

# THE WEEKLY GRAPHIC

AND

## NEW ZEALAND MAIL

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### The Week in Review.

#### Gold and Prices.

FOR most people the value of a sovereign is twenty shillings. But this leaves undetermined the further question as to what is the value of twenty shillings. Gold rises or falls in value the same as everything else. This fact was emphasised by the Cost of Living Commission. Now that gold is plentiful prices are high; when gold was scarce prices were low. To a very large extent the value of any article depends on its scarcity. For 300 years the annual production of gold averaged £1,600,000, and from 1804 to 1840 the average was considerably under £2,500,000. Then came the great discoveries of gold in America and Australia, and by the middle of last century the annual output of gold had risen to £27,000,000. Then came a fall as the alluvial fields began to be worked out, and by 1886 the annual production was under £20,000,000. Then came the Rand discoveries, and by 1896 the output was double what it had been ten years earlier. To-day the output is double what it was in 1896, and fifty times what it was three centuries ago. To be exact, it is a little over £90,000,000 per annum.

#### Currency and Prosperity.

When gold is scarce prices fall. That is to say, the sovereign being scarcer is worth more in the shape of wheat, foodstuffs, and other necessities of life. When gold is plentiful, it is worth less in the shape of goods. So a sovereign will buy less goods and prices rise. This has a bearing on national debts. During the last twenty years the price of all Government securities has fallen. Consols have fallen 24 points, and French, German, and Italian securities have fallen from 10 to 15 points. The debenture stocks of the best English railways show a similar decline. This is largely due to the fact that the money paid as interest will purchase less than it would twenty years ago. It takes £3 7/6 now to purchase what could have been bought for £2 10/ then. In the case of our own debt we are the gainers. Our goods fetch more gold, while the amount we have to pay in gold and interest remains fixed. It takes less produce to meet our public liabilities. Thus, if high prices increase the cost of living they also enable us to get more for our goods, and we have to send away less of our produce to pay our debts.

#### Northern Railways.

During the conference on railway affairs held at Whangarei, the question of linking up Whangarei with the North Auckland Main Trunk line was fully discussed. The Whangarei Chamber of Commerce favoured the construction of a short connecting line between Kiorea and the Main Trunk. At first the Kaipara representatives were inclined to regard this proposal with disfavour, but after the matter had been discussed in all its bearings the outcome was the unanimous adoption of a series of resolutions urging the Government to push on the Main Trunk line to Kaikohe with all speed, and at the same time to connect the western district by a short link line with the 98 miles of the Whangarei system, which now ministers to the needs of the East Coast. When the work is completed the whole of the peninsula will be brought directly into touch with Auckland, and settlement

will proceed apace. At present large expanses of splendid country are entirely untouched, and the opening up of this country will add materially to the prosperity of the whole Dominion.

#### Egypt and Turkey.

Italian papers report that negotiations are proceeding to transform Egypt into a kingdom under a British protectorate on the termination of the Italian-Turkish war. In the event of the change being made it is suggested that Turkey would receive an indemnity of £20,000,000. Egypt is only nominally a part of the Turkish Empire, and England acts as a guardian and protector. The fact that the suggestion for the forming of an Egyptian kingdom emanates from Italy means that the Italians would be glad to see England permanently retain her paramount standing in Egypt so long as she raises no objection to Italy's annexation of Tripoli. If Egypt is formed into a kingdom it may be a step towards the collapse of the Turkish Empire. At present Turkey is threatened by Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro, as well as by Italy. Her one hope lies in the jealousy of the different Balkan States, and in the fact that it is to the interest of all the Powers to prevent what is as long as possible. For these reasons it may well be that the inevitable Balkan explosion will be delayed for several years to come. But it seems certain that the Turkish Empire must eventually go down before the forces opposed to it.

#### Varieties of Football.

None of the different kinds of football as played at the present day are so exciting as the games played at the beginning of last century. At that time village played against village, but all the able-bodied inhabitants of the rival places took part in the game. In many counties these contests were annual affairs, and the favourite day for such games was Shrove Tuesday. Early in the morning the combatants assembled at a place midway between the two villages. After the kick-off the players endeavoured to kick or carry the ball towards their opponents' goal, which was generally the village churchyard, or some other well-known landmark. The goals were often miles apart, and the field of play offered many natural obstructions, such as hedges, brooks, and ditches. Women seem to have played as well as men in some places, for we read of a contest at Inverness between the married and unmarried women of the place. One of the most famous of these early matches took place on December 5, 1815, between the men of Yarrow and the men of Selkirk. The match was memorable from the fact that the famous novelist, Sir Walter Scott, who was then county sheriff, took upon himself the leadership of the men of Selkirk. In speaking of the match he said: "The appearance of the various parties marching from their different glens to the place of rendezvous, with pipes playing and loud acclamations, carried back the coldest imagination to the old times, when the foresters assembled with a less peaceable purpose of invading English territory or defending their own." It sometimes happened that the goals were a mile and a-half apart, and the players on each side numbered more than a thousand. With so many players the games generally ended in a free fight. In 1897 the inhabitants of Dorking endeavoured to revive the old style of play, but such a tumultuous scene

occurred that the Surrey County Council had to send a hundred policemen to quell the disturbances. Modern football would have created very tame to these old players.

#### The New Labour Party.

Mr. Fowlds has accepted the presidency of the United Labour party, and in the course of his presidential speech he referred to the prospects of the party in New Zealand. He explained that while he was fully sensible of the honour done him in electing him to the office of president, he had been chiefly influenced in accepting the post, not by the personal honour, but by the hope that he might be of use to a party which was rapidly becoming the most potent political factor in the country. In speaking of the Liberal party, he said that it was dead and gone beyond redemption, and it would in a very short time disintegrate into its natural elements. He thought the Conservative element would join the Conservatives, while the Radical element would support the United Labour party. He urged active organisation and concerted action, and predicted victory for the party at the next general election.

#### The Civil Service.

The report of the Public Service Commission commends favourably on the high type, both as regards character and ability, of the departmental heads and those holding responsible positions in the Service. The report goes on to state that there is a tendency for each department to magnify and glorify itself, and to run its affairs as a distinct and separate concern, instead of looking upon itself as a branch of one large business. A number of the younger men are kept year after year at the one class of work instead of being put through as many different kinds of work as possible, so that they may become capable all-round men. Many temporary hands had been made permanent members of the public service, and were now on the same footing as those who had passed the regular examinations. The regular members of the staff looked upon this as a great grievance, and the Commission thought that their attitude was justified.

#### Pay and Promotion.

In dealing with the matter of pay and promotion the Commission is of opinion that there is room for great improvement. The report says:—"There is no uniform system for making promotions in the Service, and there are considerable differences in pay between different departments, sometimes due to the head or Minister being economical or generous. Merit does not count as it should. The

passing of examinations, either departmental or outside examinations, such as solicitors and accountancy examinations, do not carry weight and bring the promotion that might reasonably be expected. The result is that many more able young fellows finding their advancement slow, get out of the Service at the first opportunity, and it is quite a common occurrence to find young men in the Service studying for law, accountancy or other examinations, not with the object of getting on in the Service, but with the object of obtaining degrees that will enable them to get out of it. The Commission found that "in many cases the salary paid has no relationship to the work done. When increases in pay are going they are usually doled out as much a head all round, but when the heads of departments allot the work to be done in the lower grades of the Service it is generally given to those who have the capacity to do it, regardless of the pay received. We could hardly say that the salaries as a whole are either too high or too low, but they badly need adjusting, and men should be paid for the work they do, and not for the time they have been in the service."

#### A Board of Management.

The Commission lays great stress on the need for efficiency, combined with economy, and to effect this it suggests that there should be one controlling head to hold the whole service together, and make it work as one efficient machine. "This is the most important matter of all," declares the Commission, which goes on to say: "We think that a Board of Management should be set up which would be the managing head of the whole Government service. We would suggest that this Board should be composed of three men, one of whom should be the ablest man that could be obtained in the service. This position on the Board should be the prize position in the whole public service, and carry a higher salary than any other with the possible exception of that of the general manager of railways. The two other members of the Board should be chosen from outside, and they should be men of wide business experience who have had training in large organisations and are accustomed to the handling of a large staff. One of these two should be chairman of the Board. This Board would, therefore, have as its members two men of thorough business training, chosen for their organising ability, and one from the public service, who would know its requirements, and be thoroughly familiar with all its details, and who would possess a good working knowledge of the personnel of its officers. The members of the Board should give their whole time to their work, and have no other duties."

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