

existence not upon their own exertions, but upon the bounty of the visitors, and who will hibernate during the winter months, only to emerge in the spring ravenous for prey. We look for something better and more manly in the colonial youth than to see them anxious to perform menial services and ambitious of nothing higher than to act the part of cicerone. It were better that New Zealand possessed no 'wonders' at all than that each of them should be infested with a crowd of idlers like those that haunt the continental holiday places and become the sure progenitors of a race of mendicants. This is a matter that must be attended to at the very outset. The matter of guides should be placed on an intelligible and reasonable footing, and a certain number of them licensed to act, and at stated fees. Otherwise, the beauty spots will ere long become the refuge of the lazy and unthrifty, who will levy backsheesh upon grumbling travellers, and live in alternatives of riotous plenty and squalid starvation. It would be much more easy to exercise foresight and prevent the creation of such a class than to exterminate them after they have gained a foothold and reached formidable numbers.

Superannuation of Railway Servants.

The Government Railways Superannuation Fund Bill, introduced by the Acting-Premier on July 4, and referred to a committee, met with a most gratifying reception from both sides of the House, the chief opposition to it coming from the Government benches, and voiced by the senior member for Dunedin, who expressed the fear that the Bill was opening up a very large question without attempting to settle it. For, as he said, the other branches of the Civil Service will be clamoring immediately for similar superannuation schemes, as, indeed, the teachers are already doing, and the total liability will become a serious one. It is difficult to understand from Mr Millar's remarks what the Liberal opinions on this subject really are. If a contribution to the funds is demanded from the employee, that is considered unjust, and if nothing at all is asked, but a sum at the age of retiring is suggested, it is immediately replied that such a system would be one of pensions, and there could in Liberal ears be no more hateful word. The Government proposal is that the State should contribute one-half of the necessary amount, and the employee the other to the extent of a 3 per cent. deduction from their salaries. This proposal looks very fair, and is much more liberal than the terms given in connection with the police superannuation fund established a few years ago, where the nucleus was mainly derived from a fund which had accumulated out of fines and from other sources after many years. No one will for a moment contend that it is not desirable that public servants should look forward to some provision for their old age. The only question is as to the most equitable method of providing it. We are told that the average salary received by railway servants after 25 years of service is £180 per annum. That is not a munificent sum out of which to make provision for old age. The present haphazard system of making compassionate allowances has the elements of neither justice nor permanency. Men should not be called upon to accept as a favor that to which they are entitled as a right. The feature of compulsion, to which objection seems to be taken, is minimised by placing the control in the hands of a board, to be elected by the parties jointly interested.

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It is above all things desirable that the public service should attract the best class of men. They are called upon to surrender their individuality to an extent not demanded in any private employment. From them is expected a high quality of efficiency, and a degree of ability that would frequently in outside employment gain for them more liberal pay. The one attraction about the public service is the certainty of employment during good behaviour, and the regularity of payment without deduction for loss of time. In the railway service the calls upon an employee's time are specially exigent. It is when other people are enjoying themselves that his work is the hardest, and his annual holiday of seven or fourteen days, according to his grade, is not commensurate with the 52 weekly half-holidays and about 13 full days besides that the outside employee enjoys. Above all, he is weighted with a never-ceasing sense of responsibility for the safety of those who travel. The managers plan, but it is the employee who holds the points, waves the flags, and displays the lights. Even the humblest subordinate may in a moment of forgetfulness disorganise the most skilfully arranged plans, and the best part of a lifetime spent under such enormous responsibility is poorly rewarded with a pittance to keep the wolf from the door in old age. Even the coldest-blooded actuary might be excused for straining a point in such men's favor. Similar schemes for other branches of the public services may follow, and when all have devised plans to suit the peculiarities of their services, it may then be possible to amalgamate the whole into one comprehensive scheme with different branches according to circumstances, as is done in insurance companies every day. That

being accomplished, the goal of universal insurance is brought appreciably nearer.

Imperial Expenditure.

A correspondent sends us the following paragraph clipped from a North Island newspaper:—Ireland pays only £2,200,000 a year towards Imperial expenditure, while Scotland, with a very slightly larger population, pays almost £10,000,000. The Imperial revenue is derived mainly from taxation under the following heads: Customs, Excise, Stamps, Land tax, House duty, Income and Property tax. These six sources of revenue produce about 85 per cent. of the whole. According to a return (the latest to hand) for the year ended March 31, 1898, the amount of revenue, under the head of Customs and Excise, collected in Ireland was £5,361,000. From this our correspondent will see that the statement in the paragraph is incorrect.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

An entertainment of a social character was held in St. Joseph's Hall on Tuesday evening last in aid of the Home for the Aged Poor. There was a large attendance, and the evening passed off very pleasantly. A cornet solo ('The Holy City') by Mr R. Phillips was greatly appreciated. During an interval refreshments were handed round by a number of the lady members of St. Joseph's Club.

On Monday evening the members of St. Patrick's Catholic Literary and Social Institute, South Dunedin, discussed the question 'Should bachelors be taxed?' Mr Marlow opened in the affirmative, and was supported by Messrs Foster, Hoare, and Carr. The negative side was taken by Messrs D. McCurdy, P. Fitzgerald, E. O'Connell, and C. Foley. Rev. Father Coffey, who acted as judge of the debate, decided that although the bachelors delivered the better speeches, the arguments in favor of the proposed tax were more convincing and stronger. Some very excellent speeches were delivered during the evening. There was a large attendance and the keenest interest was taken in the debate.

Proposed Veterans' Home.

FOREMOST amongst the many schemes put forward for perpetuating the memory of those who fell in South Africa is that of His Excellency the Governor for the establishment of a Veterans' Home. Apart altogether from the sentimental point of view the movement deserves general support as it has for its object the providing of a home for men who have given the best years of their manhood to the service of the Empire and now in their old age deserve every consideration and attention. His Excellency has not been content to inaugurate the movement and leave others to do the work of organising, but he has pushed it forward with great zeal and enthusiasm which will undoubtedly win success. The proposal is highly philanthropic, and on this ground alone it should meet with a generous response from the public. The following are the suggestions of the committee, who have the matter in hand:—

The cost of a furnished home to accommodate 40 veterans, of whom provision for four married couples is also made, would be, exclusive of the cost of the land, £5000. The price of the land may be estimated at £1000. Putting it at the lowest estimate, £350, or the interest on £9000 will be required for maintenance. Although this will be insufficient to meet all contingencies, yet it is hoped by entertainments, etc., sufficient will be forthcoming to meet all that is required. From this it will be seen that £15,000 is all that is necessary to carry out the scheme in its entirety. The home would be made self-supportive, so to speak, as far as possible. The most deserving and needy cases would at all times receive first consideration as regards admission to the home, the selection being without canvas, and under the control of the committee.

The Governor's list of veterans now contains upwards of 2000 names, holding more than 2260 medals. Amongst these one holds the medal for Syria (Acre), 1840; four, China War, 1842; one, Scinde, 1843; twelve, the Kaffir War, 1853; five, Sobraon, 1845; six, Punjaub, 1846; nineteen, New Zealand, 1846; and there are representatives living of every campaign since, including 240 Crimea and 150 Mutiny.

WEDDING BELLS.

QUINN—TOOHERS.

On Tuesday morning, July 15, a marriage which excited a good deal of local interest was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church (writes our Waimate correspondent), the contracting parties being Miss M. Toohere, eldest daughter of Mr L. Toohers, a very old and respected resident of the district, and Mr P. Quinn, eldest son of Mr P. Quinn, Makikihi, also a very old resident. The ceremony was celebrated by the Rev Father Regnault. The bride, who was given away by her father, looked charming in a costume of royal blue cloth trimmed with white silk and lace. The bridesmaid was Miss Toohers, sister of the bride, and Mr J. Quinn was best man. After the ceremony a large number of guests assembled at the residence of Mr L. Toohers, where the wedding breakfast was laid. The wedding presents were valuable and useful, and showed the respect in which the recipients were held by their many friends. The happy couple left by the express for Dunedin, where the honeymoon was to be spent.