

SIR JOSEPH WARD

FREE FROM THE CARES OF OFFICE

Free from the cares of office and quite his usual urbane self, Sir Joseph Ward arrived in Christchurch on Tuesday, accompanied by Lady Ward and Miss Eileen Ward. Sir Joseph Ward spent the morning in the city, and during his stay was called upon at Warner's Hotel by many personal friends and political supporters.

He found time to give a brief interview to a reporter as to his future movements. Sir Joseph Ward said that he would be leaving Bluff on Monday next for Melbourne, and it was his intention to visit Ballarat, Adelaide, Sydney, and Brisbane. He expected to be away six weeks altogether. 'I am moving along for the first time for many years with a complete relief from all kinds of official responsibility,' said Sir Joseph Ward. 'We are going on what is entirely a pleasure trip, and though I am in good health and good form after a rather strenuous life, the prospect is quite acceptable to me. It is my first holiday since I have been in politics, and it is the first time that I have gone out of the country without having some heavy work before me. As I have large circles of personal friends in Australia, as well as others whom I have met in the ordinary course of events, I look forward to this visit with a great deal of pleasure.'

An informal gathering of citizens was held in the lounge of Warner's Hotel during the morning as a sort of valedictory to Sir Joseph Ward. The gathering was a very large one—very much in excess of the space accommodation of the lounge. Even the stairway which leads from the hall to the first floor was occupied by the crowd of admirers. The function was not intended as a party tribute, and all political parties were represented at it. When Sir Joseph entered the lounge he was received with an ovation. The whole company spontaneously rose and sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow,' and this rousing chorus was followed by enthusiastic cheering.

Sir Joseph Ward and party arrived in Dunedin on Tuesday evening by the second express. He was welcomed at the railway station by a large gathering of prominent citizens and members of the general public. The reception was marked with a considerable amount of cordiality, and many persons took the opportunity of shaking hands with Sir Joseph Ward and wishing him a pleasant holiday in Australia.

Subsequently, at the Grand Hotel, there was a representative gathering of citizens to meet Sir Joseph Ward.

Mr. Ritchie, who presided, said the meeting was a representative meeting of citizens to welcome Sir Joseph Ward on his first appearance in Dunedin after assuming the important position of a representative on the Royal Commission for Trade. There were present gentlemen of all shades of politics, but the gathering was not a political one. The Chamber of Commerce, at short notice, had sent round to get as many representative gentlemen as possible to meet Sir Joseph Ward. After referring in eulogistic terms to Sir Joseph Ward's business ability and fitness for his new position, Mr. Ritchie extended on behalf of the commercial community a hearty welcome to him, and said the community had every confidence that he would worthily uphold the position to which he had been called.

Eulogistic and complimentary speeches were also delivered by Messrs. Kempthorne and Belcher, to which Sir Joseph Ward made an eloquent reply, in the course of which he expressed his pleasure at being free from the cares of office and at liberty to enjoy a real holiday.

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Interprovincial

Sales of this season's oats are already being made in the Wyndham district. It is reported that Mr. D. R. Hunter, of Ivanhoe, Edendale, has disposed of 700 sacks, at the very satisfactory price of 2s per bushel.

A farmer from the Feilding district informed an *Eketahuna Express* representative that he had been compelled to dispose of his dairy farm owing to his inability to procure labor.

The inmates of the Lyttelton Gaol 'struck' on Monday, and refused to work, or give a reason for their refusal to do so.

The Taieri farmers are making the most of the existing spell of fine weather, and harvesting operations are general.

The sum received by the Napier Hospital Board on account of the recent Hospital Saturday collection was £654 15s 2d. Further donations from the country districts are expected, and there is every likelihood that the collection will eventually reach close on £700.

By the Corinthic 450 third-class passengers arrived at Wellington on Tuesday. About 50 per cent. are from Scotland. Included in the list is a large number of domestic servants, cooks and housemaids, almost all of whom appear to be engaged to go to places in various parts of the Dominion.

Up to the end of March (says the *Wellington Post*) 794 pensions to widows had been granted, involving an annual liability of £15,900. The average pension is £20, the families of the beneficiaries ranging from one to fifteen. The Postmaster-General (Hon. H. G. Ell) says he is satisfied that the advantages of the Act are not yet as widely known as they ought to be, but the Department estimates that at the end of twelve months from the coming into operation of the Act there will be nearly the number on the pension list that was estimated—namely, 3000.

'My desire as Minister of Agriculture,' said the Prime Minister (the Hon. T. Mackenzie) to a Wellington reporter, 'is to establish at our agricultural experimental farms facilities for young men to learn farming.' The statement was apropos of the fact that the Cabinet had authorised the expenditure of a sum of money for the erection of apprentices' quarters at the Wararoa Experimental Farm. The Prime Minister went on to state that the building would be of a moderate size, and would include a room in which lectures would be given by officers of the department. The lads would give their work for the first three months in exchange for board and training, for the next three months they would receive a slight remuneration, and the future allowances would increase in proportion to their industry and ability. He hoped to widen the system, so as to include the other State properties. He wanted to afford facilities for quite a number of young men of good stamp to learn the practical work of farming, supplemented by lectures and other forms of instruction.

In conversation with a reporter in Christchurch about the proposal to celebrate Empire Day on June 22, which combines the anniversaries of the King's Coronation and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Sir Joseph Ward said that at the Imperial Conference he had urged that it should be celebrated on the birthday of the reigning Sovereign. He was still of that opinion, believing that it was desirable to have one general day fixed throughout the Empire. When Queen Victoria died Empire Day was appointed for May 24, but when later on King Edward passed away a difficulty arose about recognising his birthday. As the custom throughout the Empire was to recognise the birthday of the reigning Sovereign, there seemed to be a danger of a multiplicity of holidays if all these dates were to be recognised. It seemed to him that the best plan was to celebrate Empire Day on the King's Birthday, and to change the date to the birthday of the future successor to the Throne. He was convinced that Empire Day would receive more enthusiastic and united support from the people throughout the Empire if some arrangement of that kind was come to.

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