

thing was to be omitted, then they are untrue to their Church, and instead of giving the children bread they are offering them stones. Rather let them fight their own battles, try to establish their own schools, and join with Roman Catholics in urging that the State, as it is relieved of expense by religious bodies giving adequate and tested secular instruction in addition to spiritual, shall help those taking trouble and financial liability upon their shoulders, and not as at present place a double burden upon them.'

NOTES FROM THE HOUSE.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

There was what is called in theatrical parlance a full house on Tuesday evening when the Acting-Premier delivered the Financial Statement. It occupied an hour and a half in the reading and during the time neither the interest of the members nor of the public in the crowded galleries flagged. The Statement showed that the surplus for the past year was £270,458. The revenue for the present financial year is estimated at £6,026,000, while the expenditure is set down at £5,987,063. Sir Joseph Ward announced that it was intended to reduce the mortgage tax by 25 per cent. Reductions will be made in railway charges and rates on wool, passengers, and small lots of dairy produce, which are estimated at £40,000; while bush settlers are not to be asked after payment of the first half-year's rent to pay any more for two or three years. During the past year the public debt was increased by £3,375,202, and the gross public debt now stands at £52,966,447. This year it is proposed to borrow £1,750,000, of which £750,000 is for railways, £450,000 for roads, tracks, and bridges, £150,000 for rolling stock and additions on railway lines, £50,000 for the development of goldfields, and for the extension of the telegraph lines.

Sir J. G. Ward was congratulated all round, not only for bringing down the Budget at so early a date after the opening of Parliament, but also for the clear and succinct statement of the finances of the Colony presented.

At the suggestion of Sir William Russell the discussion on the Budget was set down for Tuesday night.

The whole of Wednesday afternoon was taken up with formal business. In the evening Mr Hornsby moved the second reading of the Rings and Combines Suppression Bill to prevent the continuance or establishment of monopolies.

The motion for the second reading was seconded by Mr Gilfedder who said that the Miller's Trust should be burst up, and condemned the nefarious system of tied houses.

The debate lasted until two o'clock on Thursday morning, the consensus of opinion of the speakers being that it would be advisable to await the Government's proposal on this matter.

The second reading was carried by 21 to 15, and at the suggestion of the Acting-Premier the mover declined not to proceed further with the measure as the Government promised to bring down legislation of a similar nature.

On Thursday afternoon Mr McNab introduced his Absolute Majority Voting Bill to ensure the representation of majorities.

At the suggestion of Sir J. G. Ward the debate was adjourned until the Government's Electoral Bill is brought down.

The State Fire Insurance Bill, introduced by the Acting-Premier, was, after a lengthy debate, allowed to pass the second reading. In the course of his speech Sir J. G. Ward said that a Government Fire Insurance Department would not only get a share of the business of the Colony, but would fix the minimum rate of charges and prevent them being raised abnormally, and so do injury to the community. If the House would effect such a desirable change the Government did not want to prevent other companies doing business here, and he did not desire to say anything against these private institutions. The Government would, if the measure was carried, conduct the department on strict business lines, with every provision for reinsurance, and he believed other offices would be glad to do business with them in that respect, and that the Government department would be able to confer valuable business on other companies. It was proposed that the department should commence with a capital of £250,000, and provision was made for a sinking fund for the redemption of the original capital. On the whole he thought the business of our fire insurance companies had been carried out with advantage to themselves, and if the State department was run in a business-like way he did not think it would prove to be injurious to private companies.

In the House of Representatives on Friday the whole of the afternoon was taken up with formal business and replies to questions. In the evening the Orchard and Garden Pests Bill and the Land and Live Stock Auction Bill, introduced by the Minister for Lands, were read a second time, and referred to Select Committees. The Birds Nuisance Bill, and Second-hand Dealers Bill, the latter to provide for the licensing of such dealers, also passed their second reading after which the House rose.

LOBBY GOSSIP AND NEWS.

One thousand foot warmers have been imported, and will be provided for second class carriages on the South Island lines without charge.

In his report presented to the House the Commissioner of Police says with regard to persons who have been repeatedly convicted of drunkenness: 'I submit it has become a moot question whether the time has not arrived when these persons ought to be treated as suffering from a disease, instead of vainly endeavoring to coerce them into sobriety by the imposition of a monetary penalty or

temporary loss of liberty, as at present. Dealing with these "old drunks" under the present system takes up a very considerable portion of the time of the police, magistrates, and prison officials, and is a very considerable expense to the community, with no good result.'

During the year ending March last there were 148 prosecutions for sly grog-selling, resulting in 82 convictions, against 169 prosecutions and 107 convictions in 1900. The aggregate amount of fines imposed was £1164 5s, against £1351 4s in the preceding year.

The police force is evidently becoming popular with a large number of young men, as the applicants for admission last year were 111, 23 of whom were taken on. The nationalities, religions and occupations of these 23 men were:—Nationalities—New Zealand-born 17, English 3, Scotch 2, and Australian 1. Religions—Church of England 9, Presbyterian 6, Roman Catholic 5, Wesleyan 1, Lutheran 1, Congregational 1. Occupations—Laborers 8, miners 3, farmers 3, grocer's assistant 1, cooper 1, blacksmith 1, survey linesman 1, clerk 1, tanner 1, station hand 1, asylum warder 1, and engine-driver 1.

On March 31 last the strength of the force was 604 of all ranks, being an increase of 13 during the past 12 months. The total comprises 7 inspectors, 5 sub-inspectors, 2 sergeants-major, 56 sergeants, 514 constables, and 20 detectives. There are besides 4 police surgeons, 4 matrons, 22 district constables, and 7 native constables. During the year there were 23 casualties, being 6 less than during the previous year; 11 retired under the Police Provident Fund Act, 9 resigned, and 3 died.

New Zealand has one policeman to 1375 of her population at a cost of 2s 10½d per inhabitant, Victoria, one to 815 of her population at a cost of 4s 5½d; New South Wales, one to 640 of her population, at a cost of 5s 9½d; South Australia, one to 1013 of her population at a cost of 4s 2½d; Queensland, one to 518 of her population, at a cost of 6s 9½d; Western Australia, one to 353 of her population, at a cost of 13s 11½d; Tasmania, one to 735 of her population at a cost of 4s 4½d.

In reply to a question in the House it was stated the other night that a year must elapse before coal would be available from the State coal mine for public or other uses.

The Hon. W. C. Smith has been elected Chairman of Committees in the Legislative Council.

In the discussion on the State Fire Insurance Bill a southern member stated that last year there were 230 fires in the North Island costing £231,797, whereas in the South there were only 99 fires costing £101,277. He hoped that some explanation of the disparity would be forthcoming, but none of the members offered to account for it.

How Japanese Boys are Named.

A JAPANESE boy is never very sure what his name is, for every little while he receives a new one. The first is given him when he is a month old. He is then taken to the temple, where three different names are written upon slips of paper; these are tossed into the air while prayers are made to the particular god of the family. The first name that reaches the holy floor is the one by which the little fellow is known until he is three years old. At that time his baby clothes are laid away, and with his new garments, bound by a tight girdle, he gets a fresh name and his education begins. At 15 he attains his majority, and is thought to be a man; so, naturally, another name is given him; and at the slightest advancement in office or position, and especially at his marriage, the name is changed once more. His last name, the one that never changes, is bestowed upon him when he dies.

It will be within the recollection of our readers (says the Sydney Freeman's Journal) that some six or eight months ago the Commonwealth was startled by the romantic account of how the Rev. Father Rouillac, a simple missionary priest of the Marist Order, sailed his little schooner, Eclipse, manned by a crew of dusky boys, from the Solomon Islands into Sydney Harbor. His action in navigating his tiny craft through the storms of the Pacific, evoked at the time a note of universal applause. The little vessel, which he had brought to Sydney for repairs, was barely seaworthy, and wonder was expressed by those who saw her that she had survived the huffeting of an unusually rough passage. Then some of the yachting clubs of Sydney enthusiastically took the dismantled Eclipse in hand, and returned her to her missionary captain thoroughly renovated. Father Rouillac returned with his boys to the islands, and an occasional echo of his doings reached Sydney from the great silence of the Solomons, and told his friends that he was doing well. But a few weeks ago a cable report from Norfolk Island appeared in the Sydney papers, stating that the Eclipse had been caught in a storm, became unmanageable, and was stranded. The Titus, one of Messrs Burns, Philp's island fleet (it was from one of Burns, Philp's officers, by the way, that Father Rouillac received his first lesson in navigation, and made Sydney on the strength of it), arrived in Port the other day bearing the news of the misadventure. Captain Bibbing stated that the scene of the disaster was on the weather side of Gaudalcanar, but the damage done to the schooner was not of a serious nature. In all probability, the Captain said, the schooner would before long be floated. This was also the general opinion of those who had visited the scene of the stranding. Father Rouillac is an intrepid mariner, recalling in the present, as in his past previous risky experiences, some of the best traditions of early Irish missionizing.

In cases of Sprains or any injury to the limbs the application of WITCH'S OIL gives instant relief.—*.*