

GISBORNE ROWING CLUB GYMNASIUM.

The Gisborne Rowing Club Gymnasium first saw the light in 1889, when at the request of the members of the Gisborne Rowing Club Mr William Miller (then Treasurer, now Captain of the Club), called a meeting, which resulted in the formation of the present Gymnasium. Since opening the members have held two athletic carnivals, which have met with very great success. The last one was held in honour of the visit of the representatives from Auckland, Napier, and Union Rowing Clubs on 1st April, 1891, and on the first night fully three hundred persons were refused admission, as the City Rink was taxed to its utmost capacity, and in consequence the Committee repeated the show two nights, and also at a matinee performance for children, and on both occasions crowded houses greeted the performers. The programme included running, jumping, semi-circus, horizontal and parallel bars, Roman rings, Roman staturary with limelight effects, trapeze act with double leap for life through fire balloon (a feat that has never before been attempted by amateurs). The local paper says: 'The trapeze act has not been surpassed by any professionals that have visited Gisborne. Many people went there prepared to forgive shortcomings that might be expected at an amateur performance, but left finding they had nothing to forgive, and declaring the show to be far superior to any professional company's they had seen in Gisborne.' The club is exceedingly fortunate in securing the services of Mr Fred Wilkinson as trapeze instructor, he having travelled as a professional for many years, and was considered one of the best aerial performers in the Australian colonies. The way he brought his pupils on in such a short space of time is really wonderful, as trapeze work is by far the most difficult of all gymnastic work for a new man to learn.

Mr Alf Skipworth, the horizontal and parallel bar instructor, is a Gisborne lad bred and born, and has been performing off and on ever since he was five years old. One of his great feats is to turn a complete somersault when on skates.

Mr William Miller, the manager and conductor of the gymnasium, who has sole control during practice, is also a well-known athlete, having represented this town in the annual rowing contest with Napier, besides being a prominent member of all our local athletic institutions.

MR W. BRIDSON.

AUCKLAND and Wellington people will recollect the recent departure of Mr Bridson, and the dinner tendered by his friends and admirers to him at Wellington on the occasion of his leaving there to compete in the Amateur Sculling Race at Melbourne Regatta. They will also remember the decisive victory gained by him over the six other competitors—McRae, of Sydney; Ritchie and Gow, of Tasmania; Ainsley, Scheider, and J. Waters, of Victoria. This is his only fitting continuation of a brilliant record, for in his short public career previously to this Mr Bridson had achieved the extraordinary feat of scoring thirty-one firsts, seven seconds, two thirds, and one fourth in the various races in which he has competed. Mr Bridson is but twenty-three years of age, and it is less than five years since he left Auckland for Wellington, where the most of his aquatic experience was gained.

GERMAN IMPERIAL SOCIALISM.

NOTE.—Those persons who are agitating for the sale of the New Zealand railways will peruse the fifth paragraph of this article with interest.

BEFORE indicating some of the interesting results brought about in Germany we should define the sense in which the term 'Socialism' is applicable to the view of the relations of capital and labour, and of the duty of the state toward its citizens which is held alike by Bismarck and by the present Emperor. Assuredly William II. is not a Socialist in the sense given to the term by Karl Marx and by the multitude of German artisans who accept the doctrines of that reformer. The latter would substitute for the Prussian monarchy an unmixted democracy, and they would transfer all the accumulated wealth of the country from individual owners to a common stock, which should thenceforth be administered by the democratic commonwealth for the common benefit.

The Socialism of Marx, in other words has a political as well as a social aim, and it is the former rather than the latter purpose which renders it obnoxious to the friends of monarchy in Prussia. Many of the latter, including Bismarck and the present Emperor himself, believe that all which is sound and safe in the doctrines of Socialism can be carried out more effectively by a firmly-seated monarchy than under the fluctuating conditions of democracy. They hold, further, that it is unwise to remove the most powerful spur to individual exertion by the abolition of individual ownership, and that, without taking a step so revolutionary it is possible to secure most of the benefits promised by Socialism through a judicious enlargement of the functions of the state. They maintain, that is to say, in opposition to the English orthodox economists, that, instead of confining itself to the protection of citizens from foreign invaders, and to the maintenance of law and order, the state may, with great advantage to the community, interpose to regulate the relations of capital and labour, and to perform a host of functions which in England and the United States are discharged by individuals or by corporations.

It will be at once perceived that this view of State Socialism is scarcely distinguishable from the old conception of paternal government. The fact that the Hohenzollerns have, upon the whole, been faithful to this paternal conception of their duty to their subjects, accounts for the popular attachment which, in the political convulsions of 1789, 1830 and 1848 proved strong enough to resist every strain. The socialistic legislation, effected by Bismarck and promised by the young Emperor, is but the development of the fundamental principle of the Prussian common law promulgated in 1794. *That law distinctly recognizes the right of every citizen to work, and proclaims the state the natural protector of the poorer classes.*

Passing over its dealings with the tariff, we find that the Prussian Government has, since 1870, interfered in three ways with economical and social questions. It has exempted, or avowed a purpose to exempt, the wage earning class from all direct taxation. It has, in many fields of work, substituted, or tried to substitute, the state for the private capitalist, considered as an employer of labour. It has, in the third place, by a memorable series of laws, undertaken to insure the working-man against sickness, accident, and old age. Such, stated in a sentence, is the outcome of the Prussian government's attitude toward the mass of poorer citizens during the last twenty years.

The Prussian state, considered as an employer of labour, has not gone so far in the way of superseding corporations and individual capitalists as Bismarck desired, but it has advanced much further in this direction than the governments of democratic countries. There are no private telegraph companies in Prussia, the telegraph, as well as the postal system, being managed by the state, which here means, however, not the Prussian Kingdom but the German Empire. It is the nationalization of Prussian railways, which most distinctly marks the conversion of Prussia to the principle of state enterprise and control in the domain of economic activity. Fifteen years ago, out of forty-six Prussian railways, only eight belonged to the state, though eight others were private lines under state management. Now almost all of the iron roads have passed into the hands of the Gov-



Wrigglesworth & Binns, photo., Wellington.
W. BRIDSON.

ernment. In 1876, moreover, the Prussian Diet passed a Bill agreeing to transfer all the Prussian railways to the German Empire, on condition that the monarchy should be reimbursed for its outlay. The offer is still open, but the Empire has not yet felt itself pecuniarily able to relieve Prussia of her railways. *The result of the nationalization of the Prussian railways has been to place in the treasury millions of pounds which would otherwise have gone into the pockets of shareholders, and the burdens of the tax-payers have been proportionately lightened.*

Could Bismarck have had his way, he would have made the German Empire independent of annual contributions of money, by giving the Imperial Government a monopoly of two important industries. He began in 1881, by proposing to the Reichstag to give the Imperial Government a monopoly of the production, manufacture and sale of tobacco. The project was based in part on the experience of France, Austria and Italy, and it was computed that the net proceeds of the monopoly would add not less than forty million dollars a year to the Imperial revenue. The Bill was defeated, but the Government announced that it was not definitely abandoned, and we may expect to see the scheme again brought forward by the new chancellor, Caprivi. In 1886, another unsuccessful attempt was made by Bismarck to transform the state into a manufacturer and merchant. He proposed to give the Imperial Government a monopoly of the production and sale of distilled liquors. The latter measures undoubtedly constitute the most remarkable application of the principles of paternal government that has ever been witnessed in Europe. Thus far they indicate the high-water mark of German State Socialism of the type adopted by Bismarck and the young Emperor. This extraordinary legislation includes the sickness insurance law of 1883, the accident insurance laws of 1884 and 1885, and the old age insurance laws of 1889.

By the first measure, passed in 1883, it was enacted that working people, disabled by sickness for work, should be supported for the first thirteen weeks of their disability, and that afterwards, should their disability continue, their support should be transferred to the accident insurance funds created by supplementary measures carried in the two following years. These sickness and accident insurance laws, taken together, comprehend all the wage-earning classes and apply to over twelve million working-people. Insurance is obligatory, the workman being forced to pay two-thirds of the sickness premium, while the payment of the remaining third is imposed on the employer. The trio of insurance laws was completed in 1889, by a measure providing for the insurance of working-people against the incapacity resulting from old age. Here, too, the payment of premiums is compulsory from the age of sixteen, but half the burden is borne by the employer. The state also guarantees a yearly addition of £2 10s to every annuity paid. We should remind the reader that these insurance laws were passed, not by the Prussian Diet, but by the German Parliament, and are therefore applicable, not only to the Prussian Kingdom, but to the whole German Empire.

Such, concisely stated, is the substance of Prince Bismarck's recognition of the paternal principle laid down in the common law of Prussia. From the outset of his reign in the summer of 1888, the present Emperor declared that his social policy would be the same.



C. P. BROUSE,

photo., Gisborne.

GISBORNE AMATEUR ROWING CLUB GYMNASIUM—1891.

FIRST ROW.—F. HERRIFF, F. WILKINSON, (Instructor), WM. MILLER, (Secretary & Conductor), H. MILLER, A. SKIPWORTH, (Instructor), H. JOHNSTON, (Clown). SECOND ROW.—H. SOMERVELL, C. MOORE, L. HERRIFF, R. C. FRENK. THIRD ROW.—J. SOMERVELL, C. MUIR, A. MATTHEWS.

INHERITED.—'Where does Harry get his inventive genius?' 'From his father. He was the most notorious liar in the town.'