

## NOTES FROM THE HOUSE.

## PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

THE question of damages to property through sparks from railway engines came up for discussion on Tuesday on a report from the Railways Committee. The Acting-Premier said that everybody sympathised with the settlers who had suffered loss from this cause, but the difficulty was to discriminate between fires started by sparks from railway engines and fires arising from other causes. His idea was that settlers living near the railway lines whose holdings were subject to fire should insure themselves against possible loss in that way. However, the Government would again go into the report of the Commission which had some time ago inquired into the subject, and the Cabinet's proposals would appear on the Supplementary Estimates.

Later on the Estimates were again considered, and when the item for passage for members was being considered a sharp discussion arose on the constitution of the Legislative Council, the majority of speakers expressing themselves in favor of a reform of the Upper House.

When the vote for the Agent-General's department was under review Sir William Russell said that Mr Reeves was a most capable Agent-General, but it was wrong that a high official like the Agent-General should have held office from year to year, and thus been dependent on the goodwill of the Government, being liable to be removed at any time if he displeased the Government.

Sir J. G. Ward replied that the arrangement was that six months' notice of removal was required on either side. He believed that the arrangement was satisfactory to Mr Reeves, and it had worked very well.

The vote for the Printing and Stationery Department, £35,373, was challenged by Mr Pirani who complained that this department was growing at such an extravagant rate that it was positively becoming a menace to the State. Economy could be practised by allowing a proportion of the work to be tendered for by private firms. The machinery and plant were out of date, and the Government seemed to be afraid to get the latest appliances for fear of the labor unions.

The Hon. Mr Hall-Jones said the machinery of the Government Printing Office was up to date in most respects. To obtain eight linotypes for the office would cost £6000, and he could not see his way to ask the House to vote that amount at present. Linotypes had thrown out of work a large number of men, who were too old to find other employment, and that fact actuated him in not desiring to get the machines. But they were bound to come eventually.

The consideration of the various votes in connection with the Colonial Secretary's department was continued during the night, and it was nine o'clock on Wednesday morning when the House rose. Several of the items were challenged but no reduction was effected in any of them.

On Wednesday afternoon the adjourned debate on the Loan Bill was resumed. The opinion of the majority of the speakers was that it was not undesirable to borrow money for public works providing it was properly spent.

The Loan Bill was again discussed on Thursday and Friday, and the Acting-Premier in replying to the criticisms of the various speakers said that every member who had spoken had supported the loan. Some had qualified their support by stating that they were prepared to vote for a reduced amount, but not one of those gave a single instance in which a reduction could be made, and he therefore had to take it that they were hoping and praying that the Government would be able to carry through the whole of the loan in the interests of themselves and their constituents and the Colony generally. Would hon. members believe, he asked, that the value of works and requirements asked for by members for their own districts was four times the amount of the proposed loan, and yet they had found fault with the borrowing proposals of the Government.

The measure was read a second time by 52 votes to 6, and was then considered in committee.

## LOBBY GOSSIP AND NEWS.

The exports from New Zealand to South Africa for the year ended March 31, 1902, were valued at £730,415. Of this amount oats represented £616,316. One-third in value of the exports was sent from Invercargill, Lyttelton coming next with £217,034, and Timaru third with £101,802.

Borrowers from the Advances to Settlers Department paid for fire insurance last year nearly £25,000. The total losses on such properties during the same period were £16,000.

Rotorua is evidently growing in popularity. The bath fees in 1897 were £717, and last year £1535.

According to the Mines Statement, the production of gold and silver and also of coal and lignite in 1901 was considerably in excess of that of the previous year, whilst the output of kauri gum and miscellaneous minerals showed a falling off. The gross value of the mineral productions, including kauri gum, for 1901, however, show an increase of over £250,000 as compared with those of the year 1900, and doubtless the increase would have been greater still but for the fact that the phenomenally high state of some of the rivers interfered with gold dredging operations during a considerable portion of the year. The total production of gold and silver was 1,026,695oz, valued at £1,819,941, and shows an increase in value of £340,560, as compared with the production of the preceding year. The output of other minerals, including coal and lignite, had been

1,248,464 tons, representing a value of £1,136,842, or 121,680 tons in excess of the previous year. Kauri gum to the amount of 7541 tons, valued at £456,114, was obtained.

The number of coal mines in the Colony which were worked last year was 149, giving employment to 2754 persons. Many of the mines are very small, and are worked for purely local demands, whilst quite a number on private lands are worked for the requirements of the owners only.

According to the Mines Statement, the shale works at Orepuki have now got into full working order, and oils of various grades, adapted for both burning and lubricating purposes, as well as other products obtainable from the distillates of shale, have been produced. Doubtless it will take a little time to find a market for the entire production of the works, but it is to be hoped that the enterprise of the company will be rewarded in the near future.

Mr Laurenson stated in the House on Wednesday that of 19,000 children in the Colony only 4000 had been vaccinated. Fifteen thousand had not been vaccinated, and yet there had not been a single prosecution except in Lyttelton.

## Obituary.

MR MICHAEL KITTSON, CHARLESTON.

General regret was felt in Charleston when the sad news became known that Mr Michael Kittson, one of the publishers of the local *Herald*, had passed away on July 15 at the early age of 21 years. The deceased was the second son of the late Mr Patrick Kittson, and when death laid its icy hand on the bread-winner of the family ten years ago, he, in conjunction with his brother, assumed control of the paper. The deceased was a bright young man and extremely popular with all classes. Prior to his death he was attended by the Rev. Father Haire, who administered the last rites of the Church. The funeral took place on July 19, and was one of the largest ever seen in Charleston, friends having come from all parts of the Buller district to pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased. The Rev. Father Haire officiated at the church and also at the graveside. Mrs Kittson and family have the sincere sympathy of a large number of friends in their bereavement.—R.I.P.

## British Ambassadors.

ONLY a short time ago (says the *London Tablet*) the late Sir William White could claim, at Constantinople, to be the first Catholic Ambassador sent abroad by England since the Reformation. Now we have Sir Nicholas O'Connor, Sir Francis Plunkett, Sir Henry Howard, and to add to that illustrious list another addition has now to be made, the King having this week appointed Sir Martin Goselin, K.C.M.G., to be his Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Lisbon. Sir Martin, who is not yet 50 years of age, and is married to a daughter of the late Lord Gerard, had, as it happens, his first experiences in diplomacy at the Portuguese capital; and he had served far afield in Paris, Petersburg, Paris, Berlin, and Madrid, when he was brought home and appointed permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Office, with the best of intentions, had fallen into strange blunders from the absence of just such a man as Sir Martin, who, when a question came up, could speak with personal experience of the cities, the men, the manners, whose case was in question. His place will be difficult to fill; but in the great outer sphere now found for him, he will easily render services that will compensate the Government for the loss they sustained in London.

The appropriateness of sending a Catholic to the Court of Lisbon does not need a word of exposition; and yet it is safe to say that this consideration did not determine the appointment. The Catholic Ambassadors have been chosen for the personal qualifications which distinguished them above their fellows of all creeds, and the nation gets thrown into the bargain the uncovenanted advantages in Lisbon, in Vienna, and even in Constantinople, of a diplomat with a religion that is either professed, or at least understood and recognised, in those capitals. A Catholic is of necessity something of a cosmopolitan; and that is what a great ambassador must needs be. Moreover, his profession of the Catholic faith vouches for him, and he need not fustily intrude his sentiments when and where they are irrelevant things, essentially impertinent. Disraeli, who knew most things, expressed something of this when he bluntly said: 'A diplomatist is, after all, an abstraction. There is a want of nationality about his being. I always look upon diplomatists as the Hebrews of politics, without country, political creed, popular convictions.' Possibly some of our countrymen—the preliminary grumblers have, in fact, already been heard—may grudge to Catholics (or, as they would say, Jesuits) their large representation, though a purely accidental one, in a field from which for centuries they have been most unrighteously excluded. To some of these we may offer for use as a consoling gibe yet another definition of ambassadors as 'the men who lie abroad for their country's good.'

If Cyclists or Footballers meet with accidents, they will find that Evan's WITCH'S OIL is infallible.—\* \*

The Rev. T. T. O'Sullivan, who was recently transferred from Gordon to Bacchus Marsh, was entertained at a banquet at Ormond and presented with a purse of sovereigns and an illuminated address from the Bacchus Marsh Y.M.C.A. society. At Gordon Father O'Sullivan was presented with a purse of sovereigns and an address on behalf of the parishioners. He was also entertained at a banquet.