

ministration of that Department, his charges were so serious, and so obviously backed by information, that the appointment of a Royal Commission was inevitable. Upon its appointment Mr Taylor abandoned his business, and for several months devoted himself to gathering material to lay before it; he was to all intents and purposes the Public Prosecutor, and he proved beyond all question that the appointment of the Commission was fully warranted, and it resulted in a great improvement and purification of the Department of Justice. His services to the community and his sacrifices on this occasion were never adequately recognised, and his whole action in connection therewith was a display of rare patriotism and devotion to public duty.

In 1899 the war fever and jingoistic spirit was rampant, and Mr Taylor strongly expressed opposition to the Boer war (as a purely capitalistic one, an opinion fully sustained and justified now), which cost him his seat at the general election of that year; but in or out of Parliament his influence never waned, and his opinions on public questions and events were as eagerly sought from the defeated candidate as from the victorious member. His independence, his unbending adherence to what he believed to be the right, forced him into refusing to ally himself absolutely with any party, and always brought against him, in his election contests, the combined opposition of party and press. In 1902 he was returned for Christchurch City at the head of the poll. In 1904 he appeared as defendant in the Seddon-Taylor libel case, which he defended personally, with the most consummate skill against the highest legal talent in the colony, the verdict being practically in his favour. The "voucher question" came to the front in the following year, and was the cause of his defeat at the general election of 1905, but a most brilliant victory was his at the election of 1908.

It is impossible to give in detail the splendid work he did in Parliament, where he was always a force for righteousness; it must be sufficient here to say that his warmest support was ever given to every measure making for the betterment of the people of this land. Every proposal for moral reform, for bettering the conditions under which men and women live and work, for the removal

of the civil and political disabilities by which women are handicapped, for the relief of the poor, the fallen, and the down-trodden, had his utmost sympathy and his strenuous assistance, both in and out of Parliament. To his particular and persistent efforts are due two important alterations of the law relating to women. It did not matter how false, how gross, how undeserved a slander might be uttered against a woman, she had no remedy in law unless she could prove that her power of **making a living was injured** thereby, and we are indebted to Mr Taylor for the fact that in this matter men and women are now equal in the eyes of the law.

Again, no charge could be brought against a man for indecent assault upon young girls under the age of consent unless it were laid within three months after the commission of the offence. Mr Taylor succeeded in getting the time doubled, it still being only six months.

Every measure tending to purity of life and justice to women was sure of his earnest support. This great knight of God had no false notion of one standard of morality for men and another for women. He believed in "the white life for both" alike; he entertained no belief in the regulation of vice in any form whatever, and held that the only way to banish venereal diseases from our midst is to abstain from the vice which creates them, and to live chaste and clean lives.

A very notable incident in his Parliamentary life was his position with regard to the gift of the Dreadnought. He did not object to the gift, but he emphatically objected to the manner in which that gift was made, holding that the Premier had acted in the most unconstitutional manner when he pledged this country, with its million inhabitants, to an expenditure of two million sterling without the consent of Parliament or consultation with the people's representatives.

When one remembers the price it cost, in past days, to secure for us the right to refuse taxation (unless imposed upon us by ourselves through elected representatives), it is a most amazing thing that the people of New Zealand generally took this flagrant infraction of their rights with the indifference they did, or that any section of the community could be found supporting it. It is to the everlasting honour of Mr Taylor that he

worked up such a strong protest against it that its repetition will not occur again in a hurry, and he did it in the teeth of the bitterest opposition and the fullest misrepresentation.

He feared no human being and no human power in the discharge of his duty; he never considered public opinion, expediency had no meaning for him, and social ostracism, no terror. He has blazed the way for many reforms, and the path of the pioneer is ever hard. If he was relentless in his fight against newspapers, and certain politicians, it was because of their opposition to much-needed reforms; or because they stood for that which was objectionable or debasing in politics, or in the life of the nation. His work cannot be measured. He inspired and organised a great body of public opinion that was animated by the purest patriotism and the purest love of humanity. From the moment he stepped on the platform he was ever a force of growing power for good, always to be reckoned with in the public life of the Dominion; and there exists not a hamlet in this country that has not felt his influence, an influence of inestimable and incalculable value.

He was always a commanding figure in the House, due, not to his physique, but to his immense vitality and extraordinary ability. The announcement of "Taylor's up" meant the abandonment of all intermediate tasks, sent everyone hurriedly to his seat, and an empty chamber and press gallery filled immediately. When his opportunity arrived, he never missed it. He was up, straight and erect, and whilst others were struggling to their feet, his quick "Mr Speaker, Sir," invariably caught for him the Speaker's eye. He was by turns bitingly sarcastic, witheringly denunciative, pathetic, pleading, generous; but whatever his vein, his choice of words, and expressions, and similes, was always happy and convincingly certain. His plain, Anglo-Saxon was a marvellous illustration of the beauty of the right word at the right time. No more brilliant orator has ever sat in the House. He never hesitated, never was at a loss for a word, marshalled his facts and opinions in a logical sequence that was marvellous and impressive; and his gift of ready analysis was as striking as his enormous faculty of assimilation. Interference or interjections were either