

the ages has come the declaration that men shall be adjudged by their deeds, not by their professions or their promises as to the future. In the light of this knowledge the present Government fearlessly approach the Electorate—the grand inquest of the country—satisfied that their claims will receive a dispassionate, unprejudiced and honourable consideration.

What Has the Present Government Done for the Colony During the Past Four Years?

This question has been more than once captiously asked by the opponents of the Government. The time has now arrived to furnish the answer and I shall proceed to do so:—

When the present Government assumed office the whole Railway system of the colony, which cost the tax-payers the sum of Twelve million dollars, was the property of R. G. Reid, having been bartered away to him by the former Government for one-twelfth of its actual cost. The present Government, immediately upon coming into office, passed an Act through the Legislature, taking back the fee-simple or ownership, of the railway, returning to Mr. Reid the consideration he paid for it, and to-day it is the property of the people of this country.

In connection with the transfer of the railway to R. G. Reid under the Railway Act of 1898, some Two millions and a half acres of the best lands in the colony were also transferred to him. Included in this enormous area were lands held under mining and timber leases by a number of enterprising proprietors; home steads that had been established by the thrift and industry of hundreds of poor settlers, and more than Eight hundred thousand acres of timber land within three miles of the sea, which it had ever been the policy of the Liberal Party to reserve for the exclusive use of the fishermen of the colony.

The present Government, as one of their first acts, took back those lands from R. G. Reid, returned to poor settlers and mining and timber proprietors the areas of which they had been despoiled, set apart for the use of the fishermen all the lands within three miles of the sea, and placed at the disposal of any and all who were prepared to comply with the condition of payment prescribed by law the balance remaining. More than seven hundred thousand acres of land so taken back from R. G. Reid are to-day held under timber and mining leases, which yield annual payments that largely augment, and will continue to swell, the revenue of the colony.

In view of the abuse and misrepresentation that have been showered upon the Government in this connection by their opponents, it will surprise some to learn that, as a result of the land policy of the Government, the revenue of the colony from Crown Lands has increased Four hundred and seventy-five per cent. in the past four years; in other words, the receipts from Crown Lands in 1899-1900 were only Nine thousand Five hundred and five Dollars, while for the year ending June, 1904, they amounted to Forty-four thousand Six hundred and thirty-two Dollars.