

much more than the credit of the colony can afford. I quite agree with you as regards the latter; and if this is to be adduced as an argument in favour of abolition, it may fairly be urged as a reason for abolishing the General Government, or at all events of very greatly curtailing its expenditure. It does seem strange that, in face of the fact that the colonial expenditure is more than the credit of the Colony can afford, the Government should have been so desirous, during the past few sessions, of increasing that expenditure by the establishment of new and expensive departments.

And now, one word more as to what is to be in the future.

You may be right in your assumption that whatever your Government proposes the Assembly will sanction. I may be pardoned, however, for saying that Governments as strong as yours have in the past had to submit to a public opinion they could not control; and I feel convinced that the opinion of so large and important a section of the colony as Otago will not be lightly set aside by the Colonial Legislature.

It should not be the aim of statesmen to ignore the feelings of those over whom they rule; and if one large section of any country is forced into a hostile attitude towards the Government, and its opinions and feelings ignored, history tells us that there are sad days in store for such a country.

The justice of Otago's claims, which you say are "chimerical," may, I trust, yet receive from the Assembly that consideration which is denied by your Government.

I fail to see how the country districts of Otago can benefit by your proposed scheme. Hitherto, for example, the Provincial Council has given no subsidy to Dunedin, as they felt it to be their duty to devote the revenue to making roads and bridges, and building schools throughout the country districts. Your Government, as the first step in the decentralizing process, have given a subsidy of £10,000 to Dunedin, and promised that it shall be perpetual. How, therefore, Dunedin can be said to have benefited more from provincial administration than the country districts, I cannot understand. You have forgotten that the districts which have hitherto been most jealous of Dunedin, and furthest removed from it, have returned as members of the Colonial Parliament strong Provincialists. The people of Otago are not so misinformed as you seem to imagine; and if, as you say, the province has been spending more money than the colony can afford, of course your scheme means a stoppage of public works throughout the province, unless, indeed, you imagine that the credit of the colony will not be injured by every County and Road Board borrowing what they please.

You cannot, however, consider that allowing a County or Road Board to borrow is a good thing, whilst granting the same right to a province is an evil thing.

I would only say further, that, believing as I do, that like myself you are aiming at making New Zealand a great, prosperous, and free country, it is to me a source of the deepest regret that we do not agree as to the most effectual and only means of accomplishing this end.

Much as I should feel disposed to defer to your judgment, I cannot ignore the convictions which a life-long experience of New Zealand politics has forced upon me; and if, in the heat of a political controversy not of my seeking, I have used any expressions distasteful to you, you will, I trust, pardon such.

I am well aware that in every discussion some expression may seem harsh to an opponent that was not so meant by the writer.

Had it not been that you had hitherto so loyally, and under much obloquy in the past, supported the Constitution, and did I not hope that calm reflection may yet induce you to return to your previous political platform, I need not, perhaps, have entered into so much detail.

I feel, however, that you will pardon the length, and perhaps ardour, of my letter, and believe me to be actuated by a strong desire for the continued prosperity and advancement, not only of Otago, but also of all New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

J. MACANDREW,

Superintendent of Otago.

The Hon. Sir J. Vogel, K.C.M.G.