

man of mark in the House of thirty years since. Cool, calm, collected and wary, he possesses all the attributes of a statesman. From the uniformly high tone which he adopts as his model in debate, Mr. Stafford is in the front rank as an orator. In arguing a question, he grapples with it in a clear, logical manner, and in a way, intelligible even to the meanest capacity, states his reasons for arriving at the conclusions he does. He possesses in the highest degree the confidence of the House, and is looked upon as the leader of it, second only to the Government. He is wily and astute as a Parliamentarian in no ordinary degree, and as a party leader there is not his equal in New Zealand, because he can in an instant, as it were, be prepared for an emergency, and avert the evil consequences of any indiscretion or bad political generalship on the part of his followers. He is speaking this afternoon on the subject of our relations with the Home Government, and his clear, melodious tones ring through the Chamber. As he speaks all the faces of the members are turned in his direction, and the House listens intently to the close and logical arguments which fall from his lips. The little knots and coteries of members which one notes round the fire or in the lobby when a less important member is addressing the House, are now broken up, and every member is in his place eager to listen to what the Leader of the Opposition has to say on such an important subject.

Next to Mr Stafford sits a rather bald, military set-up looking gentleman, Colonel Haultain, the Defence Minister under the Stafford Government. He is a fair and critical debater, confining his speeches mainly to questions affecting the Department over which he formerly presided.

Brisk, alert and watchful sits Hon. John Hall, despatch box at hand, and his desk covered with numerous papers neatly docketed. While he is speaking, the House fills up, members trooping in from Bellamy's, the library, and other havens of refuge from the prosings of Parliamentary bores.

As we gaze out over the House a member

somewhat in the sere and yellow leaf rises to speak. This is the subtle party general, Mr. Fitzherbert, one of the trio—Fitzherbert, Fox, and Featherston—known in the earlier days of Parliament as "the three F's." His oratory is peculiar and somewhat puzzling to those not used to it. His sentences are constructed and delivered with ease and grace, every art of oratory being employed skilfully and with a master hand. The parenthetical style which, on all hands is admitted to be most baffling to an opponent, is principally in favour with Mr Fitzherbert. His speeches require the closest possible



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attention to follow them and to master the details; in style they very much resemble those of his late chief, Mr. Stafford, but they are deficient in the heartiness and warmth of that gentleman's oratory, giving one more the impression of special pleading.

A number of Otago members form a happy family all to themselves under the gallery, and then comes the cross bench whereon sit the Maori representatives. There is to be seen the grim-looking tattooed face of General Mete Kingi, representing