

New Zealand After Twenty Years of Progress

Continued from Page 8

ninety of these, through the government's organized efforts, secured permanent positions in private works, and 6,201 were given government employment. Of this number there were 1,679 from Great Britain, and 483 from Australia. Since the organization of the government employment bureau, positions have been obtained for 69,173 persons, and more than one hundred thousand persons were dependent upon the toilers for which this work was secured, so that succor was rendered to about 170,000 lives; and what is more, it was that kind of aid that builds up instead of tearing down self-respecting manhood. The soup-kitchen and conventional charity assistance exert a demoralizing influence, but secure to the worker employment when he is able to earn his own living, and you help him to the highway of happiness, development and independence.

Secure Homes for Homeless

New Zealand's statesmen, realizing that a nation of homesteaders under just, wise and humane government will be a happy and nobly patriotic people, have aided the homeseeker to realize his dream. To do this was not an easy matter, for when the Liberal government came into power in 1890 more than eighty per cent. of the people owned no land. Indeed, only fourteen of the whole population were land holders, while one-third of one per cent. of the people owned over half the area and value in the hands of the people. To get this idle land held for speculation and in some instances for grazing, into the hands of the people required radical changes in the taxation laws. The taxation of land values and measures calculated to encourage industry instead of idling it, as is the effect of the unjust laws of the older countries, and the condemnation and taking over by the government of vast idle tracts, accomplished the first step necessary. Next the government encouraged the homeseekers to secure small farms by letting the actual settler buy the land on long-time and easy terms; and in many cases money was also advanced to enable the industrious citizen to build and to stock his little farm. This has proved a wise investment as well as a conspicuous example of noble yet patriotic humanitarian statesmanship. The land has been rapidly settled around the centres of wealth and the nation's riches have been thereby enormously augmented through increased production.

The government owned and operated the railroads, and so they were run in the interests of the people and not for the purpose of making a few millionaire stock-gamblers, monopolists and capitalists of industry. It was therefore in a position to encourage the people to become homesteaders and to cultivate the land environing the large towns and cities that otherwise would have lain vacant for many years. Within a zone extending many miles from the cities, the workers and the school children, as we have seen, are carried to and from their labors and schools at nominal charges, and this has enormously stimulated the settlement of the land. Still, owing to the number of immigrants coming constantly to the cities, who know nothing of agriculture, the rents in the three great centres of New Zealand—Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch—have been abnormally high and oppressive on the poor. To meet this condition the government have erected model dwellings for the workers, which are leased at a reasonable price. This has naturally had an admirable effect in lessening the rents generally. In the case of many immigrants who want to become farmers, the government interests itself and assists them to gain positions on farms for a year, so that they acquire the elementary information necessary to successful farming.

Interests of Industry Protected

Nothing in modern government is more inspiring and beautiful than the sleepless vigilance and interest of the progressive democratic statesmen of New Zealand in behalf of helpless industry. If a man is out of a position and finds that he can get employment



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at a distant point, but lacks the means to reach his destination, the government transports him and lets him pay it back as he is able to out of his earnings. If a man succeeds in getting steady employment at some distance from home, the railroads will carry his family to the worker under the same condition as it takes the toiler to his place of employment. This enables the family to be kept together, and the cost charged by the railroad in such instances is merely the cost of transportation.

We recently called attention to an article from the Australian Review of Reviews which described an act of the New Zealand government, since the period of financial depression reached the Dominion, which is so characteristic an illustration that we quote a part of it again.

"The government," says the Australian Review of Reviews, in referring to New Zealand, "is setting aside a large block of country in the North Island, in which the civil servants who are being retrenched can settle—an exceedingly wise and kind provision, which at once saves the unemployed problem and savors of the humane."

Protecting the Citizens

One of the things in New Zealand that stands out in golden radiance against the background of our corpora-

tion ruled government, is its vigilance in preventing corporations and monopolies from gaining a strangle-hold on the people. A few years ago the coal operators, having formed themselves into a ring with some shipping interests, began to charge extortionate prices for coal. The government promptly embarked in the coal business in such a way as to cover all expenses and at the same time bring down the price of coal to a reasonable figure, developing the commerce and enriching the people.

New Zealand is removed from the great centres of civilization, and it became apparent to her progressive statesmen that two things were necessary: the farming, stock-raising and fruit-growing population should be aided in obtaining the latest and most improved facts relating to these most important wealth-creating products, and also in securing the best possible markets for what they produced. Accordingly the government sends trained teachers to all parts of the country to instruct the people how to get the best results from their labor and to prepare their products for the markets. Then the state takes the produce and places it in its own storehouses, from whence it is carefully graded, packed, exported and marketed in Great Britain. The farmers receive the full return, save the actual cost to the government of preparing and marketing the products.

These are only a few of the many striking illustrations of the wise, far-sighted and humane statesmanship which has marked the administration of the Dominion Government since the progressive democracy has taken the reins of power. The various innovations about which such doleful predictions were made by alarmed corporate and monopolistic interests have proved eminently successful. The government has been preserved from the debauching influence of privileged wealth. The interests, the enrichment, the happiness of true development of all the people has from the first been the master concern of the people's representatives. The innovations have, in many instances, been as radical as they have been just, and at all times manhood has been placed above money. It is the government in which the principle of the Golden Rule has been made the rule of national life.

It is thought that Grand Trunk employees may go out on a strike within the next couple of weeks. The trouble is a result of the recent strike on the same road.

The steamer Wasaga, laden with packages freight, was burned on Lake Superior. The crew was saved by another steamer.