

CONCLUSION.

The facts I have stated need little comment: they speak for themselves. They show that, applying any and every test which is possible, the progress of the colony during the past six years has been decisive. Our revenue (exclusive of territorial) has increased by £644,623; the area of our lands occupied and cultivated has been greatly enlarged; the number of our farmers has multiplied; the export of our wool and meat has increased in volume; the output of our gold- and coal-mines has substantially increased; and the capital invested and the number of hands employed in our factories and industries have largely expanded. Surely, in view of these incontrovertible facts, I am justified in claiming that the Ballance and Seddon Governments have succeeded in bringing about a marked improvement in the condition of the people, and of placing the colony on a permanent footing of prosperity beyond that previously obtained. The first and foremost cause of this satisfactory condition is the enterprise and energy of our colonists, which have contributed in a large degree to procure these splendid results; but I have no hesitation in pointing out that this satisfactory state of things has taken place under a Liberal Administration, whose advent to power was heralded by the most gloomy predictions on the part of those who differ from us. And, as to the future, I feel confident that, with strict economy, prudent expenditure on reproductive works, the continuance of the policy of settlement of our lands on wise and progressive lines, the development of our resources, assistance to and encouragement of our industries, aided by the judicious application of expert knowledge, the progress of the past six years will most certainly be continued and our most sanguine anticipations realised.
