

reported and commented on, and the Rangitikei Liberal Association was constantly attacked. More local meetings were addressed by I vess, but by October he had still not declared himself. The endorsement of Stevens by Seddon, the Premier, was characterised as an attack on I vess: it would

offer up as a sacrifice that sterling and long-tried politician—Mr. Joseph I vess . . . The man who stood loyally by the party with whom Mr. Seddon was associated . . . from 1880-1886 . . . is now to be thrown aside. (17 October 1893)

More meetings were reported, then on 31 October I vess formally announced his candidature.

This unsatisfactory state could not be allowed to continue. As both Stevens and I vess appeared to have strong support the Liberal interests could not afford the possibility of the vote being split and so allowing the opposition candidate to win the seat. Stevens and I vess met but neither party was willing to back down (11, 14 November 1893). A few days later Stevens stated his determination to stand and on 21 November I vess bowed out.

During the past two or three months he had been buoyed up by hopes that he would have sufficient strength to enable him to go to the poll [but] the people were anxious to maintain the Liberal vote intact. He had no desire to wreck his party. (21 November 1893)

Stevens was successful with 2100 votes to his opponent's 1924.

The Liberal Party's rejection of I vess effectively shut him out of any further significant role in national politics. Although he did further attempt to become elected to the House of Representatives, he must have stood as an independent and was not successful.⁴² In any case it is difficult to investigate I vess's use of his later newspapers to further his political ambitions as files of I vess newspapers after the *Paraekaretu Express* are far from complete.

For the sake of completeness I vess's further 'rag-planting' activities need to be briefly documented. He headed north from Hunterville to Stratford in 1894, establishing the *Egmont Post* there and using it as the base for two more titles, the *Eltham Guardian* and the *Hawera Morning Post*. He sold his interests in this chain by August 1895 and next established the *Pahiatua Argus*, selling his interest in this title in January 1896. I vess moved a little way south to the Horowhenua town of Manakau, where the first issue of the *Levin and Manakau Express* appeared on 4 April 1896. His next move was back to Ashburton to establish the *Ashburton Standard* in October 1896. This move may not be unrelated to the national elections to be held in December of that year, but as no issues of this title have been located the point must remain conjectural. The Ashburton Newspaper Company leased the *Standard*