

has been made to me by the man in the street, "Is there only one brain in the House to carry on the business of the country? Because the Premier wants to attend the Conference, does it follow that the whole seventy-nine of you have not sufficient brains to carry on the business of the country?" Some workshops have hundreds and hundreds of employees engaged, yet the business proceeds even if the head of the workshop is away. We have drifted into what is called the one-man system... We have only one man, and, that one man having two functions to attend to at the one time, we are in a quandary, as it is unscientific that he should be in two places at the same time. I suggest that it would be a good thing if the Premier educated some other member of the Ministry to take his place. There are fifty things that may cause the Premier's absence. I think it would be splendid training if some one of his lieutenants were to take up the running of the business of the country while he is away. The Premier's argument against that is to this effect: that he should be here as head of the Government. Do you know, Sir, that you have got a majority of twenty-five over any vote likely to be brought against you on any critical division?

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the land question?

Mr. WRIGHT.—I think the honourable gentleman might turn out all right even in regard to the land question. With such a majority, do you think that any mischief can be done by the member for Franklin? I do not think the argument is a strong one. I do not think any mischief will happen to the party if you go away. Now, I want to refer to the High Commissioner. I was under the impression that it was his business to represent New Zealand at these Conferences. We pay him £2,000 a year, and it would appear that his principal duty is to show visitors from New Zealand the sights of London, to attend banquets, and drink champagne. If that is all he has to do, there are plenty of men in New Zealand who will be prepared to drink champagne and attend banquets for less than £2,000 a year. With regard to the confidential telegram which the Premier sent to the editors of newspapers, other members have criticized his action as to that matter; but I want to point this out: that he led us to believe it was a confidential telegram, and therefore he could not read it. But I may say that it is open to the sender of a confidential communication to remove the bond as to its confidential nature. I want to know if the Government sent a confidential telegram as to the representation of New Zealand at the Conference. I know it may be presumption on my part to give you a suggestion as to the danger you are running in regard to the proposed adjournment of the House, but it is only fair that I should give it you for what it is worth. The man in the street says you are adjourning Parliament because the Government is afraid to face the music. Mind you, I do not say the man in the street is right, but when the man in the street gets an idea into his head it is generally pretty hard to shift it. He says the position is this: there are a lot of questions that need dealing with, and the Government does not seem disposed to deal with them, therefore the Government intends to shut up the House, and when the Premier comes back public feeling will have cooled down to a certain extent. That is the object in adjourning the House. I think this is a very wrong suggestion for the man in the street to make, but the simplest way of dealing with it would be to give the man in the street the lie, and let the House go on with the business. I have not a very great deal more to say, but I want to give a few reasons why the House should not adjourn. I do not think there was anything in the Premier's suggestion that the House would pass embarrassing resolutions in his absence. I do not think the House would do such a thing as that; even the Opposition—bad as the Premier thinks they are—would scarcely do that. I want to deal with one or two subjects that have already been brought up, but I will deal with them in a different way so as not to weary the House. The unemployed question is not understood by yourself, Sir. You have no idea of it. Since I have been a member of the House I have been greatly distressed by the number of people seeking situations. Honourable members on the other side may laugh, but if they lived in Wellington they would find little to laugh at. There are scores and scores of deserving people who cannot get employment. The right honourable gentleman said the Government were employing more men in New Zealand than at any other time. That may be so; but is it not a fact that the Government will not employ single men? Does not the Labour Department say they can find work for some married men, and that is all they can do? I dare say it is all they can do; but there are scores of single men with people dependent upon them who cannot get a day's work.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Will they do a day's work if they can get it?

Mr. WRIGHT.—I will bring the honourable gentleman fifty to-morrow who would do a good day's work if he will tell them where they can get it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Put them on the land.

Mr. WRIGHT.—As the honourable member for Christchurch North has already said, they cannot get land. There is no land for them. They are balloted out every time, and are tramping about from place to place. I repeat what I said—the unemployed question is a grave one; and if for no other reason the business of the House should go on in the endeavour to alleviate the sufferings of deserving people. You do not always come across the deserving cases; they bear and suffer in silence, and say nothing. You have to find them out if you can, and they exist in Wellington. What about the business men who are suffering on account of the monetary stringency? What about the complaint known as miner's disease, and the questions that were raised in connection with the insurance of the men? These are questions that ought to be dealt with. The House has admitted its responsibility in the matter. How much is the action taken by the Government going to cost the Dominion?

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—It has not cost us a single shilling to date.

Mr. WRIGHT.—That may be so, but how are we to know that it is not going to cost us a great deal? The Premier says it has not cost us a single shilling. I am glad if it is so, and I hope he is right. What about other questions that have been alluded to by different members in the course of this debate? All these questions should be dealt with. In conclusion, I raise my