

The Teachers' Superannuation Bill will not be proceeded with this session. The bill was referred to the actuaries of the New Zealand Government Life Insurance Department, and their report showed that actually the proposed scheme is financially unsound. The proposal to grant superannuation to school teachers differs from the police and from the railway service, as in both of these services accumulated funds existed. The contribution fixed by the bill prepared last session is inadequate. The amount required according to the actuaries to be contributed to place the fund on a sound financial position is more than the teachers could well pay.

The situation could be met (1) by contribution from the teachers for a given period without any benefits being derived, thus allowing a substantial fund to accumulate; (2) Government to subsidise such contributions; (3) Parliament to vote a sum of money sufficient to make the scheme financially sound, and to start with fair prospect of success.

Mr Baume, speaking in the House of Representatives, said the position was exceedingly unsatisfactory to the school teachers of the colony. They had asked for such a scheme, and were told it would be brought down. It would be a scandal if some attempt was not made to meet the desires of the teachers, and to justify the confidence they had reposed in the Government.

Suprarenalin is a big product of the meat packing-house industry, says the Duluth, U.S.A., "News-Tribune." It is one of the most precious articles in existence, being worth 7000dol. (£1400) a pound, and is so powerful that one part of it dissolved in 100,000 parts of water will show its presence when tested with chloride of iron.

It has been found that the suprarenal gland of the animal, which is found about the kidneys, when reduced to a drug, possesses wonderful astringent properties; so powerful that operations on the eye and nose may be performed without the loss of any blood. With the addition of cocaine such operations are also painless. The great value of this to a surgeon will be appreciated when one realises that when cutting around the eye he can have a perfectly clear field, and can do his work much more quickly, as a flow of blood would not only obscure the operation, but would make it necessary to stop frequently and wipe it away in order that he might see where he is cutting. The active principle has been isolated at the Armour Packing Company's Chicago Laboratory, and has been named "suprarenalin," a word that has not yet got into the dictionary. It takes 7000 grains of fresh glandular substance to make one grain of the "suprarenalin." However, it is very powerful, and solutions employed by surgeons in performing minor operations on the eye, ear, and throat vary from 1:10,000 to 1:1000 in strength. This "suprarenalin" is said also to be the most powerful stimulant known. It may take the place of strychnia in the pharmacopoeia.

The Westchester Racing Association is building at Queens, Long Island, a racing plant, which will undoubtedly (says "Harper's Weekly") be the most complete and luxurious in the world. It is to cost 1,500,000 dol. (£300,000), and will probably be finished before the opening of the racing season of 1904. Belmont Park, as the course will be called, is to occupy over 600 acres. It will cover the territory lying to the north and south of the Hempstead Turnpike at Queens, on the south side of the line of the Long Island Railroad. Four hundred acres will lie to the north of the Turnpike, and 200 to the south of it. On the larger portion to the north of the road will be located the race-course, an exercising track, a grandstand, fieldstand, club-house, jockey-house, paddock, judges' stand, timers' stand, etc. On the south side it is proposed to build still another training track and additional stables. The plans provide for numerous round and straight tracks—the main one to be 100ft. wide on the stretches, and 75ft. on the turns. Races will be run from right to left, after the English custom, instead of from left to right, as on most American courses. There will be a grandstand 750ft. long, which will seat 11,000 people. In the rear will be a large betting ring, easy of access from

the stand and lawn. Everything has been planned with a view to meeting the requirements of a great metropolitan race-track. The assembling and dispersing of crowds will be elaborately cared for; and for their accommodation there are to be restaurants, cafes, and ladies' dining-rooms and parlours. The club-house—to be connected by a bridge with the grandstand—will be particularly complete in all its appointments. It will surpass in quality of construction and magnificence any racing club-house in America, or, probably, in the world. The approach to it will be through groves of oak-trees between the Hempstead Turnpike and the rear of the grandstand. Trains from Long Island City will reach the park in 23 minutes, and visitors will pass from them through a covered walk elevated gradually to the level of the mezzanine floor of the grandstand.

Sir George White's evidence before Lord Elgin's Commission of Enquiry into the Boer War contains the following remarkable passages:

"I would like to submit to His Majesty's Commissioners that my resolve to hold Ladysmith and its successful accomplishment resulted in the complete overthrow of the Boer plan of campaign.

"That plan was to overwhelm the British in Natal before their reinforcements could arrive and by a rapid coup conquer that province to the sea. The overthrow of that plan had been accomplished even before the reinforcements landed.

"During the time the Boers could have carried out their plan they were held at Ladysmith. The holding of Ladysmith, therefore, saved Natal. My task was thus fulfilled.

"If I could keep the Boers round Ladysmith, and thus preserve the integrity of Natal as a province, its capital city of Mafitzburg and its seaport at Durban, during the interval when the Boers' power of early mobilisation and concentration on Natal enabled them to attack with greatly superior numbers, I had every confidence that after that interval the greater resources of the British Empire would be put forth to help my force. I cannot justly be held responsible for the losses incurred in the relief."

Occupying the greater part of the crater was the new cone that had been built up since the first eruption, and from its summit rose in supreme grandeur—one might say in overwhelming grandeur—that which had been described as the "cork of the volcano," an obelisk of rock towering upwards of eight hundred feet in height, with a thickness in its lower part of three hundred to three hundred and fifty feet, says a Professor Heilprin in an article describing a remarkable phenomenon in connection with the famous Mount Pele. The grandest monuments erected by man are insignificant when compared with this monument of nature, placed where it looks over cities of the dead. The volcano is corked, but the cork is being pushed out, and the entire eight hundred feet and more have been forced out bodily! The force that pushes out lava in other volcanoes is acting in the same way here, but in this case the lava hardens before it leaves the crater mouth, and instead of flowing over, is simply being pushed up higher and higher as a united mass. At the time of my visit the tip of the obelisk was five thousand and twenty feet above the sea, and it was still going higher. In four days it had risen twenty-one feet. On one side, where the "cork" has pressed hardest against the enclosing rocks, it is quite smooth, even polished, and grooved with parallel lines. The night preceding our ascent, the base of this mighty tower was fiery red, glowing with the molten lava that was being forced into it through passages and rifts that had remained open; and on the day that I left the island a faint line of steam was curling out from the very apex, showing that, although solid, the obelisk has channel-ways that go continuously to the top. From nearly all points of its base steam puffs were issuing and boiling; and whatever real eruption now takes place, the activity is confined to this position. Parts of the rock are blown to pieces, great avalanches descend into the valley below, but the monument continues to mount silently and majestically, its grey and white surface standing out in brilliant relief against the

blue sky which occasionally encircles it. Compared with the other fair scenes of nature that it has been my fortune to see, I can perhaps truthfully say that the view of this new Mount Pele, as seen from the crater-rim, is the grandest of them all; certainly none of them surpasses it in imposing and picturesque quality. What is to be the end of all this? This question can be answered only in the future. For the present we must content ourselves with knowing that we have before us a structure new to the geologist, and one that has added a special feature to the remarkable activities which have made history for Mount Pele.

The Government of Peru is endeavouring to attract immigration by means of pamphlets explaining the laws and resources of the country. The latest issue, copies of which have percolated through as far as Auckland, contains some interesting specimens of official Peruvian English. Extracts are quoted from the Constitution. Article 16 says that "Nobody is obliged to do whatever is not commanded by the law nor prevented from doing whatever the law does not forbid." Another article says:—"No one can be arrested without a written order of the proper judiciary authority or of the one charged with the custody of public order except in case of infraganti delinquency."

Moreover, the "Foreing" office declares that "the practice of all trades, industries or professions not discordant with the morality safety and health of the people is entirely free. . . . All useful discoveries are exclusive property of their authors unless they agree to sell the secret or in case of forcible expropriation." Article 26 of the Constitution says that "property, whether real estate, movable goods, intellectual, literary, or artistic is inviolable. No one can be despoiled of anything that belongs to him nor can be expropriated except the public benefit legally proved. . . ." "Cleanliness and public healthfulness, with the power of dictating the rules to be observed in hotels and private establishments for the sale of victuals, liquors, or medicines of bad quality" is within the jurisdiction of the common councils of provinces. Under the comprehensive heading "Hygiene," it is announced that "public healthfulness is protected by the common councils and by the physicians appointed and paid for this special purpose." There are no export duties "save a small one on gold and caoutchouc in compensation of the gratuitous concession of property made by the Government." The inhabitants of Peru are described as "healthy and strong, and are able to attain an old age through regular habits and careful hygiene." The "Foreing" office is not alone in its use of quaint English. In its pamphlet it proudly quotes the following sentence from the description of an enthusiastic writer on Peru:—"When it is considered that this generous soil answers so profusely to the slightest effort of the labourer; when its prodigal vegetation and its metallurgic treasures are reminded, an impression of astonishment prevails in the observer."

"One of the strangest objects in the world," says a traveller recently returned from China, "is the Imperial stone junk at Peking. This stone barge stands in the middle of a lake in the heart of the city. It lies at anchor, waiting to take the Emperor, to whom use it is specially devoted, for a sail. As a matter of fact, however, the vessel has never sailed a yard, and never will, because it is built on the bottom of the lake, and is only a boat in appearance. This is the sort of deception the Chinese delight in more than anything. The Imperial junk is large, and magnificently built of the finest white marble! It has three covered decks, and is an admirable place for an airing in hot weather."

A writer in an English paper has recently entered a protest against the use of "former" and "latter" in pure English. He allows the comic poets to see their value as convenient rimes, as in the quatrain:—

One night I saw him squeeze her hand;  
There was no doubt about the matter.  
I said he must resign, or stand  
My vengeance—and he chose the latter.

Then there was the punning poet who wrote of Xenophon's retreat:—

When over the land and the sea  
It behoved the Ten Thousand to scatter,  
There were some who cried, "The former  
for me!"  
But the rest cried, "The latter! The latter!"

The joke of this being the play on the Greek word "thalatta" (the sea), the English one has legitimate excuse for its presence.

Again in the "War Song of Dinas Vawr":—

The mountain sheep are sweeter,  
But the valley sheep are fatter;  
We therefore deemed it meet  
To carry off the latter.

This purist would have us repeat significant words, instead of using the awkward substitutes. He quotes this passage in proof of his theory that the sense is sometimes obscured by such verbal expedients: "The belief in God and another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that the former can no more vanish than the latter can ever be torn from me."

Huxley, that clear and unaffected writer, has said, "Locality is no more in the pin than pain is; of the former, as of the latter, it may be said that its existence apart from a thinking mind is not conceivable."

If we turn to the Bible, that treasure house of simple and robust English, we shall find that the translators were well able to dispense with such makeshifts. The words former and latter are used, to be sure, but invariably to denote succession in point of time, and never for the sake of avoiding repetition. "O remember not against us former iniquities," is a good example of this use. The chief objection to the modern way of employing the words is that it forces the reader to pause for an instant to recollect which is "former" and which is "latter."

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