

# PROGRESS

With which is Incorporated  
**THE SCIENTIFIC NEW ZEALANDER.**

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## Progress

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT.

### The Proposed Fast Mail Service.

It would be a pity if the brilliant service which the Prime Minister of this Country did at the Conference, by producing his very practical proposals immediately after the failure of the Preference resolution, led to no practical result. Those proposals were seized upon by all sides of the Conference table as a Heaven sent blessing to relieve the tension. They succeeded in very effectually relieving that tension while the orator of the Conference who had presented that body with a splendid phrase,—declaring the best of all possible bonds of Empire to be "The bond of the free," had nothing more to offer. Sir Joseph Ward, as the leader of at all events the Australasian section of the Conference, gave the Conference a practical policy. Now the practical policy is very well embodied in a paragraph in the Governor's speech, and it will be a thousand pities if it does not get any further. That part to which we alluded on a recent occasion, the proposal for a fast mail service on an all red line, which shall connect this country by a 20 days bond with the seat of the Empire which the Conference was engaged in building up, has received considerable attention since the Conference broke up. According to a recent newspaper communication the proposal finds the

public mind divided between two opinions—that of the experts who speak with the professional accuracy without which they must never appear in public print, and the opinion of the laymen who are permitted to indulge in those hopes which to the professional man are publicly "tapu." The laymen have confidence apparently that there is nothing in the way of the project. The former give it as their opinion that successful as the 20,000 ton steamers may be on the Atlantic section of the sea voyage, nothing smaller than a tonnage of 30,000 will do the voyage on the Pacific section in the time required for securing a 20 days service. Assuming this to be "bed rock," there is here a reason for not giving up the idea of a fast service, but for accepting the fastest that the present state of engineering can produce. When that is found, it will be well. After that, any day human invention, stimulated by the enormous prizes offered by ocean travel, may be reasonably expected before long to bring the vessels up to the rates of speed originally intended, and without much extra expense. The great thing is to get the service started, for not until it is started will the Empire and its dependencies be in a position to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the development of invention.

### Christchurch Exhibition.

It seems that the loss which the treasury authorities are expecting to have to admit as the direct financial result of the Exhibition is something in the neighbourhood of £60,000. This is the probable debit balance of the accounts of the concern. Were there no other considerations in the case it might still be held with good show of reason that as a mere advertisement of the rapid development and present status of this country, the Exhibition has earned its cost, large as that cost looks on paper. Fortunately, however, there are in the case other considerations. In the Railways statement for the year 1906-7 just published, it may be seen that, on the one hand, the revenue collected during that financial period exceeded the takings of the preceding period by £279,000, while, on the other, the estimate for the takings of the period succeeding—the period now current—is less than the revenue received during its predecessor by £75,000. We may fairly

regard this sum as representing the official estimate of something not likely to recur; in other words, as the net gain accruing to the railway system from the Exhibition traffic. If we are wrong, then that gain must be a larger slice of the increment of £275,000 shown by the figures of the Exhibition year over its predecessor. To avoid the possibility of controversy we will take the minimum, relying on the official estimate, at the above £75,000. Now as the Customs Revenue is usually affected by the same events and in the way as the Railway revenue we may confidently put down another £75,000 for the special Exhibition contribution from the Customs to the revenue. Assuming another £10,000 as the Exhibition contribution from other sources of revenue to the Consolidated Fund, we get as the Exhibition contribution a total of exceptional general revenue of £160,000. If the debit balance of the Exhibition separate account be subtracted, there is left a real net profit on the Exhibition account—using that word in its broadest sense—of £100,000. It is a fair reward for the enterprise which while informing the outer world of the position and resources of this country, assembled for its people a collection of the wisdom and achievements of the world, for the study of experts, enabling them to make comparisons and deductions and to develop plans for future improvements and progress.

### Progressive Work for Parliamentary Committees.

Out of the ruck of the past year four subjects suggest themselves as imperatively requiring the attention of Parliamentary Committees, and the decision of Parliament. These are the new Murray Marine Structures; the Mono-rail of Mr. Brennan; the multiplication, for the various soils climates and elevations of this country, of the system of Experimental Farms which has proved so successful at Levin, Momahaki, and Ruakura in the North Island; and last but not least the forcing forward of some large comprehensive scheme of tree planting. The Marine Structures, and the Mono-rail speak for themselves, in connection with defence, harbour improvements, and roading. The need for the teaching of results under the varying conditions of our agriculture is self-evident. The fact that we de-forest 40,000 acres annually and replant but 1400, while our timber supply will not last more than 75 years, is alone sufficient to make the Legislature forsake all business to concentrate on the proper provision for the planting of trees.