

are there, and my interests, such as they are, are in New Zealand. I have never seen an emigrant come to New Zealand, an industrious and capable man, or a man with an industrious family—although he may have difficulties during the first period of his residence there—who did not get on well, and in time become perfectly satisfied with the change that he made. I am looking forward to doing more in the way of land-settlement in New Zealand. We have been doing a great deal for the returned soldiers, and they have had their difficulties. They took over the land during the boom, when prices were high and the country was prosperous, and everything was going on well in Britain. Then came the slump, which always follows a boom, and, I think, always follows a great war, and these soldier settlers suffered. The Government had to come to their assistance. We had probably twenty thousand of them to assist, and when I say twenty thousand I am speaking of assistance that was given to those who settled in the towns and cities and made their homes there, as well as in the country. But we spent £27,000,000 in assisting our soldiers, and when the difficulty came it had to be faced. We did our best to face it, and I think we are getting over the trouble now. The State will lose a little money; I know that perfectly well; but it was no use going on and expecting these men to find a very large amount by way of interest or rent, knowing that in the end there would be very little left for themselves. They have now been given the opportunity, and in consequence the Lands Department in New Zealand is giving its time and attention to the business of the soldiers. When that is through we shall be able to prepare more land—I do not say there is none now—for new arrivals from Britain particularly than has been the case in the past. If we are going to be successful in getting out of this depression, which I have been disappointed to find is more serious in Britain than I expected, if we are going to be successful in getting rid of it in the not far-distant future, then we shall have to work together—the Dominions and overseas countries and Great Britain—better and more closely than ever we have done in the past.

Great Britain New Zealand's Principal Market.

I hope, Mr. President, I am not taking up too much time, but let me just say this: we realize that Britain is likely to remain the principal market for our products. When depression comes along and the purchasing capacity of Britain is affected, it affects us in the oversea countries of the Empire. Our interests are one and indivisible, and we have got to pull together so far as it is possible for us to do so.

Reference was made by yourself, Mr. President, to the possibility of doing something in the way of improving our communications, but I am not able to follow the good example of the Prime Minister of Canada by saying we have no grievance. It is a very small grievance, and we appreciate all that has been done for us by the British Government and the British people, but there is one matter that has caused a certain amount of irritation, and it is not to be wondered at. Tenders were asked some time ago for supplies of meat—I think, principally beef—for the Army and Navy. The contract went to a country outside the Empire, and our people naturally turned to me and said, "That is what your British Government is doing—is that the way to treat us?" I think even if it cost a little more the overseas countries of the Empire should have first consideration. We can produce the quantity, there is no doubt about that. It will surprise many members sitting round this table to-day when I say that New Zealand sends more lamb and mutton into Britain than all the other countries put together, and again I say the quantity can be increased. I have ventilated my little grievance, and I hope it will not be forgotten when an opportunity offers to put matters right.

Need for Improvement in Imperial Communications.

Now as to communications: I notice in the schedule that has been supplied to representatives of the countries overseas that some stress is placed upon the improvement in what may be called inter-Empire communications, and I agree that it is absolutely necessary. I am not quite certain that I am very optimistic about the possibilities of airship communications. I do not say that it will not be possible to carry mails and passengers, but I am afraid we shall have to wait a long time before we see an airship coming to England loaded with, say, wool or cotton, or any of the bulky commodities of which you require large quantities in this country. I do not want to throw cold water on any proposal that may be put forward. I know that aviation has come to stay, and that it is possible for very great development to take place; I know that perfectly well, and, as far as I am concerned, while I say I am not particularly optimistic with regard to the larger variety of airships, I do want to see the means of communications improved. I beg to call attention to my own experience in coming from New Zealand to Britain on this occasion. Generally the journey has taken very nearly forty days, sometimes more than that. I have, on a previous occasion, been forty-seven days coming from New Zealand to Great Britain; that was during the war period, and there were delays on that account; but this time I came to Britain from New Zealand in twenty-seven and a half travelling-days. It can be done again; it can be done through Canada as well. I am quite satisfied of that. There will be new steamers in the Pacific before very long; but even then we want to shorten the distance as much as we can; we cannot shorten the mileage. It will be a very fine thing if we are able to shorten the time occupied in carrying mails and passengers from one country to another, and I want to call the attention of the British Post Office to this point: there is considerable improvement possible so far as the handling of mails between Australia and New Zealand on the one side, and Britain on the other, is concerned. There has been much waste of time; that is another little grievance, but I take the opportunity that I do not often get of ventilating my difficulties, and I do not think I shall be blamed for so doing. In connection with wireless telegraphy I believe there are tremendous possibilities, and I trust that the time will come when the Prime Minister in Great Britain will be able to sit in his office and communicate by wireless with the Prime Minister in New Zealand, and possibly the publicity which we are afraid of at the present time may be avoided.