

Opening of Parliament

The third session of the fifteenth Parliament was opened on Tuesday afternoon by his Excellency the Governor. The principal feature of the Speech was its great length. Very little new legislation was foreshadowed, consequently the principal business of Parliament will be the patching-up of ill-considered measures of previous sessions.

The first statement of any importance in the Speech was that relating to our population; which now amounts to 900,682, inclusive of Maoris.

A scheme for the superannuation of public school teachers is to be submitted to Parliament, and a proposal for the utilisation of the natural motive power of our rivers and lakes.

As the financial position of the Colony has much improved it is proposed to increase the Old Age Pensions to 10/- a week.

Provisions will be made for the more expeditious construction of important railway lines, for the extension of telephone communication to back-block settlers, and for additional school accommodation.

During the past year a very large area of land has been acquired under the Land for Settlements Act. Every section of the Lindsay Estate, in Hawke's Bay, and the Greenfield Estate, in Otago, has been taken up, and in regard to the Flaxbourne Estate only one small section of five acres remains unapplied for; yet the earth hunger still continues. Other large estates, in both North and South Islands are under negotiation, and the demand for closer settlement must be provided for. It is a matter of congratulation that settlement generally throughout the Colony has proceeded at a rapid rate, whilst the markets for our products have increased, and good prices are ruling.

It is proposed to increase the salaries of Stipendiary Magistrates.

The usurious and excessive rates of interest charged for moneys lent in some instances render it necessary that a maximum rate of interest and charges differential in respect to the several classes of security upon which moneys are advanced, should be fixed by law. Proposals to this end will be submitted.

A further endeavor to establish a mail service between the Colony and Vancouver was made, but it was not successful. Bills for the suppression of gambling, for the more complete inspection and improvement of hospital and charitable institutions, and the inspection of private hospitals and nursing homes, for making better provision for the protection of life and property from fire and for placing fire brigades on an improved footing, for the repeal of clause 3 of the Shops and Offices Act, 1904, and otherwise making such amendments in the measure as seems desirable, and for the referring of matters direct to the people by way of referendum, and other necessary measures will be placed before Parliament for its consideration.

It is proposed that all goods manufactured in the Colony shall be stamped and marked as having been made in New Zealand. At the present output from our kauri forests it is estimated they will be practically exhausted in 20 years, and therefore the reservation of some forests, the timbers of which are required for special industries, will receive the attention of Parliament.

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL

We cannot accept reports of marriages, deaths, etc., from persons who are unknown at this office. For all practical purposes these are anonymous to us.

Our lady readers will be pleased to know that we have decided to devote a portion of the 'N.Z. Tablet' each week to matters of interest in regard to the household. The new department, designated 'The Home,' will be contributed to by a lady writer well qualified to deal with matters of feminine interest, and in addition to hints on practical house-keeping, will from time to time contribute articles on hygiene, care of the sick, the proper treatment of children, fashions, and kindred topics. A brief instalment of 'Maureen's' contributions will be found on page 30 of this issue.

The small sum of half a crown was the amount involved in a civil action set down for hearing at the Wellington Magistrate's Court one day last week. When counsel intimated that they intended contesting the case, Dr. A. M'Arthur, S.M., expressed surprise that the time of the court should be taken up with a case con-

cerning 2s 6d when important cases were awaiting hearing. Several solicitors in court offered to subscribe the amount of the claim and costs if the parties withdrew. His Worship remarked: 'And I will give my contribution also.' Counsel, however, refused to adopt the proposal, but subsequently agreed to an adjournment of the action.

'Apropos of knighthoods,' ran a passage in an address given by Mr. A. W. Rutherford at Amterley on Friday, 'it seems to me a grave mistake for colonial politicians to accept these baubles. In a democratic country they are of as much value as a tin can tied to a dog's tail. Some of these noble knights tell you they accepted the title to please their respective wives. This is nonsense. She does not become 'lady.' She remains simply 'missis,' as before. The 'lady' in these cases is a mere courtesy title.'

The annual report of the Reefton Literary, Debating, and Athletic Society shows that it had a fairly successful year. The thanks of the members were due to the Rev. Father Gallais for placing the boys' school-room at the disposal of the society. The literary and debating branch of the society was not as well supported as it ought to be, the principal cause being the want of a suitable room for holding the meetings. The receipts from all sources amounted to £146 7s 11d, and the expenditure to £156 7s 11d. The assets are set down at £160 10s. and the liabilities at £3 6s 6d.

The usual meeting of the Hokitika Catholic Literary and Debating Society (writes a correspondent) was held on the evening of June 20, when there was a very fair attendance. A very interesting debate was held, the subject being 'Is labor overpaid?' Mr. M. Moloney led for the affirmative, and Mr. M. Daly for the negative. A vote was taken at the close of the debate, and resulted in favor of the negative by a small majority. The office of vice-president having been declared vacant, Mr. M. Moloney was elected to the position. Four new members were elected.

Owing to the gale, accompanied by heavy rain, which raged throughout various parts of the Colony on Friday evening very heavy floods were experienced in Central Otago, Westland, and Canterbury on Saturday. At 7 o'clock on Saturday morning the town of Greymouth was completely under water, the stream rushing down the principal streets with great fury. The flood was the worst ever experienced in the town. Very high floods were also experienced in Canterbury and Marlborough. In Wellington in 24 hours an inch and three-quarters of rain fell, and the velocity of the wind was probably up to 50 miles an hour. Considerable damage was done to the telephone wires, and it will be some days before the service is fully restored.

The Rev. Father Cahill (Carterton) writes as follows from London under date, May 15:—'I had the privilege of an audience with the Holy Father on May 4. It was more of a reception than an audience, for there were about 400 persons present. The Holy Father looks very well indeed, and is full of kindness and humility. I also had the privilege of being present at his Mass on the following Sunday at seven o'clock in his private chapel. I spent the ten most interesting days of my life in Rome, and have also visited Bologna, Venice, Milan, Lucerne, Paris, and this city of London. To-day I go on to Dublin, and I expect, with God's help, to be back in the old home about the middle of this week. My health is improving.'

At the last meeting of the St. Columba Club (writes our Greymouth correspondent) a well-contested debate was held, the subject for discussion being 'Is it to the benefit of the Colony that the Otira line be completed?' One would think there was no case for the negative, but so strong were the arguments put forth against the immediate completion of the line that the judges unhesitatingly decided in favor of the opponents of the work. The billiard tournament held by the club was finished last week, Mr. James Heffernan being the winner, and Mr. Thomas Barry second. Altogether 10 members of the club competed.—The Children of Mary spent a most enjoyable evening on Friday. The members gave a social in honor of the retiring president, Miss Mary Heffernan, who received a handsome present for the zeal she had shown during her two years' term of office. Misses Ellen Sullivan, Mary Burke, and Annie Heffernan, who, with the president, are so devoted to the care of the altar, also received an acknowledgment of their services.

'The publication of an advertisement in a Catholic paper shows that the advertiser not only desires the patronage of Catholics, but pays them the compliment of seeking it through the medium of their own religious journal.' So says an esteemed and wide-awake American contemporary. A word to the wise is sufficient.