

ness of Cronje's loss before surrendering, and quoted it as an example of the ineffectiveness of even the heaviest artillery fire upon men sheltered in trenches.

In a characteristic letter, written on the 28th February to a Dunedin newspaper, Mr. William Hutchison suggests that because I had let it be known that I had cabled twice to Major Robin without getting an answer I was making some reflection upon that gallant officer. I will not waste indignation upon this. It was necessary for me to state, not to one but to many persons here, at a certain stage that I had not succeeded in getting into communication with our contingent, for about it and its probable requirements these persons were pressing me for information. No rational person could have concluded from anything I said that I was under any other impression than that my cables had not reached Major Robin. Acting on this assumption, I telegraphed to him a third time, through General Forestier-Walker. That time my message reached, and Major Robin, instead of taking no notice of it, as Mr. Hutchison suggests, took the sensible and courteous course of sending me an immediate answer. It was desirable, in the interests of the contingents, that we should know here what they were most in want of. "Comforts" are not luxuries, and it would be a most lamentable thing if friends in London were to send our men at the front tam-o'-shanters when they wanted warm underclothing, note-paper when they were craving for tobacco, or ink when they were short of matches.

More than one newspaper writer has endeavoured to make capital out of a sentence in an article written by me to the *Speaker* newspaper in December last. This sentence was, "There are colonists, and not a few of them, who indorse the sending of contingents while expressly refraining from indorsing the war." Of course, you can prove anything by quotations, if you only take care that your quotation is incomplete enough. In the very next sentence to the one quoted I went on to say, "Others, and many of them, sincerely hold the war to be justifiable, and say so." But to fairly understand the ridiculous character of the attack on this article it will be necessary to read the whole of that portion of it relating in any way to the sending of the Australasian contingents, and this accordingly I annex. It is amusing to me to remember that the editors of the *Speaker*, though they are personal friends of mine, and wanted the article, and though it was a signed article for which they were not responsible, still hesitated to publish it on the ground of its ultra-Imperialist and warlike tone. The publication was delayed for a fortnight for this reason. I also annex the report of a speech delivered by me at the annual dinner of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, as that and the article in the *Speaker* are virtually my only two public utterances upon the colonies and the war.

It may be too much to expect that the newspapers which have published reflections on myself will give space in their columns to so long a reply as this, but I think the attention of the New Zealand Press should be drawn to this letter, and I will ask that it be laid on the table of the House next session.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (1,375 copies), £2 10s. 0d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1900.

Price 3d.]