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The Week in Review

The figures just issued by the Registrar-General concerning the population of the Dominion are distinctly encouraging, and we can congratulate ourselves that we now exceed the million by over 20,000. It is calculated that on December 31st last there were 1,020,713 people living in the Dominion, including 12,340 in the Cook Islands. The European population has grown by 31,158, the excess of arrivals over departures accounting for 14,281, and natural increase has caused a gain of 16,897. These figures constitute a record both as regards births and immigration. It is gratifying to note that infant mortality was remarkably low, and the death-rate generally was not so high as in the previous year. The birth-rate showed a slight increase, 27.45, as against 27.30 in 1907; but it is still far below what it was some years ago.

It will be noticed from the above figures that we are receiving a large number of immigrants. The immigration policy of the Government has lately come in for a good deal of criticism, but there is no denying the fact that we must have population if the colony is to develop, and the readiest means of gaining population is by a wise encouragement of the right kind of immigrants. The trouble seems to be that many of those who come out are either not willing or are not able to go on the land, and they go to swell the ranks of the unemployed in the cities. It is also necessary that every facility possible should be given for acquiring land on easy terms, and information concerning Crown lands should be readily and promptly furnished by the authorities. Judging by letters sent to the press, some of our new arrivals have experienced considerable difficulty in getting any information at all. A writer in the "Dominion" relates his experiences as follows:—"I went to the Land Office; they handed me a map of the Piripiri Block, to be balloted for on December 31. I went to see it on a pouring wet day, and lost £1 on my railway fare, then had to tramp seven miles from a railway station, soaking wet. After all this trouble, it came to nothing; I was unsuccessful even in receiving an answer to my letter from the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Napier. I wrote to that official for an application form for that block, and afterwards for information regarding any other Crown lands likely to be opened—result, no reply. I also wrote to the Commissioner for Crown Lands at Wellington, and got no reply. I then wrote to the Commissioner at Auckland, from whom I received a courteous reply, along with a map of Crown lands to be balloted for on January 25. I received the letter on January 23. Living in a country place some miles out of Palmerston, I would be too late to apply." If this has been the way in which other immigrants have been treated, it is small wonder if they get disheartened. There is a large amount of land in the colony waiting to be settled, and if our immigration policy is to be successful we must do all in our power to get the right class of people as settlers, and to give them every facility for acquiring suitable areas.

The South African Convention has experienced considerable difficulty in selecting a site for the capital. At one time the tension was so great that several delegates threatened to leave, and eventually a compromise had to be accepted. Orange and Natal held out for Bloemfontein and Maritzburg, their respective capitals, but they had at least to give way, and the struggle then centred round Capetown and Pretoria. Capetown is the oldest political centre in South

Africa, and enjoys a dignity and a prestige beyond all the younger cities. Pretoria, on the other hand, is the centre of financial and commercial activity; it enjoys an invigorating climate, and it is close to the Rand and Johannesburg. The Convention therefore proposes that the seat of the Federal Legislature shall be at Capetown, while Pretoria is to be the administrative centre. This will have the effect of balancing the political parties in South Africa, for while the Boers will make the most of Pretoria they will be kept in check by the strong Imperialist feeling that prevails at Capetown.

While people have been sweltering under the summer heat, and everyone has been complaining of the sultriness of the atmosphere, the Auckland Board of Education has been considering a most elaborate scheme for thoroughly heating the new Technical College in Wellesley-street. The Director of Technical Education has been urging the Board to procure a plant which, including expenses of installation, will cost £4000, and will require about £100 a year to keep it going. A speaker at the University Senate referred to the fact that we were forcing children's minds by a hothouse system of education, and this latest proposal seems to lend countenance to his remarks. If we were living at the North Pole it is just conceivable that it might be necessary to spend several thousands in heating our buildings, but in the Auckland climate the chief difficulty is to keep cool. However admirable the proposed scheme may be in itself, there is no doubt that something much simpler would meet the requirements of the Technical College.

Several interesting accounts have been given lately of the condition of things in Turkey under the new regime. The change is said to be simply astonishing. The censorship of the Press has been abolished, and as a consequence newspapers, broadsheets, and cartoons are being freely hawked about the streets. Bookshops are springing up everywhere, and the streets are full of processions got up to do honour to England and France and the newly-elected deputies. Six months ago a gathering of even a handful of people was regarded as a sign of sedition and conspiracy, whilst to-day may be seen meetings at every street corner. The people have a happy, contented look, very different from the gloomy, suspicious countenance of older times. The revolution seemed to come suddenly, but it was in reality the result of years of plotting and secret intrigue. Discontent had been deliberately spread amongst the soldiery, women were used to smuggle letters and pamphlets, and all the innumerable devices of subterranean propaganda were brought into play. The result has been a glorious victory for the Young Turkey party, and the old system of oppression, cruelty, and cunning have been replaced by representative government and the blessings of free speech and political freedom.

The Attorney-General has given a very interesting statement regarding the National Provident Bill, which was introduced last year. He contrasted the individualism and selfishness of civilisation half a century ago, with the humane legislation of the present day. The human heart was impressing itself on the Statute Book in ever increasing measure, and men were devoting less time to piling up national wealth, and more to reducing national misery. The

National Provident Bill was an attempt to assist married workers and their families, since the State recognised that the men and women who had assumed the highest duties of citizenship were deserving of substantial help. He gave the following example of the working of the Act:—If a young man of 25 paid 1/3 per week, and had a family of four children, the benefits he would gain at 60 years of age would be 10/- per week, in addition to the old age pension. If at the end of five years he died and left a wife and four children, the sum of £1 17/6 a week would be paid to the widow and children for their support—7/6 for the widow, and 7/6 for each child under 14. Should the contributor become incapacitated by sickness or accident after five years, he would be paid 7/6 for each child under 14, so that in the case under review 30/- per week would be coming in during the period of incapacity. The scheme would be limited to workers who were not earning more than £200 a year. Dr Findlay rightly contended that no other country in the world possessed any scheme of workers' annuities as generous as this.

China seems to be seriously catering on her career of reform now that her statesmen have a free hand, owing to the death of Emperor Kwang-Su and the Dowager Empress, Tsi-An. The new Emperor, Pu-Yi, is only three years old, so Prince Chun, who is acting as regent, is the real ruler of the Empire. The regent has already shown himself to be a man of great firmness, and when there were signs of agitation recently, portending serious trouble, he took strong measures to preserve the peace. He is said to be guided by Yuan Shi Kai, who has for long been the leader of the progressive party in China, and every effort will be made to introduce much-needed reforms. The new Dowager Empress Ye-Ho-No-La, may, however, elect to assert her authority, and should she do so, the path of reform will be found to be none too easy. Meanwhile, the regent is doing all he can to secure the prosperity and happiness of the country.

The new play, "An Englishman's Home," has created one of the greatest sensations of recent years. It is by Major Guy Louis du Maurier, of the Royal Fusiliers, a son of the famous "Punch" artist. It deals with England's unpreparedness for war, and the play is being utilised for the purpose of rousing the country to the necessity for home defence. All the seats have been booked till the end of March, and arrangements have been made for producing the play at two London theatres simultaneously, as well as in the provinces. England seems at last to be waking up to the fact that her defence force must be strengthened very materially if she is to remain free from successful invasion, and several eminent authorities are urging compulsory military training for all youths between 18 and 21 years of age. The volunteer system has hopelessly broken down, and Mr Haldane's Territorial Army has not proved the success anticipated. Lord Roberts now contends that some form of compulsory service is absolutely necessary. The new play has drawn attention to the national danger in a forcible manner, and the Imperial authorities seem inclined to view with favour the proposed schemes for the compulsory military training of young men.

According to the most recently published statistics regarding the agricultural progress of the North and South Islands, the North Island, with only about half the area of land in occupation, as compared with the South Island, exporting nearly twice as much produce. The North Island, out of a total area

of 28,450,520 acres, has 14,901,294 acres in occupation. The South Island, with a total area of 37,456,000 acres, has 22,638,777 acres in occupation. The North Island in 1907 exported produce, the bulk of which came from the land, to the value of £12,204,001. The South Island's exports were £7,836,661, or only 39.1 of the Dominion's total exports. It is interesting, also, to note the values of the two islands for taxation purposes. The capital value of the North is now assessed at £149,783,914, and that of the South at £103,656,258. The North Island has for so long been regarded as being far less fertile than the South that these figures will come as a surprise to those who have been accustomed to speak of the neglected North. With some seven million acres less in occupation, it shows a yearly export of some £4,000,000 more in produce.

There is no doubt that much of the decay in English Rugby football is due to the short-sighted policy of the Executive in the matter of payment for players' expenses. Some sixteen or eighteen years ago several Yorkshire Union clubs asked that the English Rugby Union should consider the question of payment of players for lost time in big football matches. A large number of players were working men, to whom the loss of a day's pay was a serious consideration. The proposal was vetoed on the ground that it was introducing an element of professionalism, and as a consequence a large number of the Northern clubs seceded from the governing body. Hybrid amateur-professional clubs sprang up on all sides, and Association football grew so much in favour that to-day it completely eclipses the Rugby game in many places. Later on the English Union conceded an allowance of 3/- per day, but this sum was too small to represent legitimate compensation for lost time, while the strict amateur did not want it. Now the Scottish Union has impeached the mother institution for its action, and it looks as if the prospects of the game were worse than ever. It is to be hoped that some decisive action will be taken to restore to English Rugby something of the prestige it so long enjoyed.

A very remarkable gathering took place recently in the library of Hereford Cathedral, when the leading representatives of all denominations assembled in connection with the Milton Tercentenary celebrations. Many of them had travelled long distances to be present, and the Bishop of Hereford gave an eloquent and impressive address on "Christian Unity." He said that Milton had helped to lift us into the purer air of a larger freedom, and had been an inspirer of his own and of later generations. His voice had been like the sound of many waters, and we were the heirs of this rich and varied inheritance from the past. Dr Percival then went on to deal with the debt we owed to the great souls of all denominations, and concluded with the following appeal for a greater spirit of unity amongst us. Speaking of the famous men of the past, he said:

"Their gifts and their influence—in other words, the debt we owe them—should surely convince us that in very truth the Word of God is not bound, and that His Spirit breathes through all human society with little regard to those dogmatic differences which unhappily loom so large in the common everyday life and spirit of most of us. Thus it is in fact the unique greatness of Milton that we are celebrating to-day, and the greatness of his gifts to our common life, whether as the champion of freedom, or as the prophet of the higher patriotism, or as the sacred poet of our nation and our race; and the lesson