

Land settlement and development generally are proceeding at a rapid rate. The output of gold has been more than it has been for the last thirty years. The revenue is ever increasing, and the principal sources from which it is obtained—namely, our railways and Customs—proves the colony to be in a most prosperous condition.

The remarkable increase in our exports, attributable to the spread of settlement and development and the industry of our colonists, the vast increase in manufactures, and the increase in the number of employed are factors which bear evidence that our industries are flourishing, and employment is plentiful with good wages obtaining.

The education of our youth, and their complete equipment for life, is a claim we cheerfully admit and provide for. The deserving aged are relieved from anxiety, and the pensions given insure their requirements being fairly met. The construction of our railways and roads provide arterial communication, so that our products from the interior reach the ports of shipment at a reasonable cost.

The grading of dairy-produce and flax give confidence to purchasers, and the inspection of meat has proved a great boon to both producers and purchasers. The success attendant upon having secured markets in South Africa warrants further effort, and the distribution of our meat over a wider service in the Mother-country than at present obtains, by opening emporiums in the various industrial centres, is an experiment that will cost little, yet still have the most beneficial results to the New Zealand producer.

The Budget now submitted, I trust, may be taken as a chart which, if adhered to, will guide the good ship New Zealand safely into port. To announce that there is available from the Consolidated Fund over half a million sterling, after providing for everything on the estimates, makes one feel light-hearted; and to have one million sterling on the 31st March last available for public works, thus obviating the necessity for going on the London market for a considerable time, is most satisfactory and cheering.

I enjoin economy in respect to departmental expenditure, a moderate expenditure on public works, strenuous efforts to increase our population by attracting to our shores those who will lessen our responsibility, promote settlement, and bask in that sunshine of ideal progress, contentment, happiness, and prosperity we now enjoy.

New Zealand justly merits being termed "The Paradise of the Great British Empire," and, in the language of the poet Bracken, "God's own country."

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