

Englishmen, who have a horror of hasty legislation, must sometimes envy the rough-and-ready way in which the colonies dispose of difficult questions. We solve the licensing matter by giving no compensation at all, thus barring the door on all discussion as to time limits and amounts and levies. Similarly, we dismiss the question of religious education by giving none at all. But the House of Commons rejected the secular solution by 414 votes, and it has been trying to evolve a bill that shall do justice to all parties. It is most sincerely to be regretted that Mr. Runciman's statesmanlike measures failed to be carried by reason of the action of the extremists on both sides. It was far and away the best and fairest Education Bill that we have had as yet, and while remedying many injustices of Mr. Balfour's Bill, it was not so neglectful of the just claims of church schools as were the proposals of Mr. Birrell and Mr. McKenna. Englishmen are tolerant of delay, tolerant of long discussion and repeated failure, because they are intolerant of anything that savours of injustice or interference with the rightful liberties of the subject. A new country wants to make the pace and show the world how easy it is after all to dispose of difficult questions. But it is questionable whether we have the same traditional love of true liberty and justice to one class is often secured at the cost of gross injustice to another.

Speaking at the half-yearly meeting of the Bank of New Zealand last Friday, the chairman (Mr. Beauchamp) stated that the profits of the bank for the six months ended September 30 were exceedingly satisfactory, and he confidently anticipated a like favourable result for the current financial year. The bank has pursued the policy of accumulating large reserves in preference to paying large dividends, and this has done much to inspire public confidence in the institution. The chairman dwelt on the temporary financial stringency, and expressed the opinion that the strong demand for our staple products and the rise in the price of wool and other pastoral and agricultural products, would soon redress the balance of the financial market in our favour; and the relative scarcity of money would be repaired as soon as ever the effects of the present upward movement in market value had had time to make itself felt. This optimistic outlook for the future should be a sufficient answer to those who have been making ominous and pessimistic predictions regarding the financial condition of the colony.

It seems a little late in the day to refer to the winning of the Davis Cup, but the news arrived last week while the portion of the paper containing those notes was already in the press, and our congratulations to the Dominion in general, and lawn tennis players, and Wilding in particular, had of necessity to be held over till this issue. For it would indeed be ungracious and unfitting were such a feat to pass without some congratulatory remark. Wilding, by his brilliance and endurance, wrested the Cup almost out of the very grasp of the gallant Americans. The defeat of the supposedly invincible Brookes - idol of Australian tennis players - seemed to make its possession a certainty for the Land of the Stars and Stripes, and it is a proud thing for the Commonwealth and New Zealand that they should have, in face of so homeric a fight as that set up by America, been able to hold their own and retain the Cup, showing that it is not only in football that the best men in this part of the world can more than hold their own with Old World champions. It is a pity the British Lawn Tennis Association should have been suddenly shaken with a spasm of niggardiness which caused them to refrain from sending a team to Australia to compete for the Cup, but we are proud to believe that had they done so the result must have been the same. Brookes and Wilding competed for the Cup in 1905, and won much kudos, and tried again in 1906, and it was not till last year they succeeded in gaining the much-desired trophy. That they should have succeeded in retaining it again is, as we have said, a feat of which every one of us may feel justifiable pride.

Our Illustrations.

A RARE PLAN OF RUAPEKA-PEKA.

PRESENTED TO AUCKLAND CITY.

On page 23 of this issue we reproduce a plan of the famous Ruapekapeka pa, captured on January 11, 1846, after a bitter struggle. This plan was the property of Mr. C. Ruck, of Parnell, Auckland, whose father, the late Capt. Atkyns, played a distinguished part in the engagement, as will be seen from the following letter from his commanding officer. It is written rather over a year later:

"Royal Engineer's Office, Auckland, 10th August, 1847. "Sir, "Being about to give over the command of the Royal Engineer Department in New Zealand to Lieut.-Col. Bolton, R.E. I deem it but just before doing so to acknowledge the great obligation I am under for your services whilst serving in the field with me at Ruapekapeka by your so gallantly, with the pioneers under your command, cutting away the dense wood, and removing every obstacle that obstructed the view of the batteries, up to the very base of the enemies' work, exposing yourself and those under your command to very great danger from the fire of the enemy, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that it was principally by your great exertion that the pa was taken much more speedily than it otherwise would have been. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"W. B. MARLOW, Major Commanding Royal Engineers. "Captain Atkyns. "etc., etc., etc."

HONGI'S ARMOUR.

Hongi left on his visit to England on March 2nd, 1820, taking his friend Waikato with him. Hongi was well received in England, and had an interview with King George IV., who gave him a helmet and a suit of chain armour, which became as famous as that of his owner, and were used by him till his death. He was also loaded with presents from other persons, but his great desire was for guns and of guns he had but a few. On arriving in Sydney, Hongi sold his presents and bought muskets and powder enough to arm 300 men. How he devastated the country and exterminated his enemies is well known. The armour was buried after his death, and has only just been recovered, and placed in the Wellington Museum.



NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

Holiday Excursion Tickets will be issued from any station to any station on the Auckland Section, from WEDNESDAY, 16th December, 1908, until SATURDAY, 2nd January, 1909, inclusive, available for return up to MONDAY 15th February, 1909.

SPECIAL EXPRESS TRAINS.

From Friday, 18th December, 1908, until Monday, 18th January, 1909, an Extra Express train will leave Auckland at 10.35 a.m. daily for Thames, Waihi, and Tauranga. Passengers for Rotorua and Cambridge must travel with the 10 a.m. ordinary express. Passengers for Thames, Waihi, and Tauranga must travel with the 10.35 a.m. extra express train. From Friday, 18th December, 1908, until Monday, 18th January, 1909, an extra express train will leave Thames for Auckland at 9.40 a.m. daily, arriving Auckland 5.38 p.m. On Thursday, 24th December, 1908, a special train will leave Auckland for Rotorua at 10.40 p.m., returning leaving Rotorua for Auckland at 9.0 p.m. on Sunday, 27th December, 1908. For full particulars as to train arrangements, see posters and future advertisements.

BY ORDER.

Musings AND Meditations

By Dog Toby

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

IT is doubtful if New Zealand will ever be really progressive in the best sense of the word, till women sit in our Houses of Legislature. In England they are discussing the use of an Upper House, and we in this country have often done the same. That is because both legislative chambers are composed exclusively of men, though I believe Press reporters employed in the House of Lords refer to that august body as "the old women" because of the presence of the bishops with their lawn sleeves and pious demagogue. There is no reason whatever why the Upper House both here and at Home, should not be entirely for women, elected by women voters, and the Lower House would be for men, elected by men voters. This would make politics far more interesting, and it would do away with the many reproaches urged against a system that does not really represent the will of the people.

For if you come to think of it, our present method is grossly unfair. Men will never introduce reforms that fall against their own tastes and inclinations, and many of what we call "the crying evils of the day" remain unredressed because of the selfishness of the mere man. A House of women members could carry a bill to put a heavy tax on bachelors. This question was treated by our late candidates in a spirit of unbecoming levity. Women urge that it is a tax on luxuries, and thus essentially democratic, and they ought to know. It is difficult to see any valid reason that could be urged against it, there is no doubt that, once imposed, it would be cheerfully paid, and if heavy enough, our revenue should be considerably benefited. Another thing that would be gained by women sitting in Parliament would be the greater attention that would be given to questions of social reform in regard to female labour. Men are essentially selfish in these matters, and never consider the conditions under which women work. Women are noted for their considerate treatment of their own sex, as witness the way in which the average mistress always considers the comfort and happiness of any woman she employs.

should be prohibited, or hours fixed for mercantile transactions in these animals, as by this means a check would be placed on men describing the society of their wives on occasions all and sundry that they may go and see a man about a dog.

How strange it seems, now that we have found that men can be made good by Act of Parliament, to read of the old days when people believed in the power of the grace of God. Even as I write my eye falls on an old-fashioned tract. It is headed, "Make Home Comfortable," and says that if women thought more of their homes and their husband's comfort, there would be fewer bad men. With what a curious Old World sound do the words fall on our ear that God's Holy Spirit can make us good. Childhood's faith, some call it; childhood's faith, if you will, for those of us who were children when Platenus was Consul. The modern poet says prayer is vain, the modern orator says the goal is our moral agent, both proclaim the way of salvation to be through the ballot-box and the power of Parliament. Be it so. And yet from the far-away Galilean hills there comes the faint echo of a voice, an echo almost lost 'mid the din of faction and party strife, and we catch the tender accents of the man of sorrows, "No man cometh to the Father, but by me."

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES

(Established 1817.) Head Office: GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY. Paid-up Capital £2,403,720 0 0 Reserve Fund £1,530,000 0 0 Reserve Liability of Proprietors £2,000,000 0 0 £6,023,720 0 0 Directors: The Hon. Charles K. Mackellar, M.L.C., President. The Hon. Reginald James Black, M.L.C. Sir James R. Fairlie, Kt. Richard Binckley, Esq. Hon. Sir Norman MacLaurin, Kt., M.L.C. Senator the Hon. James Thomas Walker.

Auditors: Alfred S. Milson, Esq.; Frederick W. Uther, Esq. London Office: Old Broad St., with Branches in all the Australian States, New Zealand and Fiji, and Agencies and Correspondents throughout Tasmania, the United Kingdom, Europe, India, China, Japan and the East, Africa, Canada, the United States, South America, Honolulu, and the West Indies. The Bank allows Interest on Fixed Deposits, collects for its Customers Dividends on Shares in Public Companies, and Interest on Debentures; undertakes the Agency of other Banks, and conducts all customary Banking Business; also issues Letters of Credit and Circular Notes, negotiable throughout the world. J. RUSSELL FRENCH, General Manager.

TAUPOKI SETTLEMENT.

District Lands Office, Auckland, 18th Nov., 1908. It is hereby notified that Sections in the Taupo Settlement will be opened for application under Renewable Lease at this Office on MONDAY, 21st December, 1908. They are classified first, second, and third class and village lots. Access by the Auckland-Wellington Main Trunk Railway to Te Awamutu, 101 miles from Auckland, thence by road through Kihikihi. The soil is good, being sandy loam on clay formation, well suited for sheep or dairy farming. Most of the settlement is under grass. Poster Plans, giving full particulars, can be seen at all principal post offices, and copies obtained on application at this office. JOHN STRACHAN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

THE Manager of the Auckland Industrial School will be glad of applications from persons in country districts who are willing to take charge of young children. Remuneration is given, and children on leaving the institution are supplied with a good outfit.