Seddon, the Diaz of New Zealand

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WHEN the Colonial Premiers visited England in honor of the queen's diamond jubilee, and later in honor of King Edward's coronation, none of them, with the possible exception of Sir Wilfred Laurier, made such a deep and favorable impression on English statesmen and English people as Richard J. Seddon, the uncrowned king of New Zealand.

At a garden party given in his honor by an American woman well known in London society, he was the lion of the hour. His dignity, his grave courtesy, his social gifts, his distinguished manner, captivated everybody. The greatest men in England were eager for an introduction to him, and listened deferentially to his weighty words.

"Good for old 'Digger Dick,'" exclaimed one gray-haired colonial from New Zealand to another who happened to be present. "He's gone ahead with a vengeance, hasn't he? Who would think that the Hon. Richard J. Seddon, prime minister, privy councillor, doctor of laws, colonial treasurer, minister of labor, minister of defence, and all the rest of it—the man whom queens and princes delight to honor—is the same 'Digger Dick' whom you and I knew when he kept a little roadside saloon up in the mining district, and threw the miners out whenever they got too fresh. He's gone a long way since then, hasn't he? From tavern keeper at the gold diggings to guest of the queen—bravo for 'Digger Dick!'"

Several self-made men rule nations today, but none of them has had a stranger or more interesting career than Richard Seddon, and none has fought his way to the top more bravely under more depressing circumstances. He has been called the Diaz of New Zealand, and certainly he is second only to the great ruler of Mexico in regard to the period during which he has wielded practically absolute power over a modern democracy.

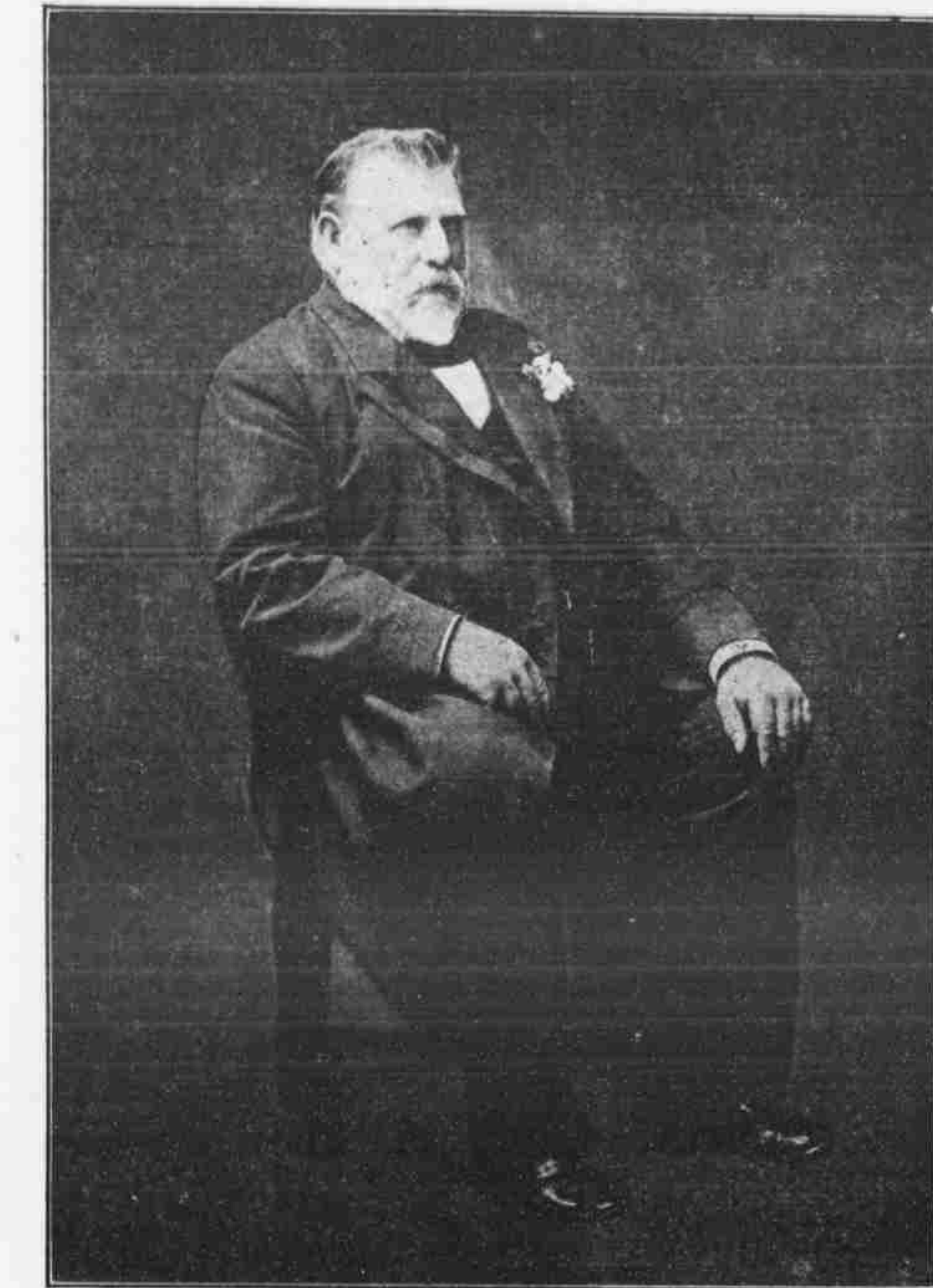
Seddon is the son of a small farmer in Lancashire, England. He learned the trade of a mechanical engineer, saved his money and emigrated to Australia at the age of 18. He meant to be a rich and successful man instead of working for a small wage in overcrowded England.

When he arrived in Victoria, in 1863, the "gold rush" was beginning. Seddon joined it and tried his luck at Bendigo diggings, but gained little except a great reputation as a man able and ready to use his fists. Possessed of immense physical strength and a good knowledge of boxing, he was always ready to fight the biggest bully on the fields.

A week seldom passed without at least one desperate battle. It was not that Seddon was quarrelsome, for he is a man of calm judgment and good temper, but he has a strain of chivalry in his nature and therefore made himself the champion of any miner who was being bullied by a rougher, stronger man. In those early days the Bendigo diggings were lawless places, infested by ex-convicts and the sweepings of humanity. "Digger Dick" had to half kill three or four of them before he made himself respected and put a stop to bullying—at all events, in his presence.

In 1866 gold was discovered in large quantities along the west coast of New Zealand and thither went Seddon, little richer than he had left England. But he had learned one thing—that digging for gold is not the best way of making money at the gold diggings. He started a saloon at a mining camp and soon became the most popular man in the place.

First of all, he ran a small shanty on the roadside and dispensed a little cheap rum and whisky. Money rolled in and he was soon able to run a high-class saloon and to establish a big mercantile business when the diggings became more settled and civilized.



HON. RICHARD J. SEDDON, PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND.

As at Bendigo, Dick Seddon's brawny fist was a powerful civilizing influence. Although a saloon keeper, he had a horror of drunkenness. Any drunken digger who entered his saloon was speedily gathered up in his muscular arms and thrown, neck and crop, into the streets.

"I remember, way back in 1868," said an old colonist, "hearing a man in Seddon's saloon make a foul remark about a woman in the settlement. 'Digger Dick' vaulted across the bar, took him by the throat, threw him to the ground and nearly shook the life out of him. Three of the man's friends, who were drinking at the bar, caught hold of him, but Dick shook them off as a terrier shakes off rats and held the man down until he took back his vile words.

"Dick was always chivalrous toward women. They were safe from insult even in the roughest mining camp if he happened to be there. He never allowed obscene stories to be told in his saloon, though he didn't object to what he used to call 'straight swearing.'

"But though he was such a great fighter, he was always on the side of law and order. They say he prevented many a riot and lynching in the old lawless days, and did everything in his power to civilize the mining districts.

"As the years passed by, he grew rich and became the most popular man in the place. The workingmen swore by him, for he had been a workingman himself; and, unlike some of his class who rise in the world, he did not forget his old friends when he became prosperous. Even to this day, when he goes down to the section where he made his money, the chums of his mining days call him 'Dick,' and talk to him as if he were still one of themselves."

Seddon increased his popularity by warmly advocating the interests of the miners in their frequent disputes with the government officials. Incidentally, he was elected to several local offices, and in 1879 was sent to the New Zealand parliament as the representative of one of the mining districts. He has held his seat since then without a break, winning every election.

In the old days political life was strenuous in New Zealand. Oftentimes, when addressing public meetings or canvassing for votes, he was obliged to

Prove his doctrines orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

New Zealanders are fond of telling how he descended from the platform at one rowdy meeting, walked through the yelling crowd up to a couple of the ringleaders, seized one with each hand, dragged them from their seats, kicking and fighting, and threw them downstairs, without anybody's help. Then he went back to the platform and calmly finished his speech amid respectful silence.

Seddon soon became recognized as one of the strongest men of the radical party. When Premier Ballance, an able leader of that party, died in 1893, everybody said there was no one could succeed him and hold the party together as he had done. But Seddon stepped into the vacant place and soon led the radicals to such triumphs as they had never dreamed of under Ballance. Since 1893 he has been prime minister of New Zealand. Last November his party was again returned to power by a large majority, which will keep him at the helm until the end of 1905. But he is not only premier; he is the lord high everything else of the colony—postmaster general, minister of labor, minister for native affairs, minister for electric affairs, colonial treasurer, etc. And for all these numerous offices he only draws a salary of £1,900.

When Seddon and his colleagues came into power they determined, as one of them has put it, to be "thorough-paced revolutionists." England's colonial statesmen, as a rule, try to copy English laws and English institutions as much as possible. Not so Seddon. "England," he is fond of saying, "can only teach us what to avoid. We must not allow our country to sink into the condition of England."

His policy from the start has been to tax the big landowners and capitalists out of existence by the graduated taxation of land and incomes, and to divide the land in small lots among the people. His opponents in the house of representatives said such a course was opposed to English principles.

"I know that," retorted Seddon. "In England half the people who reach the age of 65 also reach the poorhouse, and in London one person out of five dies in the workhouse, the hospital or the lunatic asylum. Well may we question the economic and social system of which this is the product! We want to establish our civilization in this new land on a broader basis, in a deeper sympathy for humanity."

Thus it is that New Zealand, under Seddon's strenuous rule, has become the pet state of socialists all over the world and the "bete noir" of all conservative politicians.

Seddon boasts that if he is a socialist he is also one of the staunchest of imperialists. It is said that when the Boer war broke out he was dissuaded with difficulty from giving himself a commission and going to the front. His old fighting spirit, which had lain dormant during years of statesmanship, was roused; but he had to be content with sending 6,000 other New Zealanders to South Africa.

He made a "bad break" by wanting to send the Maoris, and by advocating sterner measures toward the Boers. "The Maoris," he said, in a speech, "know how to conduct war and how to treat their enemies. They don't trouble about making prisoners."

Seddon is not content with having New Zealand a prosperous and practically independent nation. He wants to make it an empire with tributary states. With this object in view, he has already annexed several islands in the eastern Pacific to New Zealand, not to Great Britain; and he says he is going to annex others, until he builds up his empire within the empire.

But the achievement of which he is proudest is the enforcement of the famous arbitration and conciliation act, which has done away with strikes and lockouts in New Zealand.

The Doleful Merrymaking of Merrie England

WHEN Sir Thomas Lipton went to Coney Island the other day and "did the stunts," he enjoyed himself like a boy of 13 and told everybody that there was nothing like it in all England. He was right. Coney Island, the city of pleasure palaces and neckbreaking sports, has its duplicates all over the United States, from New York to San Francisco, and from Buffalo to New Orleans. But it is purely an American institution, and the Englishman's eyes bulge out with wonder when he sees it.

"Let us go down to Coney and have a good time on the beach," said a New Yorker to an English cousin whom he was entertaining the other day.

The Englishman looked troubled, but he agreed. All the way down in the car he was quiet and melancholy, but when he landed on the beach in the midst of 1,000 side shows and heard fakirs to the right of him and "howlers" to the left of him volley and thunder, he gaped in openmouthed amazement until his friend had to drag him from underneath the wheels of a diminutive locomotive which was mingling in a light-hearted way with the crowd.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "It's awfully jolly, don't you know. The people actually seem to be enjoying themselves."

Then he succumbed to a violent paroxysm of the disease known as "Coneyitis." He shot the chutes, yelling as loudly as the boy in the next seat. He slid down the corkscrew staircase on the seat of his trousers. He rode the bucking bronchos and galloped on the merry-go-round. He distinguished himself at the shying alley and, to his huge delight, was presented with a gaudy cane by the benevolent proprietor. He navigated the subterranean river, went down the coal mine, took a trip to the moon and a voyage under the sea. He yelled with the fakirs, howled with the howlers, devoured vast quantities of clam chowder and peanuts, and at last—most ecstatic moment of all—he "looped the loop."

Then he lay down exhausted on the beach, mopped his brow, and said he had had the time of his life.

"But what does an Englishman do when he has a day's holiday in the summer?" asked the American. "Doesn't he have a good time, too?"

"No," was the decided reply, "he has the worst time in his life," and the recollection of many a melancholy English holiday made the joys of Coney fade for a moment from the Englishman's face. But the discordant notes of the barkers, which were as music to his ears, recalled his late adventures, and then he went on:

"Take the pitiable case of the average London clerk or mechanic, earning $6 or $8 a week. One of his great ambitions is to have what he calls 'a day at the seaside' at least once a year.

"For weeks and months he looks forward to this holiday, and saves up money for it—50 cents a week. His wife gets some new clothes for the children to wear on the great occasion, and the children themselves cut notches on the bedpost to mark the slow passing of the days towards the glorious date.

"When the day dawns, very likely it is foggy or raining; but the family rush off to the railway station, flattering themselves it will be fine at the seaside. They join an excursion,' as they call it, of perhaps 100,000 other people, all bound for a seaside resort 200 miles away. There are similar resorts within fifty, twenty or ten miles; but they would never dream of going to one of those instead.

"The English 'cheap trippers,' as the great array of holiday makers is called, have one fixed idea—to go as far as possible over the railroad in one day at the cheapest possible rate. Nothing else seems to matter if they can only achieve that ambition. Our typical family may live within ten miles of Scarborough, the best of the English summer resorts, but they wouldn't think of going there. The children would feel that they had been swindled. No, they must travel down to the other end of England to find a place infinitely inferior to Scarborough in every way.

"They struggle like wild beasts for a seat in the train with thousands of other holiday makers. If they don't get one they probably have to stand for five or six hours. If they do get one their tenderest corns are trampled upon by the unfortunate people who are obliged to stand.

"Our typical clerk may be a quiet, decent sort of man at ordinary times, but when he blossoms out into a cheap tripper he becomes as savage as a Bengal tiger. Before the train has left the station he nags his wife, scolds his children and quarrels with two or three of his fellow passengers.

"'Four-and-sixpence, return fare,' he grumbles to the clerk in the booking office. 'The papers said four bob. What are yer givin' me? I want the tickets for four bob.'

"'You won't get them,' retorts the clerk. 'Stand aside and make way for the crowd.'

"'Gimme the tickets,' shouts the merrymaker. 'Blarst yer, who are yer shovin' of?'—this to an impatient man next in line

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