

Since the election the league had set out on a publicity campaign with the object of bringing before the public the true facts of the industrial position. Mr. Skerrett emphasised the fact that, in order to avoid a financial crisis, hard times and unemployment, they must increase production; he pointed out that to do this worker and employer must co-operate, the employer must remember that times had changed, he must not treat the worker as a mere cog in the machine, he must give the worker better conditions and also some share in the control of the industry in which he worked. The worker must remember that for better pay and conditions he must give corresponding work and production. It did not matter how high the wages if the production was forthcoming.

For the Public Good Alone.

Mr. Skerrett warned his hearers that instead of increased production, instead of co-operation between worker and employer, the country was faced with an organisation preaching that the worker had nothing in common with the employers, that Labour must fight Capital, and, above all, urging its members to demand higher wages, shorter hours, and less work. Mr. Skerrett said this would lead to national bankruptcy and unemployment, in which case the first to suffer would be the workers. Against this poisonous propaganda the League was fighting and carrying out a counter propaganda campaign to bring the dangers home to the public and to try and show the worker that his happiness and welfare were dependent on the welfare of the Dominion, which again depended on greater production. Mr. Skerrett said that the League further aimed to make politicians place the national interests before party, and not, as in the past, to sacrifice them to political expediency. He further emphasised the fact that the League was the only association in New Zealand which had purely national aims, and that it was not formed to further or protect some particular sectional interest. It was out for the public good alone; it had members of all parties and several Labour men in its ranks. It intended to continue its campaign in the interests of the public and to fearlessly attack any move, whether by employers or workers, which would be detrimental to the public welfare.

Folly of Revolutionary Socialism.

Touching on profiteering, he said the League would urge a strict inquiry into all cases, and, above all, urge prompt publicity; but he ventured to say that the rise in the cost of living, due to profiteering, was nothing compared to the extra cost put on commodities by the go-slow tactics. The reconstruction was necessary, but he pointed out that until the worker saw the folly of revolutionary socialism, it would be impossible to devise any scheme for the betterment of the worker, and the improvement in the relationship between worker and employer. Trades unions were at present the most strenuous antagonists of any scheme for improving the status of the worker in relation to his employer, and only preached antagonism.

Concluding, Mr. Skerrett remarked that it was claimed by trades unions that the Government had no right to control and regulate combinations of labour while insisting that its duty was to control and regulate combinations of capital. The speaker could not accept that principle, as the public welfare might well require the control and supervision of organisation, whether they be of labour or capital. The League's object was to watch developments in the interests of the great middle public, which suffered whenever a clash occurred between these two forces.

Forestry and the Timber Industry in U.S.A.

The condition of the Forests and Timber industry of the United States were exhaustively reviewed some months ago by a representative committee of American forest experts presided over by Mr. Gifford Pinchot, ex-Chief Forester of the United States Forest Service. The committee was concerned with the maintenance of timber supplies in the United States. Its principal recommendation, made after full investigation, was that conservative lumbering—that is to say, methods under which only ripe timber would be cut and free play would be given to regeneration—should be enforced in privately owned as well as in national forests. Some of the conclusions on which the committee based this drastic recommendation may be summarised briefly as follows:

The United States is at present consuming nearly three times more wood than is simultaneously being grown in its forests. Even at the present rate of consumption, supplies of saw-log timber would be exhausted in about fifty years, and the present rate of consumption is bound to increase. One-fourth of the entire land area of Western Europe is under permanently productive forest; yet the people of the various countries of Western Europe use on an average less than half as much timber per capita as those of the United States, and even so are forced to import increasing supplies. The shortage of high-grade timber is world-wide.

The report deals in detail also with the dependence of nearly all primary and secondary industries upon adequate supplies of timber and other forest products, and sums up the position in the statement that "without the products of the forest, civilisation as we know it would stop." It is observed also that there is not one item in the list of indispensable munitions of war which does not involve the use of forest products. The universal shortage disclosed lends all possible point to General Birdwood's prediction, that the world will experience a timber boom comparable to the oil and rubber booms of bygone years. It at the same time suggests that in making the most of their remaining forests the people of the Dominion will not only be studying their own domestic requirements, but laying the foundations of an immensely profitable export trade in years to come.