

News About New Zealand

To the Henry George News:

Verily, one must go abroad to learn about one's own country! I think it would be hard to cram more inaccuracies and misleading statements into a few inches of letter press than has been achieved by Dorothy Sara in her criticism of Mr. Lancaster Greene's article, in the May issue of *The Freeman*.

First of all, the government does not provide even supposedly "free" fire and life insurance; these services are run in free and open competition with privately owned fire and life insurance companies, and, of course, the premiums are just as high in the State offices as in the others.

In the second place, the 17½ shillings in every pound earned, is approximately the maximum taxation levied, and includes "excess profits" tax, and is paid by the big companies mostly, who, in spite of the very high rate, are in the majority of cases, doing quite well, thank you! These high taxes are war-time levies; they are not imposed in order to provide the "benefits" referred to. And they are not peculiar to New Zealand; They are imposed, on practically the same high scale in Australia, Britain, and others of the United Nations. When America is as long in the war as we have been it may be that she will be forced to follow the same high taxation road. The sales tax is also a war measure.

"Wealth has been taxed almost out of existence." Don't worry, Miss Sara, this Dominion is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, per capita. The 40-hour week has not gone, all that has happened is that war-time factories are working some hours overtime; and why not? Other factories work only five days a week, eight hours a day.

Just when had N. Z. exhausted her credit abroad? There was a time when her funds in London were allowed to run too low, but the position was soon remedied, and today we have more credits in London than we require. This dominion has never known a time when it could not borrow in the London market, and to say that we were practically bankrupt is an idea that must have been imbibed from Dr. Goebels.

As regards the government debt, it is only necessary to say that every mile of railway in N. Z. is owned by the State. If the U. S. government were to buy out all the American railroad kings her national debt might go up "come" also.

Unemployment was considerable during the depression. 1931 to 1935, but never anything like what it was in the U. S. A. according to population, but it steadily declined from 1935, up to the time we entered the war, and, of course, it has disappeared, except for "unemployables" since. Our great trouble now is to find labor for the ordinary work of the country.

In conclusion, let me say that I am not a supporter of the Labor government; I oppose its socialistic measures, and am greatly concerned lest they make the war an excuse for implementing Socialism, and carrying it on after peace is established. But I like the truth, and am sorry to say very little of it is to be found in Miss Sara's absurdly biased criticism. I am sorry such a letter has appeared in "*The Freeman*" which is so well informed generally.

C. H. NIGHTINGALE.
Auckland, New Zealand.