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The Life Of

THOMAS EDWARD TAYLOR M.P.

1863 - 1911
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PREFACE

My interest in Thomas Edward Taylor was most probably awakened by reference I had frequently heard my parents make to his work and personality. My father had been a near neighbour of the Taylors. Certainly a volume of press and other cuttings gathered by the late Mr. Frank Thompson, who had worked with Taylor in the prohibition movement, impelled me to seek more knowledge of a man who could inspire such remarkable devotion in his followers. The incidents in an eventful public life are contained in this volume, but of the magnetic power of his personality I lack personal first-hand knowledge. I can find unmistakable evidence of his extraordinary influence upon people, but my experience is too limited for me to convey the ardour of his spirit in words.
The thesis I advance for his place in the political life of this democracy is that he, essentially a self-taught man, entered the political life of the country from a strong sense of public duty and served as a spearhead for the humanitarian legislation of the Seddon Government as well as in local government. Then, I examine the reasons that impelled Taylor to enter public life and become drawn into ever widening activities. I submit that his restless energy, stirred by an intense religious experience in his youth, caused him to try to help those closest at hand. More often than not these people were drunkards. Frustrated by their continual lapses, Taylor girded himself to battle for the removal of all licences to sell liquor in the district of Sydenham. Success seemed to have been attained when a legal technicality nullified his efforts. To change the law became a necessity for him. He entered the political world and served his fellows with a much broader outlook than was first expected of him.

There is evidence to support the contention that Taylor was a spearhead for the Liberals, but because of the lack of information as to the precise time Seddon became committed to any particular reform,
I cannot say that Taylor provided the underlying ideas. But he did educate public opinion as to them, and saw those ideas written into the Statute Book by Seddon. But any view of Taylor as a politician is incomplete that ignores his stimulating effect upon political integrity. Friends and opponents alike agree that he followed his conception of right fearlessly and was ever alert to denounce anything that smacked of intrigue or jobbery.

It is to be regretted that this work was not undertaken ten years earlier when most of those who were intimately associated with Taylor were still alive. L. M. Isitt made a collection of letters intending to write a life of Taylor, but these were destroyed by fire and the work was put aside.

I am indebted to the following people who have given me generously of their time. Mrs. L. C. Horwood, daughter of Mr. Taylor, made available to me letters, newspaper clippings and complete files of the Seddon-Taylor Libel Case. Mr. James McCullough, brother-in-law of Taylor and committeeman; Mr. T. W. West, brother-in-law of Taylor and associated with the Voucher Case; Mr. E. B. E. Taylor, son; Mr. R. S. McKenzie, committeeman; Dr. A. J. Orchard, family doctor; Miss Christine Henderson, former
secretary of the Progressive Liberal Association and prominent in the prohibition movement; Mr. F. T. Kissell, engineer, who was engaged on the construction of the Lake Coleridge Power Scheme; Mr. E. Hitchcock, Manager of the M.E.D.; Mr. I. Dalmer, electrical engineer; Mr. E. Parlane, former neighbour and councillor: all gave me of their time generously. Of those who were associated with Mr. Taylor in politics, only Rt. Hon. R. Semple and Mr. F. M. B. Fisher are alive. My attempts to obtain information from them were not successful.

Files of "The Prohibitionist" have been a most useful source of information. Though strongly partisan, they contain reports of tours and meetings and make reference to exact dates, which other papers had no occasion to mention. For expressions of opinions I have given closer attention to "The Press" which was consistently and strongly opposed to Taylor.

I regret that the paucity of material available in the form of letters and secondary sources which would contribute to the picture of the political world in which Taylor was active, has restricted my research.
This I have endeavoured to overcome by obtaining as wide an understanding as possible from contemporary papers and personal interviews.
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Note: Information from the sources above has been supplemented by personal interviews with people directly connected with Mr. Taylor. See Preface, p.iii.
II. Secondary

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Edward Taylor was born at Kerton 1 Lindsey, Lincolnshire in 1863. He died at Christchurch, New Zealand, the centre of his labours, in 1911, in his fiftieth year. His father had served in the Royal Navy and the London Police Force and is remembered as a man of integrity, devoted to his wife and family. 2 Of him, Taylor writes: 3

"He was the antithesis of everything mean

1 The Lyttelton Times, July 28, 1911.
2 Ibid and oral from T. W. West and J. McCullough.
3 "Two Common Men" by T. E. Taylor; Whitcombe & Tombs, Christchurch, 1907.
or finnicky. He had a large strong head, the forehead of which suggested capacity. His eye was that of a free man. His hands were strong and gave one the feeling that, if their owner had made but ordinary use of them, they were a legacy from ancestors who had done things. He had a genial nature brimful of human sympathy. He had never made a lucky 'spec' in his life. He had never bought a section or shares for a rise: his soul knew no envy. He had no unsatisfied ambition. He knew no social disappointment because his spirit gave him the contentment which a natural life and the performance of life's common duties can give."

Taylor's mother 4 was noted for a vigour, strength of character and flow of unrestrained language that are found in a fuller measure in her son:

The family came to New Zealand when T. E. Taylor was ten years old, and settled in Addington. There, in an atmosphere that offered few cultural advantages, family life was developed on a rigid

4 Oral, E. T. Parlane.
nonconformist basis. Family prayers were held each evening but the family parrot would ensure that these did not last too long by uttering vocal disapproval in terms that could not be resisted. The ties of family were strong and in later years, regardless of the pressure of public activity, Taylor would call at the old home to wish his mother good-night before returning to his own residence at Cashmere where he built one of the first houses.

He attended the West Christchurch Primary School, but did not pass out of the fifth standard, and no indications of his unusual talents are recalled by his schoolmaster. It is related that with the impulsive sense of right and fearlessness of consequences that characterised his public life, he threatened to hurl an ink-jar at the teacher who he considered had caned a boy unjustly.

After leaving school he entered the firm of Messrs. Heywood and Company, Customs Agents, as an office boy, and by displaying the energy and conscientiousness that was typical of all his work,

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5 Oral, J. McCullough.
6 Speech by A. Foster at Jubilee of West Christchurch School.
became Manager of their Christchurch branch when he was twenty-four years of age. It was while working for Heywood's that Taylor plunged into his unrelenting work for prohibition which was drawing him into ever expanding spheres of activity. As office boy he had been called upon to bring a billy of beer for a workman, and had refused in terms that were uncompromising. Because of his passionate work for prohibition, pressure was brought to bear upon J. M. Heywood's by the liquor interests and he was offered a partnership, and requested to curtail his campaign for prohibition. Compromise found no place in his nature and he resigned. (1895). 7

He then joined in partnership with Mr. F. Cole 8 in an auctioneering and land and estate business under the title of "Taylor, Cole and Company." In this he won only moderate success for his energies were dispersed over dozens of public activities, and time that should have been given to his business was spent planning political campaigns, listening to the grievances of those who were constantly seeking his help, and in organising Prohibition Guilds. Taylor's

7 Oral, J. McCullough and Biography in the Vanguard by L.M.Isitt, August 19, 1911.

8 Ibid.
sense of civic duty contrasts sadly with the outlook of so many of the able men of recent years who have become absorbed in business building to the neglect of public life. It is told that he refused to accept bids from one dealer whose business methods were open to suspicion.

In connection with his business he visited Europe in 1902, but much of this time appears to have been given in Switzerland to investigating the possibilities of utilising the hydro-electricity resources in New Zealand. Those who were engaged in similar business activities to Taylor's remember him as a man who neglected his business opportunities because he deemed it his duty to expend his energies on behalf of the public. He was secretary of the New Zealand Electrical Construction Company which, for two years prior to the Christchurch Tramway Board's purchase of it in 1903, was responsible for the installation of an electrical tram-car service in Christchurch.

At the age of fourteen he had passed through a religious crisis that set him irrevocably

10 Oral, T. W. West.
11 Biography in The Vanguard by L. M. Isitt, August 19, 1911.
upon the course of serving his fellow men. His boundless energy and zeal for practical work directed him towards teaching in the Sunday School of the Addington Free Methodist Church. In this he was discouraged by other teachers because he was too young. "If I gather my own class, can I have a place to teach them in?" he asked. He gathered fourteen boys off the streets and soon had a flourishing class. He embarked about this time upon a preliminary course of study that would prepare him for work within that church; but his entire character was such that he could not confine his studies and activities within one religious body. Though he conducted some services as a layman and attended church regularly, his characteristic work is to be found in the practical world around him.

From the time he was sixteen, his energies were directed to the practical assistance of those in his own neighbourhood who were addicted to excessive drinking and suffered from the resultant evils. L. M. Isitt records how Mr. Taylor was surprised to see a youth supporting a woman who was obviously drunk, and guiding her home. Even greater was his surprise as

12 Ibid.
13 Oral, J. McCullough.
they drew closer to find it was her own son, still in his early teens. Of course, what Tennyson calls, "those best portions of a good man's life, His nameless, unremembered acts of charity," were followed by exhortations to those whom he thus helped, to pledge themselves to temperance. It would seem that repeated failures by many of his numerous converts prompted him to attack the entire liquor trade with fanatical zeal and a fiery denunciation that came from a deep-seated personal interest in the weak. It must not be thought that such actions were aimed at securing votes and support in his election campaigns, though no doubt they did bring him some gains.

During the pressure of one election campaign an unemployed man sought his assistance. Satisfied as to the worthiness of the man's cause, he offered his help. The man then promised him five votes from his household as tangible thanks. The help Taylor had offered was immediately withdrawn. But after the election he combed the city to find employment for this man. Incidents like these explain the unquestioning devotion of his followers

14 Oral, J. McCullough.
who supported Taylor even when he had tried to take one of his most valued rights from the poor man; his right to buy beer.

But prohibition was not his only interest, and those who worked with him hasten to speak of his wide interest in what nowadays is termed general social welfare, and of his wholesome sense of humour and flow of entertaining talk both on private and on public occasions. He was widely read. His favourite authors were Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, Whittier and Lowell. His sea voyage to England was occupied largely by reading Shakespeare. His volume is copiously annotated and his speeches are enriched by quotations and allusions to give point and strength to ideas already expressed clearly and vigorously in his own style. Throughout his life Taylor passed part of his meagre leisure time with sketch book and modelling clay though he had not the opportunities to build an adequate technique of painting or sculpture.

The Hon. Mr. Barr, M.L.C., says:

"On that occasion we got into discussion on the flora of New Zealand, and from that it developed into the field of poetry; and there was unfolded to me a man who was living close

15 Oral, Mrs. L. C. Horwood.
15a Speech to Legislative Council, July 29, 1911.
to nature. He saw things in a way that no one only knowing his work on the platform would recognise. He was a man who was deeply in love, not only with his own family, but with the whole of nature and the highest things of this life. He had a high spirituality in addition to his other qualities and powers."

In all his undertakings he was a man whose concern was with principles and integrity of mind and character. In considering any specific problem, he invariably reduced the foliage of fact to the hardwood of principles as he did, for example, when discussing the visit of the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon to the meeting of Colonial Premiers on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession. Taylor used the incident to review the limitations of Colonial Conferences and develop his ideas upon the relationship of the colonies to the mother country. This tendency to reduce matters to fundamental principles often leads to an oversimplification of the issues involved, but it led him also to a clarity that the working man in his electorate could appreciate and feel confident in. This consideration of principles won for him the respect of both friend and opponent, but it involved him in two libel actions and cost him his seat in parliament.
In 1892 he married Elisabeth Best Ellison, who was to prove herself a devoted and able advocate of the improvement in the status of women as well as a leader in the prohibition movement until her death in 1940. Henceforth there was that inevitable conflict between the man who is devoted to his family and the man who feels his duty lies in the sphere of public life, for he did not, as Burke said of many thinkers of his time, forget the claims of his kin in seeking the good of mankind. He was intensely devoted to his family and no estimate of him which ignored his family life would be adequate. His committeeemen, when presenting a petition bearing thousands of signatures requesting him to contest the parliamentary election for the Christchurch North seat following his defeat by C. M. Gray, found him most reluctant to re-enter political life. Of their family of four daughters and one son, only Edward Bickmore Ellison Taylor has given any indication of entering political life, though his daughter, Mrs.

16 Oral, T. W. West.
17 Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
Irene Horwood, has been prominent in prohibition work.

Taylor first came before the public during his carefully organised campaign in 1892 to secure Prohibition in the Sydenham Licensing District. He was Secretary of the first Prohibition League formed in New Zealand, which aimed at securing the election of a Licensing Committee pledged to refuse all licences to sell liquor in Sydenham. During the campaign he displayed the passionate vigour and relentless energy which was not content "to condemn the sin and condone the sinner." The fortunes of this battle are considered in a later chapter.

For six years from 1896, until the Borough of Sydenham became absorbed in the City of Christchurch, he served on the Borough Council.

In January 1896 Taylor contested a by-election for one of the seats in Christchurch City, which then returned three members to the House of

18 "The Lyttelton Times", July 28, 1911.
19 Minutes, Sydenham Borough Council, 1896-1902.
Representatives. He had studied the details of political life closely for some years, though he was only thirty-three years of age when he contested this election. His opinions were often Radical, sometimes Liberal and consistently opposed to those of the New Zealand Conservative Party. While he approved in general of the Legislation introduced by the Liberal Party, which was dominated by Seddon, he strenuously opposed the administration of the Government and was its most active critic. The Liberals were not in agreement with his uncompromising views upon Prohibition and their official candidate was Mr. R. M. Taylor. He secured over a thousand votes less than T. E. Taylor, but the Conservative nominee, Mr. C. Lewis, was elected. The votes recorded were as follows:

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<tr>
<td>C. Lewis</td>
<td>4,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. E. Taylor</td>
<td>4,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. M. Taylor</td>
<td>3,196</td>
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Henceforth T. E. Taylor was strenuously opposed by the Liberal Party until after the death of Seddon, when Sir Joseph Ward invited him to join the Cabinet. 21

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At the general parliamentary election in October 1896, he was one of three members returned for Christchurch City\(^{22}\), polling 5,443 votes compared with R. M. Taylor's 555. His maiden speech was a concise analysis of the relations between New Zealand and the Mother country. The chief part of his programme for reform in domestic politics was brought before the House on two occasions before he launched the attack which was to secure the appointment of a Royal Commission to examine the condition of the Police Force.\(^{23}\) He asserted that the Force was subject to Ministerial interference; that individual policemen were inefficient, immoral, and that they neglected their duty. Doubtless Taylor's concern for the enforcement of the Licensing Laws prompted him to launch the attack. Seddon was desirous that no commission should be appointed \(^{24}\) but each general charge Taylor brought was so strongly supported by specific instances that action was forced upon the Premier. Taylor himself was not included

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23 Parliamentary Debates, Sept. 30, 1897.
in the Commission, but he attended its every sitting and for weeks was absorbed in seeking and sifting evidence which he made certain was submitted to the Commission. "To all intents and purposes," says the Lyttelton Times, "he was the Public Prosecutor." Not all his assertions were proved, but the Commission found much that required immediate attention and he pressed for the necessary legislation to be brought before the House. Throughout the session his function was essentially that of a critic of the Seddon administration and it was in this capacity that he made his greatest contribution to the political life of New Zealand. It is desirable that in a democratically elected parliament there should be a strong opposition with a keen sense of its responsibility as the alternative government. This Taylor helped to provide.

His defeat at the elections of 1900 may be attributed to the unpopular attitude he adopted towards the Boer War. When a hostile Press fired a destructive broadside at Taylor on the last day

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25 Appendix to Journal of House of Representatives, Sept. 7, 1898.
26 Lyttelton Times, July 28, 1911.
of the election campaign, he had no facilities for replying before the votes were cast. During the next three years he visited Europe, lectured on behalf of the Prohibition cause, became Secretary of the New Zealand Electrical Construction Company which installed the facilities for an electrical tram car service in Christchurch, and conducted his business as an auctioneer.

In 1903 he again represented Christchurch City in the House of Representatives. During this parliament there were many indications of the animosity between Seddon and Taylor. The personal nature of this feud owed something to the fact that Seddon had been a publican while Taylor was utterly intolerant of anything connected with the drink traffic. While Seddon was essentially an opportunist, Taylor was incapable of making any compromise with whatever he believed to be the wrong principle.

It was in 1904 that the Voucher Case absorbed the nation's interest. Four Post Office officials reported to Mr. F. M. B. Fisher M.H.R. that they had sighted a voucher made out in favour of Captain R. J.

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28 Parliamentary Debates, June 9, 1904.

Oral, T. W. West
R. S. McKenzie.
Seddon, son of the Premier, for a sum of £76. Subsequent enquiries following a spirited attack in the House of Representatives by Fisher failed to locate the voucher, though the Post Office officials swore on oath that they had seen the voucher. A voucher for a similar sum payable to the firm of J. Niven and Company, whose chief clerk's signature was "R. Snedden" was produced. Taylor pressed for the officials to have access to all departmental records to support their case, but the initiative in the case was taken by Fisher. The delay in announcing the decision of the Magisterial enquiry was a subject for Taylor's venom.

Though he had largely overcome a certain rashness that he was prone to show in debate in his earlier years, a heated reply to an interjection during a speech from the floor of the House of Representatives involved him in a libel action for damages with Captain R. J. Seddon, whom he accused of cowardice in the Boer War. Taylor showed his remarkable powers of clear thinking in his conduct of his own case, and though the jury failed to agree, a majority declared in his favour.29

29 Files of Taylor v Seddon in possession of Mrs. L. C. Horwood.
In 1908 and 1911 Christchurch North returned him as its member for Parliament, and with the Ward Ministry in office, his criticism was less vitriolic. It must not be thought that Taylor indulged in the use of invective. He resorted rather to the method of asking pointed questions that called for immediate confirmation or refutation, or that of the clear, concise statement of complaints afforded by the citation of relevant facts. His opponents point to a bitterness in his spirit. This his friends will not concede. But it should not be forgotten that over many years he suffered from gnawing abdominal pains caused by an ulcer that was ultimately to cause his early death from peritonitis. For years he lived a bustling life between hasty meals and business and in this restlessness of body and mind is to be found the ultimate cause of his death and of some of the bitterness of speech with which he was sometimes charged.

Indeed, many anecdotes are related of his charm as a conversationalist, of which I quote a

30 Oral, from Dr. A. J. Orchard, his physician.
typical example.\textsuperscript{31} On one of his regular visits to inspect the progress being made on the Lake Coleridge hydro-electricity works, his companion in the carriage, a landowner, not aware of Taylor's identity, spent a considerable part of the journey deploring Taylor's views and character, but conversation covered many fields. At the end of the journey the landowner asked Taylor his name, saying he had never enjoyed a morning more, and insisting that Taylor should dine with him. Thereafter he became a firm admirer of Taylor.

In May 1911 he was elected Mayor of the City of Christchurch, mainly on the votes of the labourers of Sydenham,\textsuperscript{32} —the men whom he had consistently sought to deprive of their beer since 1890. In this important office he reached the zenith of his career as a public figure. He now had scope for his undoubted powers of organisation. His vivid imagination linked with a rare dynamic drive and practical common sense brought a new spirit of activity into the conduct of civic affairs. His first energies

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
\item[32] Christchurch Press, May 11, 1911.
\end{footnotes}
were directed towards cleaning up the city. He called upon the citizens to replace their rat-infested bins and refuse tubs with standardised iron rubbish containers, for which he had arranged with a city firm to supply at a fixed reasonable price. One prominent grocer ignored Taylor's personal request that he clean up his yard. When three days had elapsed, council employees did the work and the cost of the cleaning was charged to the firm. One of Taylor's ambitions was to build a Town Hall in Christchurch, having its approaches across the lawns of Victoria Square. Details of the roading scheme envisaged by Taylor are contained in a later chapter of this thesis. It is noteworthy that almost twenty years were to elapse before Christchurch roads were improved in the manner and to the extent he advocated. In his capacity as Mayor, he was responsible for the celebrations connected with the coronation of King Edward VII. Even a hardened and consistent opponent like the Christchurch Press, admits that he discharged the duties appertaining to these with credit.

33 Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
34 See below page 100.
The publication of a small volume in honour of the occasion indicates the fine conception he held of the responsibilities of Empire and the contribution made by the British Empire to the life of the world.

Taylor's untimely death on July 27, 1911 removed a most wholesome influence upon the political life of New Zealand. His death occurred at an age when most politicians are entering the arena of politics. Had he been given another twenty years one hesitates to suggest how deep and widespread his influence might have become. Had he aspired to Cabinet rank, it seems certain the Liberals would have renewed their offer to him, for the acrimony had passed away with the Seddon administration, and Taylor had respect for Sir Joseph Ward and his policy, while for his part Ward recognised Taylor's ability. It is a question whether Taylor would have abandoned his position as an independent member without obligations to any party.

Members of the Labour Party have claimed Taylor as one in the van of the movement when the Party was being formed. But though the Party may be said to have come into existence shortly before

35 Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
his death, yet he had not joined it. He was naturally concerned with many of the plans the Labour Party was to develop, and he was deeply conscious of his affiliations with the working man. When asked to join the Party he stated he could not tolerate the intrigue that seemed to him inevitable in party politics. He was not a member of the Progressive Liberal Association, though he had been referred to as such in the House of Representatives. Essentially an independent, he gave as his reason for refusing Ward's request to join the Cabinet the fact that he considered he had been elected as a critic of the Ward administration and it was his duty to exercise his power of criticism. He believed his electorate sent him to Parliament not as a delegate, but as a representative free to exercise his rights of criticism on each question as it arose and not bound to support a party in all matters. He was too closely concerned with right and wrong to accept the compromises which are an essential part of a successful

36 Oral, R. S. McKenzie
37 Oral, Miss C. Henderson.
38 Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
politician's career. In his early political life he was outspoken and had not secured the confidence of the majority of the people. During the three months he was Mayor he showed a strong desire to work in harmony with all sections of the community except the liquor interests, and won the confidence of the citizens. This might well have marked the opening of a new period in his public life.

In the House of Representatives he had drawn a small group of able young men around him, including F. M. D. Fisher, H. D. Bedford, H. G. Ell, J. G. Smith, and C. Laurensen; but it is unlikely that a man of his independent spirit and rashness in denouncing anything that he considered unjust, dishonest, or depraving; could have become Prime Minister. Many of his cherished ideas would have clashed with parliamentary traditions, for he consistently advocated an executive elected by the House of Representatives on a non-party basis and an elected Legislative Council. 41

40 Parliamentary Debates, Oct. 29, 1903.
The foregoing facts do not make an adequate picture of the man. They do not explain that sense of personal and national loss that stirred countless hearts throughout the country at the time of his death. Nor do they explain the solemn throngs at his funeral. In spite of his non-compromising and intolerant sense of righteousness he had captivated men by his vitality and vibrant personality. He could persuade some men to serve causes they were to abandon after his death. His vision, his mental acuity, his flashing eyes, and his impatience with the slowness with which reforms could be made, caused hard-headed men to act with abounding enthusiasm and strange devotion to this stormy petrel of New Zealand politics. What strange magnetism, what clear intellect, what warmth of human charity drew them, it is difficult to understand. But his friends loved him blindly, and if his enemies were many, he had their respect. To a generation which has not seen political life stirred by outspoken appeals to integrity and honesty, it is stimulating to read the speeches of a public man whose motto might well have been "Righteousness exalteth a nation."
He was one of those rare beings of whom people could write extravagantly. The poetess, Jessie Mackay, writing at the time of his death, could say:

"In life he had but to hold up a finger and the multitude hung upon his every word. Today his hands are folded but a greater multitude gathers than before.... The personal romance was never lacking for a moment; the intense man-power magnified and re-magnified that pulls on the heart as no written word can do, were it the word of pundit or of angel. The lean, livid, brown face, clean-shaven, with its eyes of burning, gypsy fire, and its firm pure mouth - the spare boyish graceful figure; the musical resonant voice - the whole personality of him played on the gathered people like a lyre; and yet not to passionless liking. They struck him as often as they car­essed him. He flashed in and out of parliaments, now at the head of the poll; now flung out on the crest of a wave of clamour; now back again higher than ever. For two decades Christchurch went on making up and un­making up its mind about him in a curious see-saw of emotion. Late - only three months ago - it gave him with a hearty will the highest place and highest honour in its gift...... He often said the thing that stung; He always said the thing that gripped. For discretion's sake there might have been a fighting word left out; for oratory's sake, there was never a re­dundant syllable. The facts rattled

42 The Dead Tribune: By Jessie Mackay. Published in "The White Ribbon", August 17, 1911.
like hailstones, the arguments flowed like lava, and yet there was not one catch phrase or trick gesture. He simply let his thoughts fall into periods. It was this torrential earnestness of his, joined to his trained practicality, his mastery over figures and deductions that told so lastingly on the platform. Spume oratory does not stand twenty years' wear. Still more did the courage of the man, his insatiable appetite for hard knocks and playing a lone hand, appeal to heroic natures."

Even more extravagant is an article quoted in "The Outlook" - the official paper of the Presbyterian Church from a review of a tour of New Zealand in 1906 by a Mr. Wooley, an American journalist:-

"In the centre of these elemental forces for good stands the heroic figure of a man - Tom Taylor of Christchurch, the Savonarola of New Zealand, a giant morally and intellectually, a child of the people, a genius and the idol of the best element of the Dominion, an orator of the first magnitude, a self-taught scholar, a man of affairs and masterly business ability and habits, as keen as James C. Blain, as brave as John P. St. John, and as fine as Frances Willard; deficient, some say, in tact for leadership, but in the midst of a regime of foxy plots and demagogy, it is like a breath of mountain air to catch the flash of his flaming black eyes and the clarion note of his voice and know that he is alive and making trouble ........ Where he walks, vice cowers."

Against this opinion, we set the impressions of a provincial paper published in a leading article

43 "The Outlook", August, 1911.
44 From a newspaper clipping in the possession of J. McCullough, from The Tuaoka Times, Exact date not known.
shortly after the Police Commission of 1897 had submitted its findings:—

"We see him (Taylor) at his best according to his own perverted sense of fairness and right as the advocate of a wild and utterly impracticable doctrine, at his worst and lowest as a witness of the truth, as a political partisan, a public man and a self-appointed teacher of morality and righteousness. He gives everything to the sacred cause of Prohibition, nothing to moderation; he is a man, to judge him on the evidence he supplies of himself, utterly bankrupt of anything wearing the appearance of charitable feeling; his hatred to everything and everybody opposed to his views of right and wrong amounts to a frenzy and appears to be rapidly ripening to a disease. Everyone who holds an opinion contrary to his own..... is base or unprincipled, a knave or a fool, and only those are righteous and wise and capable of the truth and accordingly privileged from insult and approbrium of a foul tongue who agree with him..... Evidence that runs counter to his purpose or opinions he distorts and emasculates and finishes up by applying grossly insulting epithets to the person who had given such evidence."

The above quotations are not included as authoritative, but are quoted to show that opinions upon Taylor differed widely. Especially was this influenced by the viewpoint of the holder upon the subject of Prohibition. Certainly Taylor was not a man to be ignored.
CHAPTER II

TAYLOR AS PROHIBITIONIST.

It was as a leader of the Prohibition movement in Sydenham that Taylor first became known to the general public. Indeed to many New Zealanders he was known only as a national leader of the movement for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors.

It was to be expected that a youth of so practical a frame of mind and possessing such abounding energy as Taylor, should, after experiencing
a religious crisis at the age of fourteen,\(^1\) attempt some social work. He lived in Addington - a workers' residential district. In the nineties the working man had comparatively few amusements, and habits of excessive drinking were commonplace. It was to the home that was ruined by intemperance that he sought to bring help. Those who knew him relate anecdotes of his practical Christianity finding its expression in assisting drunkards home\(^2\) and caring for them.

He persevered with men and women who repeatedly signed pledges to abstain from drinking and repeatedly broke their pledges. The story is told how for months he spent Sunday morning cooking breakfast and cleaning the cottage of one couple whose Saturday night debauch frequently left both dwelling and occupants in need of attention. However much he might persevere in his practical philanthropy, his work was frustrated by the ease with which his converts obtained liquor. Conscious of the futility

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1 Biographical Sketch by L.M. Isitt, "The Vanguard", August 19, 1911.
2 Ibid.
Oral, J. McCullough.
of attempting to reform a man whose everyday habits brought him in contact with easily obtained liquor, he attempted to secure the abolition of all licences to sell liquor in the Eydenham Borough.

Prior to 1890 there had been temperance movements in most of the larger towns of New Zealand. The New Zealand Alliance had been formed as early as 1886, and the Dunedin suburb of Roslyn had elected a Licensing Committee which was pledged to refuse to renew all hotel licences. Whereas the Prohibition movement in New Zealand had been only of minor and local importance, with the election of a Licensing Committee in Sydenham pledged to close all hotels, the issue of prohibition began to occupy an important place in the life of the country. This issue cut across Party politics. Newspapers devoted a column to the activities of the movement, and opinions from prominent men all over the world were quoted in these columns. Leading politicians included the topic in their electioneering speeches and legislation was introduced because of the popular clamour.

The Licensing Act of 1881 had introduced a form of indirect popular control of liquor licences in that Licensing Committees were to be elected annually by the ratepayers. These Committees were empowered to grant to publicans wholesale and conditional licences for New Zealand wine, accommodation, bottle and packet licences. Power to grant or refuse licences was vested in the Committees and included in the Act was a comprehensive penal code; but in practice, police enforcement of the law seems to have been anything but strict. It would seem that committees had the power to limit the number of licensed houses by refusing to renew licences.

In Sydenham the Prohibitionists declared their policy of securing the election of a Licensing Committee whose members would be pledged to refuse all licences. Their assumption that the ratepayers had the right to vote indirectly upon the issue of

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prohibition was later to be tested in the Appeal Court.

The Reverend L. M. Isitt, an able speaker already noted for his advocacy of prohibition, was appointed Minister of the Sydenham Free Methodist Church. Before his unpacking had been completed, Taylor called on him and, seated on boxes in Isitt's study, they formulated their plan of campaign. The rapid success that attended their efforts surprised both enemy and friend. Both men were brilliant speakers, lacking nothing in vigour and enthusiasm. Supporters were won from those who came to their meetings to scoff. A notable example of an opponent attending a meeting and later becoming a stalwart for the Prohibition cause was the Rev. P. R. Munro, who had regarded the programme of these Sydenham enthusiasts as impracticable. 7

In 1894 L. M. Isitt wrote of Taylor: 8

"Although a young man he has crowded into his life an amount of philanthropic work that would do credit to a veteran. Self-educated and an enthusiastic Liberal, he is emphatically a man of the people, and

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
While his intolerance of half measures and distrust of all who put faith in them earn him hosts of enemies, his splendid ability, both as a speaker and organiser, his self-sacrificing life and absolutely tireless energy, have won him the admiration and confidence of thousands, and entitle him to recognition as one of the chief helps to our present position."

Every street in Sydenham was mapped out by Taylor, and a band of workers so organised that if necessary a circular could be printed in the morning and delivered to every house in the borough by nightfall. Before mid-day a flag would be hoisted at the headquarters of the movement and workers returning home in the evening would take the circulars for distribution. All Taylor's campaigns are marked by the energy and the attention to detail that characterised this, his first campaign. Electoral rolls were checked minutely, and many anomalies were discovered and removed. Opposition was keen. A prominent brewer stated he had sub-divided a certain borough

9 Murray and Cocker. page 60.
10 Ibid.
acreage among trade supporters who were consequently included on the electoral roll. Taylor instructed a land agent to obtain an option over the entire sub-division, and a bogus sale was detected.

A fortnightly paper named "The Prohibitionist" made its first appearance in June, 1890. Taylor served as both Editor (for a limited period) and Secretary, and he retained his association with the paper until it was absorbed by the paper of the New Zealand Alliance, "The Vanguard", in 1903. A publication of twelve pages, it soon found a demand outside of Sydenham, where it was distributed free, and shortly after its establishment, it reached a circulation of 25,000. Its purpose was:

"To strive by stern facts and honest arguments to demonstrate to the ratepayers of 'The Model Borough' that this sweeping action would be a safe and wise policy for them to pursue, and that it might be done quietly by returning thorough-going Prohibitionists on the next licensing bench."  

The articles in this paper fall within three main groups; comments on and examinations of

11 The Prohibitionist, February 28, 1891.
12 The Prohibitionist, Oct. 6, 1894.
13 The Prohibitionist, No. 1, June 14, 1890.
local activities such as the Working Men's Club and Mutual School of Art; detailed accounts of accidents in which liquor may have played a part; and quotations from prominent citizens' speeches in America and England. Personal attacks upon publicans and brewers were frequent and unrestrained. Sinner and sin alike were condemned in terms that are almost libellous.

The rapid success of the campaign was remarkable. At the election of 1890 Prohibitionists received one third of the votes cast. A year later, with no appreciable change in the population of the district, two-thirds of the votes cast favoured these same candidates. The following table sets out the comparative voting in 1890 and 1891. 14

14 The Prohibitionist, April 25, 1891.
The Christchurch Press, April 12, 1891.
Vigorous representations were made on behalf of the licensees of all hotels and their threat to initiate litigation lasting over three years was put into effect. Four hotels had been closed immediately; but the Supreme Court ruled that the Act did not grant the Licensing Committee
the right to prohibit but to regulate only. Against this the Licensing Committee appealed to the Court of Appeal, and its decision was regarded as upholding the Committee which then refused the licences of the hotels which had remained open.\footnote{The Prohibitionist, April 25, 1891. Oct. 6, 1894.} The liquor interests brought a new action in the Supreme Court\footnote{N.Z.\textit{Law Reports}, Quill v Isitt and others, 1891. p.663, Vol.10, 1892.} which again declared that the Committee could not prohibit the sale of liquor. The Appeal Court upheld this decision. After four years' litigation which cost them over £700, the "No Licence" Committee was defeated.

It was clear that the Prohibition stalwarts had read too much into the Licensing Act of 1881, under which it was not possible to secure Prohibition by a popular vote. The expenses of litigation had been heavy and were met by popular donation. The need for some change in the law was apparent and Taylor and Isitt embarked upon tours of the country agitating for an amendment to the Licensing Act to
confer upon the people the right to decide the question of Prohibition by popular vote. Thus Taylor was launched into political activity in order to further his work for Prohibition. Interest throughout the colony grew rapidly, and in response to the popular pressure, Seddon introduced a bill into the House of Representatives which aimed at conceding as little as possible to the Prohibitionists.

As the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act of 1893, it made the electoral boundaries and qualifications the same for parliamentary and licensing elections. Control of licensing passed from the ratepayers to the electors and the principle of direct voting was recognised.

The much discussed claim of the publican to compensation if his licence was not renewed was not recognised in the law. The number of licences could not be increased unless in a country riding there had been a large increase in population, when the Governor might grant the necessary authority. Where there had

17 Thornton. page 15.
been a population increase of 25%, a poll of the electors might be taken to find if more licences should be granted. The publican's bottle licence could be renewed only after the electors had decided whether the number of licences was to continue, to be reduced, or whether any licence should be granted. The poll was to be taken every third year on a day decided by the Returning Officer. This was amended by the Triennial Licensing Committee Act of 1899, which ordered that the poll should be taken on the day of the General Parliamentary Election.

The Prohibitionists were far from satisfied with the Act of 1893, and Taylor, as one of the leaders of the movement, denounced the clause which provided that the returning officer was to declare the poll void if the votes recorded did not exceed half the number of voters on the roll.\footnote{18}{Thornton, op.cit.} \footnote{19}{Election Speech, The Lyttelton Times, Oct. 30, 1896.}
Taylor for the next decade, both from the public platform and from the floor of the House. As he expressed his view:

"Your vote should be worth the same as any barmaid's. It is not right that three of your votes should be required to equal two of theirs." 20

The Prohibition movement grew steadily from the time of the Sydenham licensing Committee campaign in 1890 until the outbreak of war in 1914. This growth was due in no small measure to the fact that the leaders of the movement could command large audiences wherever they called a meeting. With the passing of a leader like Taylor, whose speeches were so powerful and compelling, the movement could not resist the freer attitudes of a post-war world in which national prohibition had been discredited by the contempt for law and order shown in the United States of America under prohibition laws.

Taylor's gifts for handling a public meeting

20 Ibid.
21 Murray and Cocker. page 60 et seq.
are illustrated in the following anecdote. A rotten egg had been thrown by a hostile member of a crowd whom he was addressing. The aim lacked nothing in accuracy. As the crowd's ribald laughter died away, he said: "That's the best argument my opponents have produced, and it's rotten."

It was at considerable personal sacrifice that Taylor persisted in his efforts to secure Prohibition. One of the earliest errands assigned to him when he started work was to fetch beer for the workers from the public house. This he refused to do. He had become Manager of J.M. Heywood and Company's carrying business and was offered a partnership on condition he curtailed his prohibition activities. He resigned. Never did Taylor give all his energies to building up his business, for his time and brain were ever at the service of the public. Lecture tours throughout the country

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22 Oral, J. McCullough.
24 Oral, J. McCullough.
absorbed time that most men would prefer to devote to their families. On one such tour he was to become involved in a libel case brought by the Manager of Coker's Hotel, Captain Thomas Popham, whose claim for damages amounted to £1,000. The Court awarded £50 damages, while the evidence produced by Taylor injured seriously the reputation of one of the best hotels in Christchurch. 25

The "Matamata Ensign", reporting Taylor's speech had said: "Coker's Hotel, Christchurch, one of the finest in New Zealand, had been proved to be a common brothel and had been one for years."

Threatened with an action for libel, the proprietors of the paper published an apology. During the hearing of the case, the reporter deposed he had not taken shorthand notes, and on other matters connected with the speech, his memory was not good. Evidence as to what Taylor actually said, is conflicting. Taylor himself admitted that in speaking of hotels in general and the poor conduct of them, he made reference to Coker's Hotel, the front part of which

would rank as high as any he knew in the Colony, but
the George Street bar was little better than a
brothel. Taylor made no attempt to defend himself
upon the grounds of inaccurate reporting as he
had strong reason to do, but endeavoured to prove
his assertions. The jury awarded damages amounting
to £50, not £1,000 as Popham had claimed. In June
1895 the leaders of the Protestant Churches had pro­
tested to the Licensing Committee about the conduct
of Coker's Hotel, without securing any improvement.
Taylor's evidence discredited the hotel which lost
its prestige in the community.

At the general Parliamentary election of
1899, Taylor's defeat was due partly to the anti­
prohibition vote which had been whipped up by vested
liquor interests, though it is not contended that
all those who opposed him did so because of vested
interests.

It is remarkable that in spite of his whole­
hearted activity on behalf of the Prohibition party,

26 Speech by Taylor, August 4, 1896, reported in
The Prohibitionist, Aug. 22, 1896.
he retained the affection of the working people
whose demonstration of sorrow at his passing, even
more than their support which won him the Mayoralty
of Christchurch, showed they appreciated his gen-
une interest in promoting their welfare.

Though he was approached by the temperance
movement in Victoria he confined his work to
New Zealand, except for one lecture given in England
at the request of L. H. Isitt.

For some years after his death, Taylor's
life inspired the advocates of national prohibition
who lost no opportunity to quote the message Taylor
dictated for them from his death-bed: 28

"I want to say that this year of 1911
is our year of emancipation if we are true
to God and our opportunity. They call us
fanatics, but National Prohibition is worth
living for and worth dying for. I have had
a happy life and it has been full from be-
ginning to end. I am very tired. I know
I shall be happier where I am going, but I
am glad to think I have lived out every
moment, and that I have always tried to do
what is right."

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27 Letter from W. H. Holmes to Taylor dated April 6, 1906; In possession of Mrs. Horwood.

28 The Vanguard, August 17, 1911.
CHAPTER III.

TAYLOR IN POLITICS. A CRITIC.

Taylor was thirty six years of age when he contested the Christchurch City seat successfully at the general parliamentary election in 1896. ¹

In February of that year he had been defeated in a by-election. ² He was defeated at the next general election of 1899, but was returned to the House in 1902. At the next contest for the Christchurch North election, following a rearrangement of seats on a district basis, he was defeated by Charles Matthew Gray; but in 1908 he was returned for the same electorate

¹ Hansard, 1897
² Christchurch Press, 14 February, 1896
by substantial majority. It is of interest to note that he is the only member holding Liberal views who has been elected to Parliament by the Christchurch North electorate. His defeat in 1899 may be attributed to the unpopular attitude he adopted towards the Boer War. In 1905 his animosity with the Premier culminating in the Voucher Case together with a strong anti-prohibition vote caused the public to reject him. It was inevitable that a man who held views as unusual as his and who expressed those views so vigorously and uncompromisingly should have a career marked by failures as well as successes. Taylor would not have regarded these defeats as his own failures and was never bitter over them accepting them as incidents in the campaign he was fighting.

In Parliament Taylor appeared as a critic rather than as a constructive legislator initiating reforms. He was forced into this role by reason of his status as an independent. But in no sense could he be considered akin in opinion to the Conservative opposition who are to be found applauding his trenchant indictments of the Seddon administration.

3 Press during October, 1899
Strangely, the Christchurch "Press" which consistently opposed him throughout his career welcomed his entry to Parliament because he would bring strength to the critics of the Seddon government. 4 This he certainly did and his third speech initiated proposals for a reform of the Police Force. 5 Taylor was not opposed in principle to the liberal legislation which Seddon introduced; but he was ever ready to raise his voice against Seddon's administration.

Often Taylor is to be found advocating on the public platform reforms for which credit has been given to Seddon who later yielded to the popular pressure which prompted him to introduce legislation.

--- James Drummond writes of Seddon 6 ---

"In many cases the measures he took in hand were not his original ideas and attempts had been made to pass them before; but he watched the advance of public opinion and when he realised that the time was ripe he lost no time in giving the people what he believed they desired. He made measures his own, remodelled them, and successfully piloted them through their stages, so that now they stand as his."

Taylor did much to create and crystallize

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4 Christchurch Press, 5 December, 1896
5 Parliamentary Debates, 30 September, 1897
public opinion which the Premier was ever alert to lead when a sufficient body of opinion had been formed. Taylor's place in this democracy was that of a builder of enlightened public opinion whose demands he voiced in the very ear of the Government. By his speeches from the public platform in election campaigns and tours of the country, as when he addressed gatherings in every town in Taranaki in three weeks during March 1899, 8 by his persistent advocacy in "The Prohibitionist", and by the pointed questions he asked in the House of Representatives, Taylor was constantly placing his views before the people of New Zealand.

The introduction of Old Age Pensions is associated with the name of Seddon who introduced a Bill in 1896 which provided a pension of seven shillings and sixpence per week for those over the age of sixty five whose income did not exceed £36 per annum. Prior to this Taylor was associated with Henry George Ell. M.H.R. who had done much to place the advantages of such a scheme before the public. Taylor differed from Seddon on this issue in that he advocated a

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7 Notes for by Election Speech, January 1896 in possession of Mrs. L.C. Harwood
Christchurch Press, October, 30 1896
Prohibitionist No. 152, 21 March, 1899

8 Prohibitionist No. 149, 8 February, 1896
universal old age pension contending that the resources of the country were equal to the increased demand. He urged that any limitation on the earning power of pensioners would not be enforced but would only promote dishonesty. 9 Eight years later in 1904 he was pressing Seddon to have homes, built and maintained by the Government, available for pensioners. The Premier contended there was not sufficient evidence to warrant making such special provision. 10 In 1905 he moved an amendment to the Old Age Pensions Amendment Bill increasing the amount payable to old age pensioners, granting pensions to women at the age of sixty not sixty five, and exempting the value of pensioner’s bona fide homes in assessing the income of pensioners. Seddon voted against this, but introduced a similar Bill later in the session when elections were drawing near. Taylor was alert in watching for any abuse of the Pension Scheme and pressed for an enquiry as to why the amount paid out per head of population should be over 15/- on the West Coast compared with 8/- in almost all the other districts.

9 The Christchurch Press, October, 30 1896
10 Parliamentary Debates, August 10, 1904
Parliamentary Debates, July 10, 1905
The establishment of Technical Colleges in New Zealand is usually attributed to the Seddon Government which introduced legislation providing for their establishment in 1900. Four years earlier Taylor had urged the establishment of Technical Schools basing his arguments upon the progress Germany was making in its industrialisation and the influence a technical type of training was having on its young men. He criticized the existing school system in New Zealand as being "too bookish", and he advocated the opening of the High Schools to a larger number of boys and girls. Nor was Taylor content with Seddon's Bill which he considered merely one step in the right direction. He believed that education expenditure should be increased by £100,000 and desired technical education to be placed on an even broader basis. His views upon education conform closely to the popular views held twenty five years later and it is not surprising to hear him urging higher salaries for teachers in order to secure better staffing and pointing out the need for finding what activities each pupil

12 Notes for election Speech 1896 Christchurch Press, October 30, 1896
13 Parliamentary Debates, November, 2 1904
excelled in, thus implying the introduction of some form of vocational guidance.

In his election speeches of 1896 Taylor expressed the need for a State Fire Insurance Department which would serve as a check upon the high premiums insurance companies were asking and in 1905 his voice was raised supporting a Bill which was to authorise the formation of this Department.

Mention has already been made of the Sydenham Licensing Committee elections which caused Seddon to introduce the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill of 1893. This measure, which was essentially a compromise, was opposed tenaciously by the Opposition. It took some twenty hours to pass twelve clauses in Committee. Though Taylor was not a member of Parliament, at the time, it was his activity in the Sydenham Borough that forced Seddon to take some action, though the Act certainly did not satisfy the Prohibition supporters.  

Taylor deplored the three fifths majority required to declare no license in an area; but he recognised that a great gain had been won with the recognition of the right of popular vote to determine whether or not a

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14 The Prohibitionist, 26 May, 1894
no-licence area should be declared.

There was limited scope for his Prohibition work in Parliament and he seems to have understood that nothing would be achieved by lengthy speeches. His contribution to a bill which aimed at abolishing barmaids was negligible. When Seddon brought forward his Licensing Acts Amendment Bill 15 of 1904 he voted in favour of the bill but felt no warmth for the measure which he considered was too much of a compromise. When there were irregularities in the polling at Newtown in 1903 he pressed for an enquiry into the matter. 16 Small incidents meriting the attention of the member of parliament were watched zealously but the time was not ripe for any ambitious undertakings and Taylor was prepared to wait until such time as a vigorous public opinion would force action by the Government. Between Seddon and Taylor there developed a bitter personal conflict in which neither man spared his adversary. The fact that Seddon had been a publican was possibly a ground for Taylor's opposition to him; but it was the opportunistic nature of Seddon's political views that made cooperation between them impossible. Taylor always acted

15 Parliamentary Debates, 15 August, 1903
16 Parliamentary Debates, 18 August, 1904
rigidly upon his personal conception of right and wrong; whereas Seddon was more concerned with interpreting and registering the will of the electorate in legislation. It was Seddon's administration that Taylor attacked not his legislation. Year after year he hammered away in the cause of integrity in government and a clean administration.

In a speech to the House of Representatives on June 30, 1905, he charged Seddon's administration with neglecting sound principles of government. His grievances of the last decade had reached the climax; but the incident immediately arousing Taylor's ire was the appointment of one Bird, who had been dismissed for bribery from the office of Magistrate, to the responsible post of Returning Officer for the Buller electorate.

Taylor saw, as he always seems to have done, beyond the incident to the general principle involved. A Parliamentary correspondent describes the occasion.

"Adopting his favourite pose, one foot on his couch, his body bent forward and his papers in one hand, leaving the other hand free for

17 Parliamentary Debates, 30 June 1905
18 Press, July 28, 1911
animated gestures with which he emphasised his points, he rushed into a brilliant speech of the most intense and damaging criticism to which the Seddon Ministry had ever been subjected. It was the high water mark of denunciatory eloquence. In language that could not possibly be called violent and in level conversational tones with something of a ring in them he poured his criticism with such shattering earnestness that his speech had the fire and momentum of a thunderbolt. The people in the galleries ceased nodding and yawning and sat up and members reclining on their couches sat up too. The galleries craned forward, every spectator immobile and breathless. In silence that seemed to deepen minute by minute the ringing rapid voice hypnotised the whole house. The Ministerialists grew redder and redder and finally lapsed to a grave anxious helplessness. The Prime Minister turned half aside in his seat, away from the Speaker and leaned forward with his head supported on one hand, grey and immobile. Sometimes Mr. Taylor would laugh a short bitter laugh, jerk up his head and turn the end of the sentence into a sweeping blow of invective - no interjections, no cheers - only silence, with that pitiless voice flashing like lightning. Suddenly with a sharp sonorous burst of rhetoric, the speech ended."

It is apparent from the text of this speech that his power was derived from clear thinking and sharp expression of his thoughts though he had great oratorical skill, as the following quotation shows:—

"We cannot trust a man (Bird) who will make such use of the great power entrusted to him

19 Parliamentary Debates, June 30, 1905
by this democracy. We are not going to have our affairs handled by a man who has been bought and may be bought again."

This direct statement is followed by three more instances of unworthy appointments to responsible offices. Then Taylor's attack is redirected to those responsible for the appointments and Seddon, the dominating figure in the Liberal Government is accused of choosing Ministers of limited ability who were unlikely to question his decisions.

"The essence of Cabinet making in the last twelve years has been shown in the fact that every appointment has been of a character that tended to preserve and perpetuate the personal power of the Premier .... he has appointed members of poor calibre so there might be no danger of their challenging the right honourable gentleman's personal power."

Taylor hastened to except the Minister of Railways, Sir Joseph Ward for whom he always expressed respect.

Repeatedly Taylor asserted that the dominating influence of the Premier affected the government's administration adversely because he concentrated a large number of offices with the result that the various departments were not given the time required for efficient administration. 21

20 I bid

21 Parliamentary Debates, September 2, 1904
Because of this lack of attention to detail on the part of ministers, deputations to the Premier were frequent, and although these were received courteously and sympathetically, Taylor contended there would be no need for the deputations if the various ministers were efficient. He accused the Premier of enjoying powers of patronage and appointing inferior men to responsible posts to preserve that patronage. He attributes the decline of the Liberals to the growing influence of Seddon. There can be no doubt that he had gathered into his own hands a concentration of power the like of which no other New Zealand politician has held. Though we need to remember that the Government Departments were very much smaller then than they are today, Seddon himself held the portfolios of the Treasury, Labour, Defence, Government Insurance and Public Trust, Education, and Immigration. Certainly the Liberals were less vigorous than when they first came to office but it is not unusual for any government to spend itself in its first years of office. Taylor's view is quoted:

"In 1890–91 the Liberal Party in the country was a real force. They were then men in live touch with these questions; thousands of them who knew what they wanted; and the Liberal party came into power knowing what these men wanted and the people believed the Liberal party was strong"

22 Parliamentary Debates, September 2, 1901
enough to give them what they were entitled to.

But as time went on the principles of 1890 have gradually given place to the personality of the Right Honourable, the Premier, and this is what has happened. You no longer at the hustings inquire of a candidate to the Liberal ranks whether he believes in this or the other economic principle; it has been held enough that he declared he believed in Mr. Seddon. That has been the party badge - the hustings cry. And now that the Premier has lost his creed, now that he has consumed all the political energy he ever possessed, now that we know that he has been a political sham, a time server and that he never had in him any true political convictions, what is the position of the Liberal party? It is destitute, it is absolutely impotent and when it is met with a vigorous attack upon its fundamental principles by the Opposition it cannot, because its leader cannot, fight. The Liberal party have now no convictions, no ideals, no legislative proposals, no reforming energy and a fresh set of Liberals must come in or we may have to suffer for a short time the reign of a party in whose vague proposals I do not think the country has any confidence."

Taylor recognised Seddon's histrionic ability and considered it made him all the more dangerous.

It is difficult to judge if all the state departments were in the chaotic condition he asserted they were in, but his claims were substantiated where the police force was concerned, and the Seddon Taylor libel action does not reflect to the credit of Seddon as a politician of integrity.

"The Premier's personality has corrupted his party ...... one is almost afraid to refer to administrative matters for fear that the powers that he should deny you some measure of reform
you are pleading for in another direction."

It was Taylor's ability to examine an entire situation from a particular circumstance that made him such a formidable critic. In speaking of the condition of the State Mental Hospitals Taylor is most lucid. An assertion is made, supported by a wealth of evidence culled from official reports and personal examination of conditions. Against this evidence is set the opinions of experts from America and Europe. The complaints specified are:—lack of reception wards; no adequate classification and segregation of various types of cases; the likelihood of the atmosphere to stimulate insanity rather than cure it; absence of hospital wards; overcrowding resulting in poor ventilation; and the absence of a nurses' home. Each attack is supported by statistics and incidents that make clear the need for improvement. In the face of such attacks as this, remedy had to be sought and offered. But to Taylor most of the evils existing in the country were attributable to inefficient administration which had its origin in the Premier's desire to preserve his personal power.

Not all Taylor's shafts were driven home as

23 Parliamentary Debates, 3 July, 1903
when he accused the Premier of abusing his privilege of free use of the telegraph service to convey reports of party speeches to newspapers. His request that an enquiry be held into the alleged use of the telegraph by members of the Premier's family was answered by direct denial and no further action. Sharp personal attacks were frequent; for the influence of Seddon was so strong that it was difficult to attack the administration without attacking the personality who dominated party and parliament. But Taylor was no common politician dealing in invective. He avoids reference to personalities except in his references to Seddon and even then his speeches are studded with impersonal observations. In one such speech we find

"No man can administer the affairs of the colony or the affairs of an organisation above his own moral level. He may legislate on a higher level but he cannot administer above it."

The feud between Seddon and Taylor may well have been the dominating fact in what has commonly been called the Voucher Case which stirred the entire country in 1904. Four officials of the Post Office -

24 Parliamentary Debates 26 October, 1904
28 July 1905

25 Parliamentary Debates, 9 June, 1904
Joseph Willis, Thomas West, W. J. Larcombe and D. H. Lundon - claimed to have seen a Voucher covering payment of £76 to Captain R. J. Seddon, son of the Premier, for reorganisation of Army Stores.

They mentioned the matter to P. M. B. Fisher, who, suspecting misappropriation of public money, raised the issue in Parliament. An enquiry was ordered. No voucher covering payment to R. J. Seddon was found; but a voucher signed by "R. Sneddon" for J. Niven and Co. by whom he was employed as Chief Clerk for a similar amount was found. The four Post Office employees after being suspended for some time were dismissed. The issue is confused. Some contend the voucher was sent through the Post Office in order to ascertain where Taylor obtained information relating to public matters. 26 There is nothing to justify this contention in the findings of the enquiry.

Indeed it appears alien to the character of Taylor to use such methods of obtaining information. One view advanced is that one official found a blank voucher signed in a sheaf of completed vouchers and in an effort to discredit the Seddons, typed in the details on it which he showed to his fellow workmen whereupon he destroyed it. He then communicated the matter to Fisher. It is difficult to reconcile the

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26 Oral, R.S. MacKenzie, T.W. West and J. McCullough
definite statements of those experienced officials who swore on oath they had seen the voucher in question and stake their careers upon their action with the entire absence of any such document when enquiry was made. Another current view was that Captain Seddon had misappropriated the funds and his father had secured the removal of the voucher before an enquiry was held. I find nothing to support this view. Taylor was prominent in the debates in Parliament and popular opinion seems to attribute to him the conduct of the case. His speeches do not support the idea. Fisher took the initiative though he conferred with Taylor who advised him to press the matter in the House of Representatives if he was sure his witnesses were reliable. 27 Taylor pressed for a judicial inquiry open to the Press after a Departmental Inquiry had been held; and urged that the men concerned have access to all relevant files to support their case. His concern in the case seems to have been to protect the interests of the four officials who were his constituents and remained suspended for a lengthy period without being given an opportunity to establish their case.

27 Parliamentary Debates, September 7 1904
"There are four of my constituents involved in this matter. If I could find any grounds for believing that they are not honourable and reliable men, if I could find any evidence that their memory in a matter such as this is likely to play them false, I should not advocate their cause but I find at no point can these men be successfully impeached. They are men of long service, they are men of high character, they are men of exceptional capacity for their work and have been selected for their positions because of their capacity. When I find that nothing has shaken their testimony, I discharge my simple public duty in defending them before the House."

The men failed to establish their case and were dismissed. Taylor used his power as a speaker to secure for them the opportunity to establish their case.

The duel between Seddon and Taylor was embittered by the ardour of their respective supporters. In 1903 Captain R. J. Seddon brought an action for defamation of character against Taylor. During a debate on an Impeachment Supply Bill in the House of Representatives he had been championing the cause of Captain F. M. B. Fisher who had been dismissed from the Civil Service Rifles after being court-martialed

28 I bid
29 T. W. West, Oral
30 Writ issued by Supreme Court, 14 May 1904
for writing to The Lyttelton Times on the subject of "Patriotic Funds". In a heated debate the following words were spoken:

"Taylor:— He was an officer against whom not one word had previously been said and had a most excellent record.

Seddon:— You had better not go too far.

Taylor:— The Premier need not talk to me like that. I say the Premier had better not go too far. I may have a great deal more to say about another Court that was not held in New Zealand about which I can give some interesting information ...... and it will rankle in his mind for many a long day."

Immediately following the debate in a corridor leading from the chamber Mr. John Duthie M.H.R. touched Taylor on the shoulder and said, "You meant young Seddon didn’t you?" Taylor nodded. Upon this gesture was based the entire action, but Taylor did not raise the issue of a member's privilege in the precincts of the House nor upon the allegation made against him upon which conflicting evidence was given. He set out to prove Captain R.J. Seddon had been guilty of cowardice. The Premier was surprised that Taylor did not retract his statement which at

31 Lyttelton Times, 5 September, 1903
32 Parliamentary Debates, 29 October, 1903
33 Notes on evidence made at Court by Taylor
that time he lacked evidence to support. Taylor was surprised that action was taken by Captain Seddon, but was not one to recant. He combed the country to find the evidence that would justify the idle talk of soldiers. Men were tracked to sawmill camps and assembled from all corners of the country. Some of them were dismissed from their employment for the part they played in the case. Once assembled they had to be shepherded to avoid the persuasive hospitality of former comrades in arms. Taylor conducted his own case so ably that he won the admiration of the ablest legal men in the country. Justice R. H. Ostler (then Judge associate) wrote after the trial:

"Well fought indeed. A very high legal authority thinks you should know the jury having found no malice, you have practically won the action as malice must be proved in a slander action and you should move for judgment on the finding of the jury without delay and perhaps this time get counsel to argue the law of it. You have worked miracles and can leave that part. It is also useful to note the costs of an abortive trial go to the defendant. I also heard Chapman J. agree with my authority that if the jury found no malice it is useless to proceed

* Judge Denniston

34 Letters to witnesses from Taylor
35 Letters to witnesses from Taylor
36 Letter to T. E. Taylor from R. H. Ostler dated 22 December, 1904

Note All letters referred to above are in possession of Mrs. L. C. Horwood.
further, so you're all right. My only regret is that the jury was weak enough to want to whitewash Seddon. You've done more in my opinion during the last 8 days to break the power of Seddon and his evil government than the combined efforts of the Official Opposition for the last 12 years, and next change of Government you'll be our Premier.

Well done!

H. H. Ostler."

The jury failed to agree but upon a number of important points their decisions were as follows:

"Is it true that Lieutenant Dillon (a scout) sent messages to the plaintiff earnestly begging for assistance?

ANSWER: Yes (unanimous)

And the plaintiff refused to send any assistance and a short time afterwards ordered his troops to retire?

ANSWER: Yes (unanimous)

Is it true that the plaintiff thereupon and the whole of the troop galloped some three miles and, although there were two or three positions which they could easily have held and defended and so enabled the scouts to extricate themselves, they passed such positions at a gallop until they were out of range of the enemy's fire and in absolute safety?

ANSWER: Yes (by three fourths majority)"

After the decision both Taylor and Captain Seddon were carried shoulder high by their partisans.
who expressed unbounded jubilation at their successes. An application for a new trial was filed and plaintiff sought a change of venue. Mr. A. L. Herdman (afterwards Chief Justice) wrote to Taylor indicating that Dr. Findley who conducted the case for Captain Seddon intended pursuing the matter. He concluded that letter:

"You have indeed achieved a great victory. I admire your great luck. All through Central Otago I heard your case discussed with great avidity. In defending the action you have done more to expose the hollowness and rottenness of Seddon's methods than anyone else for years. If good candidates could be got for the next election Seddon would fall but only a few good men are prepared to sacrifice themselves."

Taylor took the initiative on Christmas Day in suggesting in a carefully worded letter that they should reach an agreement. His reasons for making the request are contained in a letter to Mr. W. Spragg. The case had cost Taylor £350 and it was unlikely prolonged litigation would secure any more decisive findings.

"It shows Seddon to have made a family appointment devoid of merit and prompted only by greed for social distinction."

38 Letter A. L. Herdman to T. E. Taylor, 10 January 1904
39 Letter T. E. Taylor to Wesley Spragg Auckland 29 December, 1903
After a month's delay Seddon agreed to withdraw his case and an agreement was reached.

The terms of the settlement were:

1. Taylor admitted that had he before making his speech in the House been informed of the evidence afterwards given at the trial he would not have made any statement in his speech implying Captain Seddon had been court martialed.

2. Captain Seddon admitted he would not have brought the action if he had known Taylor had merely answered Duthie's interrogation and admitted Taylor made his speech in the House in good faith.

3. Both parties regretted that there had been occasion to bring action.

4. Nothing in the settlement was to be regarded as an apology by either party.

Taylor's remark in the House indicated a degree of bitterness and gave justification for his opponent's claim that he was too harsh. Seddon's nepotism stands condemned on the evidence. Yet his reply to Taylor's suggestions for a settlement are not to be read without stirrings of sympathy.

"First let me say that this action is not in any sense a personal or political one between you and me. It is what it avows itself to be, an attempt by my son to clear his character. It is his action not mine, and so far as he has taken my advice in the matter, I have been

40 Text of Settlement, February 17, 1905
41 Letters R.J. Seddon to T.E. Taylor, 25 January 1904
uninfluenced by politics or by any bitterness or antagonism born of them. He is my son and I love him and however hardened I may be now to attacks upon me personally I feel any attack upon his honour or the honour of my family perhaps even supernaturally. You have a father's feelings and the reputation as a father, of loving your children."

Less pleasant are the grossly inaccurate reports Seddon had circulated to overseas newspapers as Reynolds Newspaper of London pointed out clearly. 42

"Grossly false reports were telegraphed to this country by Prime Minister Seddon." The terms of the settlement were then quoted. The London "Daily Express" of 17 February, 1905 stated:

"Mr Taylor has withdrawn his charges of cowardice."

"The Northern Whig" of Belfast also stated that all imputations had been withdrawn. "Lloyds Weekly News" 19 February, 1905 stated:

"Mr. Taylor frees Mr. Seddon from the charge of cowardice."

To Taylor the matter was political rather than personal:

"I feel sorry for the younger although I do not think he possesses any more character than he did courage. The real criminal on the whole affair is the Prime Minister who appointed his son to a position that he was incompetent to fill."

42 Reynolds Newspaper, March 5, 1904
Taylor was approached by the Premier not to press his claims and offered to modify his case to attribute the fault to inexperience. The Premier refused to accept the implication that there was anything amiss in appointing an inexperienced youth to a position of responsibility.

Some degree of rapprochement had been attained between the Premier and Taylor by May. The case had revealed nepotism upon the part of the Premier but at the next election it was Taylor who was defeated in his contest for the newly formed Christchurch North electorate.

The only striking achievement that has been acknowledged as almost entirely due to Taylor was the reorganisation of the Police Force. His work was thorough, tireless and pursued until the reforms he considered essential had been achieved.

The Prohibitionists had often complained of laxity in the enforcement of the licensing legislation by the police. It was to be expected that the condition of the Police Force would be raised in the House of Representatives by such a stalwart in the

43 Letter, Seddon to Taylor, May 7 1904
Prohibition cause as Taylor. But few could have anticipated his attack would have been so formidable and couched in such convincing terms as to secure a complete examination of the force by a Royal Commission.

In his maiden speech upon April 7th, 1897, Taylor announced his theme in phrases that were moderate but clear. Pointed questions followed and before the debate on the Address in Reply closed he unleashed an attack in which personal bitterness was balanced by logical vigour. His declaration "the inefficiency of the Police Force is one of the greatest scandals in the country" was supported by quotations of opinions from all the main newspapers in the colony including "The New Zealand Herald"; "The Evening Post"; "The Otago Daily Times"; "The Observer" and "The Lyttelton Times" which was not antagonistic to the Seddon Liberal Government.

The Police Reports over the preceding eight years were marshalled to support his contentions that the Police Force was rendered inefficient by reason of faulty recruiting, inadequate training, corruption, political interference, poor discipline

44 Parliamentary Debates, September 30, 1897
and inefficiency on the part of individuals in the force. Taylor conceded that

"the corruption which he alleged had caused the disorganisation of the force had not grown up entirely under the present administration but had been nourished during the past five years until it had become a matter of public notoriety."

Cases were specified in which Taylor asserted constables, sergeants and detectives were guilty of drunkenness while on duty and because of their offenses had been shifted to other districts. Instances were quoted of policemen of debauched habits; of men aiding and abetting informers; of continuous and flagrant neglect of duty; of systematic and deliberate winking at and hushing-up of breaches of the licensing laws of the Colony. Specific details were given of Sunday trading and the failure of the police to secure a single conviction gave an opportunity for bitter comment.

In an article in the "Review of Reviews", Charles Wilson, a Member of the House of Representatives, asserts that had Seddon replied to Taylor, his vigour and skill would have shelved the issue and no commission would have been appointed. 45 The Hon. Thomas Thompson, senior member for Auckland, "aimiable, even tempered quiet mannered" was Minister for Defence and his reply was

45 quoted in The Prohibitiunist, October 1, 1898
no match for the charges made by Taylor. It was necessary to appoint a Commission to refute the charges made and in November Seddon announced one would be appointed.

Taylor's work now began to multiply and day and night he laboured to secure evidence to be placed before the Commission. In an honorary capacity he conducted the case for the public of New Zealand. He was present at all of the sittings of the Commission and there were some sharp verbal battles with Colonel Hume, the former Commissioner, and Commissioner Tunbridge. It is significant that, in the four centres, evidence was given by the Prohibitionists but the whole approach of the Commission was upon a broad basis and evidence was received concerning pay, promotion and superannuation; and cases of unfair treatment by superior officers were investigated. Almost a thousand witnesses were heard and the report itself, when laid on the Table of the House of Representatives on 7th September, 1898, consisted of over 1,200 pages.

Many of the recommendations of the Commission

46 Appendix to Journal at House of Representatives
Report of Police Commission tabled in House of Representatives 7 September 1898

were embodied in the first report of the newly appointed Commissioner Tunbridge who pressed for remedies for the numerical weakness of the force; the lack of proper methods of recruiting, lack of supervision and the difficulty in retiring the aged and incapacitated.

Not all the charges of individual irregularities which Taylor brought before the Commission were proved but the claims of his opponents that they were baseless are certainly disproved. However the main charges made by Taylor were substantiated and the Commission's Report showed that the country did not possess adequate protection for persons and property. Recommendations for improving the efficiency of the police force included remedying the understaffing, weeding out of aged and infirm policemen complete revision of the system of recruiting, an adequate course of training and all appointments to be made by the Commissioner who should be free from Ministerial interference. A superannuation and pension scheme was also recommended. Taylor was dissatisfied with the Report which he considered was not severe enough in censoring some individuals. As it was,

48 I bid

49 Parliamentary Debates September 7 1898
twelve constables and two commissioners were retired and another of the seven commissioners tended his resignation. The Liberals contended that these reforms would have been effected by Commissioner Tunbridge had no Commission been formed. Taylor and his supporters contended that political influence would have made Tunbridge's work ineffective.

This must be considered the most effective reform Taylor achieved. His vigorous speech and clear analysis of the situation forced the setting up of the Commission. His energy and vigour secured a wealth of evidence for the commissioners to consider. His vigilant attitude in the House of Representatives left no possibility of inaction when the Report had been received. In recognition of his labours a public meeting in Wellington on 16th October 1898 presented him with a cheque for £200.

On February 27th 1902 the Wanganui Chronicle wrote of the Police Force,

"In character, intelligence, in efficiency, in physique there has been a marked improvement."

This is ascribed to the practical reorganisation by Commissioner Tunbridge.

50 Parliamentary Debates, June 30, 1905
"The man who was mainly responsible for forcing the Commission into existence was T.E. Taylor. He collected valuable evidence, faced and fought corruption and inefficiency."

If opposition and informed criticism are essential conditions for sound democratic government then Taylor served his country well in drawing the attention of Parliament to the needs of the hour. He was a strong check on Seddon.

"The Premier has been sailing in political waters for fourteen years. When he started he was clipper built and so were his colleagues, now they are barge-like and we must have them in dock."
CHAPTER IV.

TAYLOR'S IDEAS.

The main issues Taylor fought have been considered in the preceding chapter and some reference has been made to the thinking of this man of the people. Not all his ideas were to lead him into pitched battle during his political career. To complete the picture of Taylor it is necessary to probe into his speeches and find the wealth of ideas that comprise the motivating force of so fearless and vigorous a young Liberal. Of many minor ambitions such as building State houses for working men at the foot of Cashmere little need be said. ¹ But his views upon the

constitution, the sovereignty of parliament, communism, land tenure, and women's rights are enlightened and indicate a breadth of interest that is unusual in a person whose schooling was so restricted.

The Legislative Council was a common subject for his criticism. Whenever that body opposed a bill which he supported, he attacked its position as a non-elected House in a democracy. At times he urged the abolition of the Upper House though he usually confines himself to deploiring its non-elected basis and its failure to exercise its powers of revising bills. To him it was a barrier to progress. Of course he attributed the root of the trouble to the Premier. 3

"He has practically in its present form created the Legislative Council. He has also corrupted it. He has appointed men who are absolutely nothing more than his personal friends with no record of public service behind them."

Because he wished the Legislative Council to be an elected body Taylor was faced with the issue of reforming the constitution. In this his approach was concerned more with practical than legal issues.

2 Parliamentary Debates 29, October, 1903
19, November, 1909

3 Parliamentary Debates 3, July, 1903
He considered that the reform could be made effective by a motion in the House of Representatives following a referendum. This view showed a lack of appreciation of the necessity of passing a Statute to which the Legislative Council must join to pass, and also of the legal sovereignty of the parliament sitting at Westminster.

Though Taylor was not a member of the Progressive Liberal Association he shared many of their views. In particular he was a consistent advocate of an Executive elected by the House of Representatives. His work in Parliament particularly when financial measures were being debated was a sustained protest against what he called the farce of taking power from the hands of the people and placing it in the hands of seven men. Since for nine months of the year Cabinet had power in their hands it was necessary that Cabinet should be elected by members of the House, thus overcoming party strife and, throwing more responsibility upon the peoples representatives and elevating the institutions of government.

4 Parliamentary Debates, 28, December, 1909
5 Oral, Miss C. Henderson
6 (Press, 30 October, 1896
(Parliamentary Debates, 28, December, 1909
Only in times of national crisis have members of the Opposition been admitted to the Cabinet. The idea of an executive elected by the entire House does not seem to have become popular in New Zealand at any time. Taylor's distrust of vesting power in the hands of a small group of men who had to answer to their electorates every three years, has not won popular support since his death. The trend of events in the last ten years has been to give the executive even wider powers.

Taylor's view of the sovereignty of parliament was uncompromising and involved him in considerable unpopularity on occasions when his views upon imperial affairs conflicted with the Government's policy. Because he objected to Sir Joseph Ward giving a dreadnought to the Imperial Navy in 1909 without consulting Parliament, Taylor addressed public meetings in Christchurch which drew upon him very real threats of personal violence. It is apparent that the objection Taylor voiced was not upon the actual gift but upon the making of the gift without referring the matter to Parliament, but this was not clear to those who besieged his home on the sparsely populated

7 Parliamentary Debates July 3, 1903 September, 7, 1905
8 Christchurch Press, April 15, 1909.
Cashmere Hills with intent of doing him bodily harm.

By the time the police had arrived at Taylor's residence he had dispersed them after some exchange of words. Taylor was impetuous in following wholeheartedly what he believed to be right.

"Nor have I ever studied for one moment what effect on my political position any vote I have given would have. I do try to find out what is the right thing to do and I try to follow that course." 10

He was a staunch believer in the idea of social progress. No institution, office, law or custom was viewed as static by Taylor who regarded all society and its institutions as evolving to higher forms and more effective and beneficial influence. One might expect a politician of his radical outlook to advocate a reduction in the salary of the Governor General as he did in speaking to the budget on November 19, 1909. But one is not prepared for the idea expressed in the following extract.

"I believe the day will come within the next ten or fifteen years when this country will consider it is strong enough and important enough to select its own Governor General..... It is very nearly an ornamental position although in the present state of public opinion we must have such an office." 11

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9 Oral, J. McCullough
Taylor accepted the Crown and all the institutions of government existing in New Zealand though he advocated reforms in many of them. His reputation for irresponsible opinions appears to have been created by "The Press." 12

Indeed his opponents were outspoken in referring to Taylor as a rabid radical and a communist. Such speeches as we have record of certainly do not support the view that Taylor was a communist though he certainly advocated State enterprise where he considered the service of any private activity was operating against the public interest. 13

"I go a long way in the direction of what is called State socialism but I do not go any way in the direction of what is called communism. I do not believe in it. I believe it is wrong from its centre to its circumference. You can never hope to establish equality of opportunity; unless you destroy the varied endowments of the race and produce human machines. You must have varied endowments and varied rewards."

These words are part of a speech in which Taylor is advancing the viewpoint that the salaries of judges should be high enough to attract the keenest minds and in supporting the Liberal Government upon the

12 Christchurch Press, April 24, 1911
13 Parliamentary Debates, October 6, 1904
issue Taylor compares the salaries of various sections of the community and urges those of the judge should compare more than favourably with those of other professional men. Taylor advocated the state establishment of boarding houses in the King Country - an un-licensed area - in order to reduce the illegal sale of liquor there by private hotels. But if he was prepared to urge state intrusion upon a field where private enterprise had been unchallenged, in order to effect a moral improvement; on similar grounds he strenuously opposed the establishment of the totalisator he considered that gambling would be stimulated by state approval. His speeches on this topic won for him the support of numbers of bookmakers; but this may be explained by the fact that the totalisator was regarded by bookmakers as a competitor with them for their business. The Seddon government had established State Collieries on the West Coast and they had been useful in developing the mining industry. The city consumer, said Taylor, saw no appreciable cheapening in the retail price. Therefore he urged.

14 Parliamentary Debates, 25 September, 1903
15 Oral, Mrs. Horwood
the establishment of State owned retail depots to replace the system of selling to a private dealer.

"If there is no monetary return the extension of the State's function is wasted."

Closely related to his views on state ownership were his views upon monopolies. The exposures of the American Trust Companies seem to have impressed him deeply. No institution attracted his attention more consistently than the Christchurch Gas Company which he wished to see brought under municipal control. His efforts in this direction were cut short by his death, but he had done much to secure the establishment of a powerful rival under State control in the Lake Coleridge Hydro-Electrical Scheme. He was active in opposing the activities of the International Harvester Trust and a combination on the part of flourmillers to exclude the small mill owner because in both these cases a group of individuals were endeavouring to establish a monopoly. As a check to the charges made by the Union Steam Ship Company Taylor pressed for a State owned ferry service between Wellington and Lyttelton.

16 Christchurch Press, 27 April, 1911
17 Parliamentary Debates, 20 September, 1905
28 October, 1905
18 Parliamentary Debates, 14 July, 1905
19 Parliamentary Debates, 17 December, 1909
"When a shipping company has become so all embracing as it (the Union Steam Ship Co.) is, the time has come when it is really a taxing machine. We cannot protest against its rates. When any private combination reaches that point, it ought to be in the hands of the Government."

Sir Joseph Ward, Minister for Railways considered the Company was meeting all requirements and the time was not suitable for embarking on large expenditure. In 1909 Taylor made a vigorous attack upon "the brewing monopoly." He urged that a tax of ½d per gallon be levied upon the sale of beer. This was too small a levy to pass on to the consumer and would realise £25,000 per annum. Taylor was a liberal with some leanings towards socialism but opposed to large private trusts.

Where the Empire was concerned, Taylor's outlook shows an independence of thought that was often unpopular. He was never in the van of Patriotic sentiment but there is nothing to suggest he was not thoroughly loyal to the crown. He seems to have seen things in their perspective divested of any jingoism. His views upon the Boer War were out of step with those of the general public and contributed greatly

20 Parliamentary Debates, 23 November, 1909
to his defeat at the general election of 1900. 21

"It is not a question of loyalty. We are all loyal. It is a question of Imperialism gone mad."

Taylor opposed the entry of New Zealand into the Boer War on the grounds of the ineffectiveness of a small New Zealand contingent and his doubts as to the real reason for the war. 22 He considered the war was not humanitarian but capitalistic, for Great Britain was asking for the Outlanders a more liberal franchise than she was prepared to concede to her own people. The Boers had made sacrifices to establish a republic where they might follow their own way of life and no trouble would have occurred had gold not been discovered in their territory. To the fortune seekers vast areas of Africa remained open. The Empire was not endangered and England had not asked for troops.

"If England were threatened by a European power it would have been different."

In 1909 he supported proposals for universal compulsory military training and increased expenditure

21 Letters to Editor of "The Press" during October, 1899.

22 Parliamentary Debates, 28 September, 1899
upon defence preparations. 23

His views upon preferential trade are of interest in that they emphasize his distrust of Joseph Chamberlain whom he failed to understand.

"I do not object to preferential trade but I do say that our very first duty - and it must dominate us from first to last - is consideration for our own local industries and their future and if after doing full justice to local requirements and the future of this country of ours we can render any assistance to the manufacturers of Great Britain, I would far rather render assistance to those of the mother country than any other nation." 24

This was not the attitude of a strong imperialist but it might fairly be described as representative of the New Zealand city dweller whose affiliations are with the factory owners and workers of the country. In times of national danger the loyalty hardens and without any high-sounding oratory the men are prompt to express their sense of commonweal in action. Remove the threat of danger, and the working man will be found with Taylor jealous of his own welfare

Taylor saw clearly the limitations of the

23 Parliamentary Debates, 7 June 1909
24 Parliamentary Debates, 25 November, 1903
Colonial Conference 25 idea. He believed that it was not for the Prime Minister to deal with such wide issues as commercial union, colonial defence and immigration by Asiatics. Such matters might be discussed; but the Premier should not bind the parliament or people even to a single item. Moreover the absence of the Premier from the country for a lengthy period, as was inevitable in days of sea transport had a bad effect in holding up the business of the Parliament and the executive. Especially was this so when the Premier was as influential as Seddon whose personality and vigour dominated all activities in the House. He wished to see the Empire maintain its unity but he was anxious that the countries forming the Empire should develop their national consciousness 26 and to this end he urged greater power and increased importance for the High Commissioner in London.

"I look forward to the day when Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand will develop all the qualities of nations, whilst maintaining the close connection with the Mother country now existing."

Some words had been exchanged by Government

25 Parliamentary Debates, 7 April, 1897
26 Parliamentary Debates, 3 November, 1903
and Opposition upon the subject of an invitation from the Secretary of State at Westminster being equivalent to a command. 27 Speaking after much empty verbiage had been exchanged Taylor quoted directly from the invitation received and pointed out the difference in wording between an invitation for a representative to visit London and a suggestion that a contingent of troops should be sent. But here as ever he is not content to deal with a particular incident. He hastens to assert a principle for he was ever concerned with principles. "A democracy should take no command from a Secretary of State." Here is voiced the growing nationalism of the Colony for he was a spokesman of the people, more conscious of their half formed thoughts than they themselves.

He would have no truck with the sham expressions of patriotism which wished to send to London for the sixtieth anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria a specially created Native Volunteer Corps. 28

27 Parliamentary Debated 7 April 1897.
28 I bid.
"Playing at theatricals," he designates it.
"Tantamount to false pretences .......
squandering $6,000 without having any effect
on the counsels of Europe ....... fifty men
would merely earn ridicule."

Taylor's views upon honouring an occasion
of imperial significance find expression in a
seventy page brochure with which the Christchurch
City Council celebrated the Coronation of King
George V in 1911. 29 Edited by Dr. J. Hight the
volume contains contributions by University lecturers
and prominent journalists upon significant aspects of
the empire: - Colonial Policy; Foreign Policy;
Defence; Exploration; Science and Invention; The
Rise of Democracy; The Coronation Oath; The Office
of King; Literature etc. In his capacity as Mayor
Taylor wrote a section upon "Humanitarianism" and
marks the disappearance of brutal treatment of prisoners
and brutal sports; improved industrial conditions and
improved conditions in hospitals, orphanages and
reformatories as the significant contribution of the
British Empire to modern life.

Conflicting ideas on land tenure had divided

29 Brochure issued by City Council, 22 June 1911
the Conservatives and Liberals since the formation of the Liberal party, but by 1904 the Liberal Party leaders were less resolute in their determination to break up large estates. Taylor adhered to the traditional Liberal ideals of closer settlement and was a firm admirer of the principles underlying the Cheviot settlement. He associated the desire to possess land with the desire for leisure, pleasure, and power which the landowners of England had enjoyed in their possessions. The failure of the Liberals to give full effect to their early ideals provoked his scorn.

"What did Mr. Ballance who was in 1890 the dominant leader of the Liberal party declare in connection with the land policy. We were taught to believe that if the Liberals came to power there would be a tax that would press so heavily upon the land monopolists as to force these men to subdivide their land and enable population to take the place it ought to occupy on the land? Has the land-tax accomplished its purpose? The honourable member for Lyttelton has shown the aggregation of large estates is still going on steadily. The Liberal party has so fallen from its original ideals that it has failed to inflict a land-tax that will secure what they said it would secure." Taylor gave the Liberals little credit for what they had already achieved.

30 Parliamentary Debates, 13 October, 1904
         21 September, 1905
31 Parliamentary Debates, 2 September, 1904
The Leader of the Opposition, William Ferguson Franklin Massey, was eager that leaseholders should have the right to purchase their holdings at purchase price of the value of the holding when the lease was first obtained. He introduced a bill into the House which Taylor opposed vigorously. He contended that the leaseholder had no right to be given the land at any price lower than the current market value because its increase in value had been created by the entire community by building roads, drains and bridges. It must not be thought that Taylor was entirely opposed to private ownership.

"There is nothing immoral, nothing ethically wrong in the freehold tenure. This is an economic question. Give a man the assurance that what he produces, what labour he puts on the land and what capital he expends shall be his so far as the fruit of his labour is concerned and you will have successful settlement" 33

Seddon's indecisive attitude was roundly condemned by Taylor who anticipated a division of the Liberal party if the reactionary bill had been passed. The action of the premier that aroused the ire of Taylor was his circulation in the Pahiatua electorate of copies of a speech made by him at Newtown. 34

32 Parliamentary Debates, November 19, 1909
33 I Bid
34 Parliamentary Debates, November, 16 1909
In the city area Seddon had roundly condemned the reactionaries and said to remain silent upon the issue would be cowardly. The copies circulated in the country contained no reference to the land question.

In all his views Taylor was sincere regardless of the attitude of those around him. He was a true liberal, but it was impossible for his strong personality to work in harmony with the other forceful but opportunist Richard John Seddon.
CHAPTER V

MUNICIPAL ACTIVITIES.

In the sphere of municipal activity Taylor made a notable contribution to the life of his fellow citizens by his energy and clear perception in attending to the immediate needs of his city. His contribution was not to be measured by grandiose schemes translated into memorials of wood and stone. Rather he provided his fellow councillors with a reinvigorated and higher conception of their duty. It was unfortunate that a man possessed of his vision and capacity for detailed work should have occupied the Mayoralty of Christchurch for three months only. His successors lacked the capacity to put into action
the ideas that he held for the immediate improvement of the city. For six years he had served on the Sydenham Borough Council, that is from 1896 until the Borough was absorbed in Greater Christchurch. ¹ There he found useful training in public life and obtained experience that was of value to him in his later life. He does not appear to have made any notable contribution to the development of the Borough but merely to have discharged his duties honestly and honourably. Verbal tradition ascribes² to him the naming of many Sydenham streets after English poets and novelists but documentary evidence in support of this I have not been able to find.

Taylor's receptive mind was one of the few in Municipal affairs that appreciated the advantages that would accrue from utilising the hydro-electricity resources of the country. ³ As early as 1899 Mr.

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1 Minutes of Borough Council, 1896-1902.
2 Oral, R. S. McKenzie.
3 "Development of Hydro-electric Power in Canterbury", by L. Birks; Government Printer.
Arthur Dudley Dobson drafted a scheme "for taking water from the Waimakariri River just above the Gorge Bridge by means of a short tunnel through the rock spur forming the southern promontory of the gorge, enlarging a previously existing water race tunnel." By this scheme 5,000 kilowatts would become available for the use of the city. Impressed by the proposals Taylor, then a member of the House of Representatives, brought them before groups of business men who formed a committee to advance Dobson's ideas in spite of official lethargy and lack of interest by the newspapers. The proposals had taken definite shape but action was stayed by the Government reviewing the entire subject of municipal and state control of hydro-electricity resources. For ten years this question vexed the municipal interests and no progress could be made while the battle was undecided. Strangely Taylor made no sustained attempts to press for a decision though he advocated greater scope for municipal authorities. It may be that his interest in the prohibition campaigns made such demands upon his time and thought that the wider approach to the electrical development of the country was either not appreciated or not seen.
Meanwhile, following his defeat in the parliamentary elections of 1899, he visited Europe for the purpose of making a study of the use being made of the hydro-electricity resources in Switzerland where he consulted American engineers who were employed there. His overtures to bring to New Zealand an American electrical engineer were forestalled by the Seddon Government which secured the services of a Californian Mr. L. M. Hancock to report on New Zealand's resources. During the last years of Taylor's life the issue that had delayed development was determined. The Government undertook the development of water power selling the energy in bulk to the municipal authority and retaining the right to supply direct to railways tramways, and to local authorities outside the city limits. City corporations were to retain the reticulation and retail distribution of power in the city area. Taylor had advocated the use of

5. J. McCullough, Oral.
both Lake Coleridge and the Waiakariri River as sources of hydro-electric power. The former scheme was commenced in 1911 after the passing of the Aid to Waterpower Works Act the previous year. No letters appear to exist that indicate the part played by Taylor in the establishing of this scheme. It has been claimed that he pursued the Minister of Public Works 7, the Rt. Hon. Scobie Mackenzie relentlessly, waiting upon him early and late, dining with him (in spite of Taylor's ascetic tastes) in order to secure the Ministerial approval of the undertaking. Once that approval had been given he made regular visits to the site of the power house to ensure that progress was being made. It is difficult to assess the part Taylor played in a political capacity towards the establishment of the Lake Coleridge scheme, but it seems that when the engineers had prepared their statistics and plans, he was a strong force in bringing before the Government and the public the merits of a hydro-electricity scheme.

Following his defeat in the parliamentary elections of 1899 he directed his energy to forming a company to

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7 J. McCullough
R.S. Mackenzie
T.W. Kest

Not supported by F.T.M.
Kissell who was constructional engineer at Coleridge.
introduce electrically driven tramcars in Christchurch. A number of prominent business men, most of whom were prohibition supporters, subscribed to form The New Zealand Electrical Construction Company which obtained the necessary electrical equipment. The life of the company was short for in 1902 its assets and liabilities were taken over by the Christchurch Tramway Board. It does not appear that Taylor himself profited greatly from the transaction though he was Secretary for the Company. His assistant Mr. Frank Thompson was later to become secretary and manager for the Tramway Board.

It may appear inconsistent that a man who held Taylor's views upon public ownership should have promoted a company to provide a public utility. Writing of his visit to Australia he states: 9

"The City Council at Perth foolishly parted with the tramway concessions to a private company. The Company's headquarters are in London. They frankly admit that the system has already proved profitable and it must become more so as population increases. It ought to be made a penal offence for any people to part with rights of this kind to private enterprise."

8 Letter to F. Ferrar from Taylor dated 11 June 1904. "Our contract in this city runs into over a quarter million stg. I am pleased to say the contract was secured as a result of my personal effort."

9 Prohibitionist, 2 May, 1902.
But Taylor's real aim in promoting the company was to accelerate action by the public to secure an electrical tram-car service which he was impatient to see established. His confidence in the success of the undertaking was increased when he saw the electrical power plants working in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

"I am certain that if a steam plant can be made to pay in Christchurch or elsewhere a water power plant connected with the Waimakariri, giving three thousand horse power in Christchurch would prove a source of great wealth to the city if it cost anything less than £350,000. The most carping critic has not suggested that more than £180,000 would be required. ...... it becomes more urgent that the disputed points relating to Mr. A. D. Dobson's Waimakariri power scheme shall be dealt with by the best expert opinion money can buy. If water power is not available in Canterbury to generate the power necessary to supply Christchurch with trams, lighting and manufacturer's power, let it be known and let steam be installed with its costly coal bill; but power means luxury and progress and New Zealand cities must have it if they are to keep any decent position."

The Christchurch Tramway Board used a steam generating plant until such time as power was available from the State Hydro-Electricity scheme at Lake Coleridge.

10 I bid.
To the Prohibitionists his election as Mayor on 27 April 1911 was an occasion for rejoicing, for they considered it enhanced their prestige to have in office one of their leaders. Taylor made every attempt to secure the co-operation of all sections of the community and during his short term of office council discussions are marked by keenness without acrimony. On the eve of his election he declared:

"We cannot make men equal but we can do something to give every man a fair run for what is in him. I will do my best to work peaceably with the Council."

To the newly elected Labour Party representatives on the Council, he recommended patience. A determined effort was made to secure an improved standard of cleanliness in the city. An organised attempt to exterminate the rats that were a menace to public health resulted in over two hundred being caught in a single day. In the City area a more frequent collection of rubbish was arranged for and proper bins were made available to the shopkeepers at a reasonable price. But still there remained the dust nuisance which was aggravated by unpaved roads.

11 Council Minutes, 18 May, 1911
12 Press, 27 April 1911
13 The Press, 18 May, 1911
Nothing Taylor attempted in the service of the public showed his remarkable qualities of imagination, attention to practical detail, persistence in the face of opposition and impatience to succeed better than the road scheme 14 which he prepared for the city. Yet this plan was not carried into effect and not until 1928 was so comprehensive a scheme attempted. As early as 1893 Mr. Eden George, 15 who was a personal friend of Taylor had advocated asphalting five miles of city streets at a cost of £14,500 but this proposal seems to have won little support and excited some ridicule on the part of the public. In 1911 Taylor submitted a much broader scheme in the form of a report to the council after all details had been examined by the city treasurer and the engineer.

With a true understanding of the practical difficulties involved in such a scheme, information relating to prices of tar and quantities available had

14 Council Minutes, 15 May, 1911.
15 Christchurch Diamond Jubilee Publication 1928, P65.
been obtained from Australia and options secured over
tar from Brisbane to Bluff. Reference is made at the
beginning of the report to the urgent need of securing
street surfaces which would be comparatively smooth,
free from dust, and sufficiently durable to justify
the cost of construction. Sources of informed opinion
are detailed for the benefit of council and public
and the relative merits of wood blocking, stone sets
and tarred macadam are considered in detail. Taylor
concedes the point that a surface of wooden blocks
will carry heavy traffic over a much longer period
than tarred macadam, but he weighs against its greater
cost the reduced maintenance costs of the latter
providing restrictions are enforced concerning heavy
traffic. The relative costs of construction were
computed at £20,000 per mile for wooden blocks and
£2,500 per mile for tarred macadam. The former he
considered prohibitive for a city where population
was spread over a wide area. Opposition that
consisted waiting until a decision could be reached
on the merits of tarred macadam is dismissed with the
caustic comment that no action could be taken until
fifty years wear had settled the issue. Local factors
influencing the road conditions are examined with
reference to the nature of local traffic, the advantages of an equable climate and the soil basis of the city. The obvious need for co-ordination between municipal authorities in breaking up road surfaces is foreseen and he advocates legislation compelling property owners to have gas, sewerage and water connections made before road work is proceeded with.

"I suggest that the Council should approach the Gas Company, the Tramway Board and the Drainage Board to ask a representative from each of these bodies shall be appointed to confer regularly with the city engineer as to what works involving interference with the streets are contemplated by any such authorities. Such a committee should succeed in saving a great deal of the expense the city is now subject to in having to repair damage to roads that have recently been put in good order."

Taylor proposed some thirty nine miles of city road should be treated with tarred macadam. To meet the cost of construction it was proposed to raise a loan of £100,000 which would be paid off at the end of twenty five years by means of a sinking fund. At that time the council was spending £3,500 per year on watering roads and £24,000 on their construction and maintenance — a total that composed two thirds of the gross city rates. The Town Clerk certified that the proposals would save from the
general rate £10,750 during the first year of its operation; £8,826 in the second year and thereafter £6,000 per year.

The report was presented on May 15, 1911 and referred to the Works Committee, on May 29 after keen discussion the report was adopted by the Council by eight votes to seven. 16 The question of cost was referred to a referendum of ratepayers. Taylor's personal attitude towards the proposals is to be found in the following quotation.

"I desire a definite plan for the construction of modern roadways over as large an area as possible. I do not desire to speak dogmatically upon the proposal I am submitting but I believe that when it is thoroughly examined by the Works Committee and by the Council and submitted to the test of all the evidence that is available it will prove worthy of acceptance."

He prepared for the referendum by educating the citizens. The Automobile Association was addressed on June 7 and their support assured for they had strong interests in securing good roads. 17

16 Minutes of Christchurch City Council, May 29, 1911
17 Christchurch Press, June 8, 1911:
one of their numbers said "they wished to obviate the necessity of painting their vehicles every three months." Taylor's death in July was a mortal blow to the scheme. His successor as Mayor, Mr. J. J. Dougall submitted a modified scheme based on a loan of £120,000 which would enable 10 miles of roads to be treated with tarred macadam and 30 miles to be painted with tar. These proposals were rejected by the ratepayers. It is doubtful if the scheme Taylor proposed would have met with any better success, but his vigorous speaking and clear thinking may have convinced the ratepayers that the advantages derived from paved roadways justified the expense. But for his death, however, road building in Christchurch would have developed much more rapidly than it did in subsequent years.

From time to time small sections of the citizens of Christchurch stress the need of a Town Hall but the question does not appear to arouse much interest in the general public.

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18 Christchurch Jubilee Publication, Op cit
Taylor was impatient to see a Town Hall erected which would be worthy of the city. His plans for this were not as mature as for the河道 scheme but his main idea provided for the erection of a Town Hall to the north west of Victoria Square upon a site now partly occupied by the private hospital - "The Times." This would necessitate closing a portion of Peterborough Street and the demolition of some dwellings that are not notable for architectural beauty nor dignity. Entrance to the Town Hall would be by way of a drive leading across four acres of lawns, gardens and trees. The even river would serve as an effective barrier to over enthusiastic crowds. It was unfortunate that his tenure of office was cut short before this idea could be submitted to the council for Taylor possessed the driving power which might well have secured for the city a necessity that is now no nearer attainment than it was thirty seven years ago.

The following tribute to Taylor as a public man was paid to him by his successor to the mayoralty, who had been one of his keenest opponents in politics:

19 Oral, Mrs. L. G. Harwood
T. W. West
R. S. McKenzie
He entered the Council with the idea that he could initiate schemes for the benefit of the city as a whole. He stated it was his policy to increase the wages of the worker. He did that on the grounds of humanitarianism. In regard to administration he was decidedly effective. He made himself acquainted at once with the whole details of the working not only of the office staff but the whole details of Council work, and although personally I felt bound to oppose some of his ideas, he always discussed them with the greatest of courtesy and strove to imbue amicable feelings among the co-heilors as a whole. In personal communications with me, he was courteous to a degree. I had never come closely in contact with him till I met him in the Council and to me he disclosed a phase of his character which I had not previously appreciated. His charm of manner was such as would almost win one against one's own convictions. He had very decided views on all questions but in the little opportunity he had in the Council he always gave others every chance of expressing their opinions. He put life into the electors and caused them to take a wider and keener interest in municipal matters than was ever the case in the past. We must all deplore the loss of a personality which though it may have raised him strong opponents also won him the very closest of friends.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION.

Today, thirty seven years after Taylor's death little is heard of him. A generation has arisen that is not even familiar with his name. That name is not associated with any epoch making legislation. He made no remarkable advances in the evolution of our constitution. The idea that drew him into public life is languishing and those causes for which he waged battle, have assimilated his contributions to them and moved onward to new fields. What then justifies this remembering of political battles dusty with half a century's stirrings?
In his time and place Taylor played the man wholeheartedly. In ancient times a mere slave he would have attended to his master's needs devotedly. In medieval times the church may well have drawn his vital spirit and found in his asceticism and honesty; a servant troublesome and provoking to his brethren. But his place was in the restricted arena of colonial politics at a time when men had abundant faith in the power of legislation and the progress of mankind. Unperturbed by the analytical approach of the Psychologists, the men whom Taylor stirred were prepared to accept simple sincerity and act upon it. These men contributed much to the growth of our nation because they acted upon what they believed. To the democracy of his time this unschooled man brought his gifts in the service of his fellows. They were rare gifts; the power to think clearly and quickly; the gift of goading men to act with a single purpose for what they conceived to be good; and the fearless pursuit of unselfish ambitions.

Taylor was acknowledged by men of all parties to be the most effective speaker in the political life of New Zealand. His style of speaking was not that of pure oratory. His gestures were limited, but his
level resonant tones wrought their effect by a sincerity and intensity that burnt their way into his hearers' consciousness. Even his opponents admitted the clarity and precision of his thinking.

The Honourable Mr. George Powlds, Minister of Education said of him 1:—

"Mr. Taylor was a man of intense conviction and in controversy was a very hard hitter. But those who were associated with him in controversy whether as friend or foe, believed in his sincerity - believed that he had convinced himself the cause he was championing was the cause of right ....... and he had no fear of consequences. Mr. Taylor was without doubt the greatest speaker that we have had in the Parliament or on the platform during my experience. I have heard all the great speakers of the Old Land that have won fame for themselves as orators during the last thirty-five years and I have heard Mr. Taylor speak in a manner that compels me to place him second to none of them. Everything that would tend to elevate his fellow men commanded his sympathy and it was part of that passion of his life which compelled the whole - souled devotion which he exhibited to the work of temperance reform in this country."

Sir James Carroll, Acting Prime Minister, spoke in similar terms. 2

1 Parliamentary Debates, July 28, 1911.

2 I Bid.
"Mr. Taylor was one of those remarkable figures that stood out on the canvas of politics - as a man of remarkable talents and abilities; a powerful forceful speaker, a man with strong leanings to Radicalism and therefore a consistent and vigorous friend of the Liberal side and the working classes. Those who had occasion to differ from him in dealing with large questions could not but admire his extraordinary and illuminating intellect. His extraordinary powers rose to the highest standards, verging even to genius. He was friendly withal, and in the hostile arena when arrayed against opponents he showed great fighting qualities. His untimely disappearance from us, I am sure prevented the thorough usefulness that might have developed in Mr. Taylor of which this country and people would have had the benefit and advantage. My opinion is that he was growing stronger in the practical idealization of public duties. His usefulness as a public man was becoming more apparent each day. This country has lost a strong vigorous spirit, a tireless energy and a great champion in the interests of democracy."

It is one of the advantages of a democracy that those who are workers may express their opinions freely and share in the making of their laws.

Taylor, conscious of his working class origins applied his unusual gifts to the service of his fellows regardless of any effect on his own economic well-being. To the Parliament of his time his utter disregard of popular sentiment, his discomforting integrity and unrestrained criticism were wholesome leaven. Without such men democracy cannot function for the greatest good of the people.