

SECTION XV.

THE CLOSING CEREMONY.

THE last night of the Exhibition, the 15th April, 1907, saw the largest attendance of the whole season. Every part of the building was crowded, and the main corridors and the halls were a dense mass of people up to closing-time. More than 46,000 people entered the building that day and evening. Eight o'clock at night saw the arrival of His Excellency the Governor and other distinguished guests for the closing ceremony. So great was the crowd in the Entrance Hall and Main Avenue that it was only with considerable difficulty that the guard of honour, consisting of men-of-war sailors and Volunteers,



A "GOOD-BYE" GROUP OF COMMISSIONERS, WITH THE HON. J. CARROLL,
NATIVE MINISTER.

managed to keep an entrance-way for the official procession. The Governor was accompanied by His Excellency Vice-Admiral Sir Wilmot Fawkes, commanding the Australasian Naval Station, the Acting-Premier (Hon. W. Hall-Jones) and other members of the Ministry, visiting and executive Commissioners, and naval and military officers. The military and naval forces on parade inside and outside the main entrance included the various infantry corps of Christchurch City, two mounted corps, and three artillery companies, besides four officers and 150 bluejackets from H.M. ships "Powerful" and

"Prometheus." The pathway leading to the main entrance, lined with the red tunics of the citizen soldiers and with shining rows of fixed bayonets, was a picture of bright colour under the dazzling brilliancy of the electric lights. Inside the main doorway the guard of honour consisted of the Ordnance Corps, and within the Main Corridor again were stationed the bluejackets from the warships.

As the Governor's procession made its way to the dais at the end of the long hall the bands played the National Anthem and "Rule Britannia," and then the "Tannhäuser" overture was played by the Exhibition Orchestra under Mr. Alfred Hill.

ADDRESS TO THE GOVERNOR.

The overture ended, the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Acting-Premier and President of the Exhibition, read the following address to His Excellency the Governor:—

"To His Excellency Lord Plunket.

"May it please Your Excellency.—We, the Commissioners of the New Zealand International Exhibition, duly appointed, desire, with all dutiful respect, to convey to you, as the representative of His Most Gracious Majesty, the assurance of our continued loyalty to His Majesty's crown and person.

"On the 1st day of November, 1906, it pleased Your Excellency to declare this Exhibition open to the public. As Your Excellency will remember, this Exhibition was opened under auspices and with prospects which promised well for its success. Time has now tried the anticipations then entertained, and the greatest Exhibition this colony has ever had has now run its brilliant course, and reaches to-night its final hour.

"Every test which can reasonably be applied to the success of an Exhibition pronounces this to be one of the most successful ever held in any of the Australasian Colonies. The best proof of this is probably the attendance, and the attendance up to this date numbers no less than 1,970,000. This, considering that the whole population of our colony, including the Native race, does not exceed 975,000, is surely in the highest degree gratifying.

"From its inception Your Excellency has manifested the warmest interest in this great undertaking, and your advice and encouragement have contributed in no small degree to what the Exhibition has achieved. For this we desire to express to Your Excellency our deep gratitude.

"Your Commissioners desire to thank the Press of the colony for their invaluable assistance in making known throughout the length and breadth of these Islands the merits and excellence of the Exhibition, and the advantages of visiting it.

"It is with pleasure we bear testimony to the good work and courteous co-operation of the different Exhibition Committees, the Mayor and Councillors of this city, and other local bodies throughout the colony, who have furthered the interests of the Exhibition whenever and in whatever manner they could.

"It would be difficult to overestimate the arduous nature of the task which Mr. Munro, as General Manager, and his staff have had to perform, and it cannot be denied that the magnificent success of the Exhibition is largely due to his and their attention, organization, and firmness.

"Your Commissioners further feel that Mr. Hill, the leader of the Exhibition Orchestra of fifty-three performers, and the performers themselves, deserve some special mention for the perfection to which he and they have brought that orchestra, and for the extent its music has contributed to the success of the Exhibition.

"It is gratifying to note that the Exhibition has drawn visitors from every part of the world, and has enabled them to see from the exhibits in our New Zealand Courts the variety and extent of our natural wealth and resources. The Exhibition has, further, had an educative influence upon our people—especially our young people—scarcely to

be overestimated; an education not merely confined to artistic subjects, but extending over the whole field of productive and industrial enterprise.

"This Exhibition is an international one, and, being a New Zealand and not merely a provincial enterprise, the colony as a whole has shown a united desire and effort to make this great undertaking a success, and this unanimity has contributed to the paramount end of fostering a national spirit among our people and an unselfish co-operation for a great common good.

"Your Commissioners desire to express their high appreciation of the manner in which Great Britain, Canada, our Australasian and sister colonies, and Fiji have responded to the invitation to take part in the Exhibition, and it is felt that the success of the Exhibition is in a large measure due to the attractive courts established by the Motherland and the colonies.

"In conclusion, your Commissioners trust that the beneficial results achieved not only as regards the people of this colony, but as regards the extension of commercial and industrial relations with other colonies and the Motherland, and the closer mutual intercourse with their people, justify in full measure the wisdom of those who inaugurated this great undertaking, and in particular the foresight and prudence of the much-beloved and eminent statesman, the late Right Hon. Mr. Seddon, to whose energy and determination it mainly owed its birth.

"We would now respectfully congratulate Your Excellency upon the happy auspices under which this Exhibition began its career, upon its brilliant course, and upon this its happy close. We earnestly hope that Your Excellency will, during the remainder of your term of office in this colony, find us the same prosperous and loyal people you found us on your arrival.

"The hour having now arrived when it has been decided to close the Exhibition, we respectfully request that Your Excellency will be pleased to declare it closed accordingly."

HIS EXCELLENCY'S REPLY.

His Excellency the Governor (Lord Plunket) said in reply,—

"Your Excellency, Mr. Hall-Jones, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—The review of the New Zealand International Exhibition's career, which has just been read, is a statement which does credit to all concerned, and I join heartily in the appreciative references to the special assistance rendered by the Commissioners, the General Manager, local bodies, and the Press throughout the colony.

"It would be difficult for me in the course of a short reply to add my quota of praise regarding all those features which have appeared to me specially interesting, such as the pictures, the music, and the agricultural and the educational exhibits. But, while those who collected these displays with such anxious care are about to see them scattered again, they will have the satisfaction of knowing that their labours have not been in vain, and that their best reward is in the permanent improvement, which they will have effected in their various spheres.

"Though I cannot therefore refer in detail, as I should like, to the splendid work which has been carried out in the different sections of the Exhibition, I would ask you to allow me for a few moments to dwell upon the two main results which in my opinion it has achieved—results not only of great importance to the colony, but also to the Empire.

"First and foremost it has strengthened the links which bind New Zealand to her neighbouring sister States. Your visitors from the Commonwealth, from the Islands of the Pacific, and from the great Dominion, will go back with an accurate knowledge of your rapid progress and, I am confident, a belief in your great future. The New-Zealander, in his turn, has learnt through the exhibits of Australia, Fiji, and Canada—and

the courteous and able gentlemen in charge of them—more of the circumstances and importance of his neighbours than he could have grasped otherwise. Indeed, I believe that the wave of feeling which has recently traversed this country in favour of a first-class service between New Zealand and Canada owes its strength as much to the colonial exhibits in this building as to the vagaries of the San Francisco steamers.

“And if this Exhibition has served the noble purpose of bringing New Zealand into closer and more sympathetic touch with other portions of our Empire, it has served a similar purpose in drawing together the people of this colony, or, in the words of your address, ‘fostering a national spirit among our people.’”

“It has given the rising generation an object-lesson in the coming greatness of their country at an age when that impression will remain permanent. It has brought together the gum-digger from the extreme North, and the miner from the wild West, and it has broken down one more rotten rail in the fast-disappearing fence of provincialism.

“Truly such a result is one that confers honour upon the name of its originator, and upon those who have so admirably carried out, despite many difficulties, his Imperial-minded scheme. I shall ever remember with pride that, as His Majesty’s representative, I was privileged to take some part in an undertaking so pregnant for the good of this country and for the general advantage of the Empire.”

His Excellency then presented Exhibition prize awards to the following representative exhibitors:—

British exhibitors, Arthur Day; New South Wales, W. J. Durie; Victoria, E. Nicholls; South Australia, H. J. Scott; West Australia, C. A. Julius; Canada, T. H. Race; Queensland, J. J. Kinsey; Fiji, S. K. Sleigh; United States of America, F. E. Jones; France, G. W. Bennett; Switzerland, L. B. Hart; Germany, A. J. Zech; Denmark, A. Koch; Holland and the Netherlands, G. Payling; India and Ceylon, H. T. Quane; South Africa, M. Harris; New Zealand—Auckland W. R. Holmes, Hawke’s Bay J. Crushook, Taranaki A. McAllum, Wellington T. Kennedy Macdonald, Marlborough G. G. Corry, Canterbury F. Notley Meadows, West Coast G. J. Roberts, Otago and Southland R. Allen.

His Excellency announced that he had sent the following cable message to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

“The Secretary of State for the Colonies.—My Government desire that the following message may be transmitted to the King on behalf of my Government and the people of New Zealand: I have the honour to inform Your Majesty that I have to-day closed the New Zealand International Exhibition. The favourable anticipations Your Majesty was gracious enough to express regarding this undertaking have been fully realised. The attendance nearly approached two millions, and the sympathetic interest shown by Your Majesty and by the Imperial Government have materially assisted in its success. My Government feel assured that not only will the Exhibition prove of permanent advantage, but it will also have aided in strengthening the ties which bind the colonies to each other, the Throne, and Mother-country.—PLUNKET.”

The orchestra played “God save the King,” and the ceremony was over. The doors of the Exhibition were finally closed at midnight.

