY WITH POMP.

Parliament has many forms and ceremonies. When the House assembles each afternoon members rise from their seats when the Sergeant-at-Arms marches into the Chamber with the mace upon his shoulder, and announces, "Mr. Speaker." It is only in turbulent times that the officer in question is called upon to do anything of a strenuous nature, and this afternoon Mr. Gray raised the question, "Has the desirability of doing away with the Sergeant-at-Arms been considered?" The member for Christchurch went on to say that he looked upon the position as unnecessary. "There are a lot of things about this House that should be abolished," he said, "and the hauble lying on the table there (indicating the mace) is a survival of old times."

The Prime Minister: "Very well; give notice to change the Constitution." Mr. Gray: "I should certainly vote for the abolition of this position. I don't know what the officer does for his money. He carries the mace in on his shoulder, shouts 'Mr. Speaker,' and then sits still and does nothing for the rest of the day. For seven months of the year he does nothing."

The Prime Minister remarked that it was a mistake to consider the Sergeant-at-Arms an ornamental office. He did a lot of work during the session, and might be required at any time to remove an offending member.

### SWEEPING THE FARMER.

Some rather sensational remarks were made in the House on July 20 by Mr. Hogg, member for Masterton, during his speech in favour of the abolition of the duty on flour. The people would, he said, if they were wise, get their butter in when it was cheap and store it. There was no scarcity of butter at present; it was being exported from the Dominion in shiploads, and sold at 1/ per pound. Those who exported it said there was a famine, and quoted the price in New Zealand at 1/0. "I call it sweating," said the member for Masterton; "and there is no sweating half so bad. I do not call those who handle it merchants. The farmer does not get the return of these high prices. He toils late and early, and should be the man to receive any fair profit. Neither does the storekeeper gain the benefit. Those who reap the advantage are privileged brigands and freebooters, trading under the name of merchants and exporters, and these men go to church! Talk about Socialism! Men like the Leader of the Opposition sit and tremble in their shoes, yet it is these freebooters who are making men Socialists, and causing them to band together for their rights. The industrial life of the country is being made unendurable. These men would levy blackmail on the air if they could."

### DOMINION DEFENCES.

In the course of a debate raised on the subject of defence, Sir Joseph Ward said that it was the opinion of Home authorities that the best way to start about the defence of New Zealand was to introduce a flotilla of submarines. The time was not ripe just yet, however, for such a system of defence, and he was satisfied that the interests of this portion of the British Empire were not being forgotten in entering into such a spirit of entente cordiale as now existed between Britain and France.

The time was not opportune, continued Sir Joseph Ward, for any such suggestion of defence as was being considered in Australia. After all, it was the strong right arm of the British army and navy that New Zealand most depend upon. In regard to volunteering, they should remember that there had not been the activity in the ranks of volunteers which was to be desired. To establish a system of private or compulsory soldiery would, he was convinced, throw the whole growth of military feeling back. To attempt to force or drive the men of this Dominion into a system of conscription would throw the whole movement into chaos. He believed that there should be an interchange of officers, and was likewise desirous of introducing a system whereby there might be an interchange of younger men.