

bazaar management were wise in excluding all vocal items from their programme. A series of tableaux were staged, and were much appreciated. The various stalls were presided over in an efficient manner, and the ladies all worked with great energy. The bazaar was open again on Friday afternoon and evening, when the various stalls were well patronised and good business done all round.

The second social at Paeroa took place in the Criterion Theatre on one evening last week. The floor of the theatre was simply crowded, while a large number of spectators assembled in the gallery. The progressive cash-tables were kept busy for several hours, and the winners proved to be Miss Lucy Medhurst and Mr J. Byrne. The Very Rev. Dean Hackett made the presentation of the prizes to the successful players. The lady's prize, a gold brooch, was donated by Mrs Delany. During the evening the Right Rev. Dr Linnihan made a presentation to Master Michael McNamara, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Nelson, as a recognition for saving their little boy from drowning in the Ohinemuri river a few days ago. In making the presentation, the Bishop said that steps should be taken by the people of Paeroa and the matter represented to the Royal Humane Society, which would forward a medal for this act of bravery. The committee, headed by their capable and energetic secretary, Miss Delany, had every reason to be congratulated on the successful issue of the second social.

## NOTES FROM THE HOUSE.

### PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

On Tuesday afternoon Sir J. G. Ward, on introducing a Loan Bill, said it had been deemed desirable to bring down the loan proposals of the Government that day, so that members would be in possession of the fullest information before entering upon the debate on the Financial Statement. No reasonable complaint could therefore be advanced that the Government were submitting their financial proposals in a piecemeal fashion, and time would be saved in that the one debate would cover the Financial Statement and the financial proposals of the Government. The total amount provided for under the Bill was exactly the same as that set out in the Financial Statement—viz., £1,750,000.

On Tuesday evening the debate on the Financial Statement was opened by Mr J. W. Thomson, who was followed by Mr Witherford, Sir William Russell, Mr Napier, and Mr E. M. Smith.

Sir William Russell said that if they went on spending money at the rate of the last few years, it was his conviction that bankruptcy would be the result. The gross amount added to the public debt last year was £3,375,202, and that was enough to make them pause. The Government talked about a strong finance, and yet proposed borrowing over £2,000,000 of money. The amount of our interest was now so great that it took about a million more than the difference between our exports and imports to pay it. The total sent out of the Colony annually in payment of interest was £2,394,909, and when people talked of borrowing more money, he asked them, if they were sane, to pause. It was to meet that interest that borrowing was going on, and the state of things would continue so long as the Colonial Treasurer would not face the situation. Surely some day a Government would be found to pursue a course not of giving up public works, but of prudence. Sir William went on to remark that if England had borrowed at the same rate per head as New Zealand during the past year her national debt would have increased by £173,669,068.

The Budget was again under review on Wednesday evening, Messrs J. Allen and Haselden adversely criticising the policy of the Government, and Messrs Gilfedder and Flatman supporting it.

Just before the House adjourned, Sir J. G. Ward announced that the Pacific cable was now working duplex between New Zealand and Queensland. This was important, and the Colony should be made aware of it. It meant that the Pacific cable was now capable of double transit, and that there was a very great reduction in transmission both ways.

It was with some difficulty the debate on the Financial Statement was kept from falling through in the early part of Thursday afternoon, and on more than one occasion the Acting-Premier was on his feet to reply when some laggard came forward and added his quota to the discussion. The speakers were Messrs McLachlan, Ell, W. Fraser, McNab, and G. W. Russell. On the House resuming after the supper adjournment no one being evidently prepared to carry on the discussion, Sir J. G. Ward took up the running, and made a vigorous defence of the policy of the Government. He reminded those members who accused the Government of having departed from the policy of Mr Ballance that many duties had been cast upon the state nowadays that were unknown a dozen years ago. Such were the advances to settlers and the lands for settlements schemes. Dealing with the indebtedness of the Colony since the present party came into power, he admitted it was some £14,000,000, but emphasised the fact that about £9,000,000 was interest-bearing, while of the balance £4,000,000 was expended in public works, and prophesied that the people in the Old Country would, when they knew what the money was required for, not be prevented from purchasing New Zealand stock by any of the troubles connected with the Midland railway, or the criticism of the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. 'In fact,' added Sir Joseph with confidence, 'the Colony occupies a stronger financial position in London than any of the neighboring colonies.' He denied that loan money was being used to bolster up the revenue of the Railway Department. Touching on taxation, the Acting-Premier said that the Government had reduced charges and made remissions to the extent of over a million of money.

Shortly before midnight the debate, which was the most uninteresting and lifeless of its kind ever heard in the House, came to an end.

### LOBBY GOSSIP AND NEWS.

The Government cannot see their way to reduce the charges on telephones.

If inquiries, which are now being made, prove satisfactory, Marconi's system of wireless telegraphy will be established between this Colony and the Chatham Islands.

'The increased expenditure on defence is appalling.'—A remark by Mr Gilfedder, which was received with marks of approval. The Government are preparing a text book on forestry, which will be published shortly.

A superannuation scheme for prison officials is under consideration.

A deputation of members waited on Mr. McGowan the other day for the purpose of bringing under his notice certain grievances under which asylum attendants labored. The deputation said there were numerous complaints from attendants at the long hours they were compelled to be on duty. It might be said their work was light; but the Minister, from his knowledge of the trying nature of the work, would admit that it was harder than physical work. The skilled attendants, too, did not receive the rate of pay given to persons in similar positions outside. Mr Field remarked that at present asylum attendants were working 3910 hours a year, as compared with 2172 hours worked by the ordinary working man. He believed many more of the best attendants would leave shortly unless a better state of things was brought about. Mr Bollard said attendants also complained of the irregular manner in which they were paid. The Minister, in reply, said he was inclined to think that the pay did not compare so badly with other services, because the attendants got rations, board and lodging, etc. He admitted the hours were long, and it was because of that the men got so many holidays and relief from duty. They got their full day off every fortnight, and 28 days in the year. He would consult his colleagues, and if they were prepared to add one-third to the staff an eight-hour day could be provided, but that would mean increased accommodation, which was already very circumscribed.

### A Falsehood.

As an example of the reckless falsehoods which are hurled by the anti-Catholic Press abroad against everything Catholic (says the *London Tablet*) we may cite the following, which appeared in several papers of the kind just before the recent disturbances in Belgium. The paragraph was quoted from the *Vlaamsche Gazet*, which stated categorically that there are in Belgium 2221 convents, viz, 1951 for women and 270 for men. The value of the property held by them was placed at 612,517,000 francs. That of buildings and land let to third parties at 117,411,000 francs, and that of furniture, works of art, etc., issued in various companies, at 365,418,000. These figures are stated to be official. The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* has lately put these extravagant assertions to the test, and compiled from Government sources the really official statistics. From this it appears that the real number of convents in all Belgium is 70 for men and 79 for women, total 149. Evidently, in order to arrive at such a figure the *Vlaamsche Gazet* has added together all schools, hospitals, and other institutions in which religious of either sex work either alone or in conjunction with lay persons. But even so the above total is far from being reached. On the contrary the actual figures are: State or private institutions, in which religious (men) are engaged in work, and including their own convents, 218; ditto, in which religious (women) are engaged, and including their own convents, 1425; total, 1643. The comparatively high number of institutions with which religious women are connected is explained by the very numerous hospitals, creches, day nurseries, orphanages, etc., in which Sisters are engaged, and sometimes, it should be noted, only two or three Sisters in each establishment. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that very many religious men and women have in late years had to take refuge in Belgium (as in England, Holland, and America), owing to persecution or vexatious legislation in their own lands—France, Germany, or Italy. Thus, in 1890 there were no less than 5513 non-Belgian inmates in all religious houses of men and women in Belgium. With reference to the colossal sum of 1,095,346,000 francs (say nearly £14,000,000), to which the above estimate of the combined properties of the religious Orders amounts, it has been obtained by the simple process of adding in the value of all institutions—hospitals, refuges, schools, etc.—belonging to the State or the municipalities; also all churches, chapels, and cemeteries, which are under the jurisdiction of the various communes and conseils de fabrique, and with which religious men and women have nothing to do. In such a way it is easy enough to manufacture any statistics that are needed for the occasion.

Every Catholic in the State (says the *Southern Cross*) will learn with regret that the Very Rev. Father Hilary, Superior of St. Paul's Retreat, Glen Osmond, will return to England very shortly. Father Hilary has resided in Australia for 14 years, and has given missions in all parts of the Commonwealth. He is an exceptionally gifted preacher, and the announcement of his sermons has always attracted large congregations.

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