

South African Union.

New Zealand Delegate's Impressions.

Sedgwick, the Labour Department, to which the work was entrusted, has been able to place the lads in situations where they are likely to secure the greatest possible benefit and instruction.

Immediately on arrival in the Dominion, the party will scatter over a wide area. Eleven of the boys are to proceed to situations in various parts of the Auckland province. Some are going as far as Heleasville in the North, and others to the Thames and Rotorua districts, and several to the Waikato. Ten will be located in Hawke's Bay and the Wairarapa, seven in the Manawatu and Wanganui districts, eight in North Canterbury, four in South Canterbury, five in Otago, and three in Southland. The Department, in addition to meeting the lads on arrival, will, through its agents, see every one of them safely to his destination. Mr. Sedgwick is accompanying the party, which is due to reach Wellington before the end of the month, but will hand them over to the Department here.

In addition to a very large demand for these "pioneer" boy immigrants, farmers are still writing to the Department and asking for the services of lads brought out under similar conditions. The Department, however, prefers to await the result of the present experiment before making any action in the direction of bringing out any further parties.

The Rhodes Scholars.

A graduate of Oxford writes to the "Christchurch Press" taking exception to Sir Robert Stout's remarks as to the age of Rhodes scholars. He says:

"I was at Oxford in the eighties. I left Christchurch at eighteen years of age, took my degree at twenty-one, nearly two years younger than we are now sending our Rhodes scholars. At that time there were at Oxford and Cambridge seventeen to twenty old Christ's College boys of the same age and numerous others from New Zealand and Australia. Again others in the Army and Navy have had to go 'from home' even earlier, and yet I can only recall one case of any approach to what Sir Robert fears. Sir Robert says that 'after all Oxford is a University and not a place for promotion of football.' I would reply that the real question at issue is 'What did Rhodes say?' He took the wide view of Oxford, namely, that it was not only a place at which men took high degrees, but a place where men's characters are formed, whether in the schools or on the river, at cricket, football, or athletics. He wanted Oxford to have some share in shaping the man's character. Sir Robert wants the character shaped before he goes. The 'smug'—a man who can only take high degrees and be good at sports and does not in any way become a leader of men, was surely not the man Rhodes wanted. Yet Sir Robert is, contrary to Rhodes' wish, inclined to put scholarship first and the other qualifications nowhere."

The Year's Revenue.

The Minister for Finance gives the following revenue returns for the Dominion for the nine months ended December 31: Total revenue for all sources £7,148,583, being an increase of £703,272 over the corresponding period of 1909. The decrease in the land and income tax was only £3000, while Customs shows an increase of £216,000, stamps £209,000, railways £183,000. The revenue for the 12 months ended December 31 last shows an increase of £848,923 over the corresponding period of 1909.

In explanation of the year's revenue figures, Sir Joseph Ward said: "There is an increase in all departments except that of land and income tax, which exhibits a decrease, but only of £5000. The general position of revenue is exceedingly satisfactory. The fact that the only department showing a shrinkage is land and income indicates that the revival which set in 12 months ago has permeated the whole of the Dominion. The decrease in this department is attributable to the operation of the Government's policy in inducing large landowners to cut up their estates. This has already been done, and has had a most marked effect, and in every way is satisfactory, because the excesses of land sold owing to the operation of the progressive land laws are now occupied by men with small families on small holdings which are unaffected by the Act. I would be glad to find this feature of the revenue returns goes on increasing from the same causes. Increased settlement means a larger increase per head for a greater number of people, and the various departments are fed to a larger extent on

THE Hon. Geo. Fowlds (Minister of Education), who has been representing New Zealand at the opening of the first Parliament of the Union of South Africa, and who arrived at Adelaide by the steamer Aeneas on December 28, was interviewed there by your representative.

"In the first place," said Mr. Fowlds, "I desire to express my appreciation of the very hearty welcome which was accorded to Mr. Fisher (the Federal Premier), myself and party, by the Government and by the leading people whom we met, not only in Capetown, but all over South Africa. The Dutch and the British were equally enthusiastic in the reception they gave us. The Railway Commissioners pleased at our disposal two finely equipped saloon cars, with bathrooms, diningroom, kitchen, and smoking room, besides sleeping compartments, and a very efficient staff of stewards. In this way we travelled in perfect comfort over considerably more than 5000 miles of railway, visiting all the main centres of population in South Africa, Bechuanaland and Rhodesia, including Victoria Falls, so that we were enabled to see far more of the country than the great majority of South Africans have ever seen, or are ever likely to see. The Government and people of Capetown deserve much credit for the taste and magnificence of their preparations for the great celebration. The decorations and illuminations were both exceedingly grand, and the arrangements for all the main functions reflected great credit on those concerned. It was quite evident that everybody had realised fully that a great historical event was about to happen, and had determined to spare no expense to make it impressive and memorable.

An Historical Pageant.

"The historical pageant, which occupied two whole afternoons, was splendidly conceived and admirably carried out. The main incidents of South African history were vividly and realistically enacted on the margin of Table Bay, probably on the very spot where Johan Van Riebeck landed 258 years before. The clear South African atmosphere, the noble background of Table Mountain, and the immense crowds of well dressed people on grandstands, together with the quaint old world dresses on the pageant ground, made a never-to-be-forgotten picture. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught and the Princess Patricia went everywhere and say everything, and left

account of the greater productiveness of the country.

"It is too soon (continued the Prime Minister) to make a comparison of revenue against expenditure. This can only be done when the year's accounts come in. Of course a number of new items of expenditure have been provided this year, such as defence, interest on the cost of providing the 'Dreadnought,' and the creation of a sinking fund for the repayment of the Dreadnought, as well as the cost of inaugurating the Territorials, also sinking funds for the general redemption of loans; but I am confident that at the close of the year's operations we shall again have a handsome surplus augmenting the public works fund.

"There is nothing abnormal in the returns, nor anything in the shape of boom in any part of the Dominion. There is no reason why, with ordinary seasons, these satisfactory conditions should be disturbed. I am not surprised at the buoyancy of the revenue, because, wherever I have been, I have found only one sentiment, both by wholesalers and retailers, and that is, they find business remarkably good; and especially towards the new year it has proved a business record for the Dominion. The financial results should inspire people, both within and beyond the Dominion, with renewed confidence in the future of the Dominion."

After a happy respite from heavy official duties, the Prime Minister added, we felt very happy at the outcome of the financial operations of the country in the period under review,

behind them a very favourable impression. The Duke seems to possess in a very large measure the bon homie qualities which made his late brother, King Edward, such a popular sovereign.

Royally Entertained.

"The reception accorded to the combined Australian and New Zealand party, wherever it went, was something marvellous. The administrators of the different provinces entertained us, the mayors and magistrates, clubs and companies, New Zealand, Australian, and Scottish societies, and the Trade and Labour Councils vied with each other to do us honour. The number of socials, banquets, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, garden parties, and picnics we attended during the six weeks we were in South Africa would be difficult to enumerate, while the speeches we made were like the sand on the seashore and the desert, innumerable. Before leaving Capetown we had farewell letters and telegrams from all sorts and conditions of people throughout South Africa, telling us how much good our visit had done. I hope that we have done some good. At any rate, wherever we went we counselled unity, believing that was the most essential thing for the present and future prosperity of South Africa.

Racial Antagonism.

"Did we find much racial bitterness amongst the people? Well, no; not more than you would expect, considering the few years that have elapsed since the two white people were fighting each other. Amongst the leaders on both sides, I may say, we found no racial bitterness. The two parties in the Union Parliament are not in any judgment more antagonistic than they usually are in British communities, especially when some important question like, say, the British Budget of 1909 is under discussion. It is quite a mistake to talk of racialism between Dutch and British in South Africa. The two peoples are one race, though divided by language. As General Hertzog said in effect at the farewell dinner which Mr. Fisher and I gave in Capetown, they were originally of the same stock, and the new thing which is going to come out of Africa in accordance with the old proverb is that the people who were divided in Europe are going to be reunited in South Africa.

A Virile Race.

"I was very favourably impressed by the Dutch people. They are an exceedingly strong, virile people, both mentally and physically, and will make an excellent addition to the British empire. I was specially impressed by their womenfolk. All the educated Dutch women take a keen interest in public affairs, and are as well versed in them as the men. I think this feature has come largely through the operation of the old Roman Dutch law which has prevailed at the Cape from time immemorial. Under that law, when a man marries, the wife at once becomes a full and equal partner with him in all the property he possesses. I believe this fact has been an important element in the development of Dutch character generally, and fully accounts for the deep interest displayed by the women in all public and national affairs.

Perplexing Questions.

"The natives question and the question of the intermediate coloured people of Cape Colony are very perplexing problems. I am sorry to say that a large number of good people in South Africa entertain what appears to me a very heathenish idea about the blacks. They seem to be opposed to every effort that is made to educate or civilise them. The idea seems to be to keep them for ever as hewers of wood and drawers of water. In my opinion, this is not only an unjust, but an impossible policy. Let me say that I found that mental attitude quite as common amongst the British people as amongst the Dutch, but it is only fair to say that quite a large proportion of the people entertain much more enlightened views on the subject. My surprise was that anybody could be found holding the former view.

If the white people in South Africa have no mission to elevate the blacks, then their right to be there is open to question. Even on purely economic grounds, the sooner the black man is civilised the better. His wants will then increase, and he will strive to become more continuously industrious. He will also need to be remunerated more highly, which will of itself help to solve the white industrial problem of South Africa.

Queer Notions of Economics.

"They have very queer notions of economics in some parts of the country—e.g., in some places they have bylaws or local regulations that no coloured artisan is to be paid more than a certain sum per hour, which is considerably below the rate of wages paid to white men for the same class of work. These regulations are supposed to be in the interest of the white workers. If the regulations were that no coloured worker was to be paid a less rate than the standard customary amongst white tradesmen, the result desired would be more likely to be attained.

"A Monstrous Blot."

"The natives and coloured people are not allowed to vote for members of the Union Parliament except in Cape Colony, and the constitution absolutely debar any coloured man from being elected to the Union Parliament. That, in my judgment, is a monstrous blot on the Union Constitution Act, and it seems the irony of fate that such a retrograde enactment should have been passed by a Liberal Government. I don't think there is such a provision in the constitution of any other civilised country, and the worst feature of the Act is that it takes away from the coloured people of Cape Colony a right which they had enjoyed for fifty years. It might be claimed that they are allowed to be elected to the Provincial Councils, but the Provincial Councils under the Act are merely glorified County Councils. I quite recognise that the framers of the constitution had a very difficult problem to face. The democratic constitutions, with manhood suffrage, which had been granted to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, tended to complicate the issue. To give manhood suffrage to five or six millions of uneducated blacks in a country with less than 1,500,000 whites was clearly impossible. The correct solution would have been to adopt the Cape Colony system, which was a low property qualification, coupled with an education test.

Industries and Agriculture.

"What is your opinion about the industrial and agricultural prospects of the country?"

"Well, I think the mining industry has a great future before it. Coal-mining is only in its infancy, and I believe that great deposits of gold and diamonds, besides a large variety of other metals and precious stones, are still to be discovered or developed. Many people believe that the De Beers Company are aware of other rich diamondiferous deposits on their extensive estates, which are not likely to be operated on for many years. The Rand mines already produce one-third of the world's total gold output, and the amount of the gold production is likely to continue increasing for some years yet. The gold from the Rand mines, however, is won at a terrible sacrifice of human life. I believe that statistics show that the average life of the white miner is only seven years, and I am afraid, if exact figures were available, the life of the native miner would be found to be much less. I think some parts of South Africa have considerable agricultural possibilities, but much has yet to be done in combating pests and diseases, which scourge the country, coming from the north. The late Transvaal and Natal Governments deserve great credit for the efforts they made to scientifically deal with these difficulties, and I have no doubt the Union Government will continue the investigations and experiments. Much could also be done in the way of water conservation, and the whole field of experiment in the methods of dry farming still lies before the people. South Africa has a fascination all its own, and in my early years I felt the glamour of the veldt. It still appeals to me to some extent, but on the whole, I am glad that circumstances directed my steps to 'God's own country' more than twenty-five years ago. I have had a most enjoyable visit, and am returning refreshed for my work in New Zealand."