

The Land Question.

The Budget intimates that it will not be possible for the Government to deal with all land policy matters this session, but a Bill will be introduced which, among other proposals, will include a new method of acquiring land for settlement purposes, and of settling such land on the deferred payment system. There will be no increase of the Dominion's indebtedness, the settlers will have security of tenure on easy terms, and landowners will receive a fair price for the land required for closer settlement. The ballot system will be amended to check speculation and give preference to applicants who have not been successful in two or more previous ballots. European and Native land will be purchased in advance of railway construction to participate in any increase in values arising out of public expenditure. It is intended to rigidly adhere to a policy of closer settlement and absolute security of tenure for settlers. The tenants on settlement lands whose tenure is renewable lease are in a different position to tenants whose tenure is lease in perpetuity, but they will also be given the option of purchase at a price to be fixed by actuarial calculation. The money received in this way will be paid into the Land for Settlement Account and used for the purchase of other land for settlement purposes, thus reducing the amount of loan money which otherwise it would be necessary to raise. It is not intended to interfere in any way with unimproved lands. An increase in the graduated land tax is proposed on large properties with the object of breaking up big holdings.

The Policy of the Budget.

As regards the policy of the Government, set forth in the statement, we may note as points of interest that the proceeds from the sale of Crown lands will in future be paid to the Land for Settlement Account. Special attention will be given to the needs of backblock settlers in regard to mails, and the post office will pay two-thirds instead of one-half of the loss on telephone lines subsidised by settlers. Second ballots will be repealed, and a new system substituted. The Old Age Pension Act is to be amended so as to provide for the payment of the pension to women on attaining the age of sixty. An Invalid Pensions Bill will also be introduced so as to assist people who are permanently incapacitated for work. The High Commissioner's office is to be reorganised. In regard to Defence, it is proposed to substitute military detention for imprisonment in connection with non-registration. A special fund is to be created in connection with the insurance of Government buildings against fire. Provision is to be made for the settlement of the gum lands by giving diggers the option of taking up sections of some twenty-five acres free of rent for five years. The question of settling both the Crown and Native lands will receive every attention, and agriculture is to be encouraged by the establishment of at least one agricultural college in each island.

An Elective Upper House.

One of the most interesting proposals is that which seeks to make the Upper House an elective body. It is proposed to create two constituencies—the North Island and the South Island—and to elect twenty Councillors from each Island. The electoral roll will be the same as for the House of Representatives, and the election will be held under the proportional system. Due provision will be made for safeguarding the full and exclusive privileges of the House of Representatives on all matters involving finance. Each elected Councillor will hold his seat for the term of two Parliaments of the House of Representatives, one-half of the total number retiring at each election. The qualification for election to the Council will be exactly the same as that for election to the House. The present non-elected members will continue to hold their seats until the expiration of the respective terms of their existing appointments.

A Salutory Sentence.

It is very gratifying to observe that both at home and in the Dominion there is a determination to administer the law in protecting life and property, irrespective of any political creed pro-

fessed by those who are inclined to flout the law and defy all authority. In England two suffragettes have been sentenced to five years' penal servitude each for attempting to set fire to the Theatre Royal, Dublin. Had the attempt succeeded, it would in all probability have been attended with great loss of life. It is difficult to conceive of a crime more serious, and it is to be hoped that the salutary sentences imposed will convince the militant suffragettes that no political catch cry will avail as an excuse for crimes. In our own country Mr. Massey emphatically declared that any person inciting others to damage property would be punished as far as the law allowed, and, if necessary, the law would be amended so as to allow proceedings to be taken against such persons. This was in reference to a newspaper paragraph giving details of an alleged Socialist's Sunday-school, conducted in Waihi by an American, who, it was stated, preached such things as putting emery powder into oiled bearings, with the object of grinding the parts of the machinery, and advised men to drop a chisel into machines as often as possible, to rip the cogs off the wheels; also, that a plug of dynamite was a useful adjunct to their work. The lecturer, it was added, told men that it was to their interests to do as much damage as possible to their employers' property, and advised them to work only when their employer was watching them, and to "take it easy" at all other times. The Crown Law office advises that the statements, if made, constitute an offence, and action will be taken.

The Centenary of the Waltz.

This year marks the centenary of the introduction of the waltz into England, and it is interesting to note that when the dance was first introduced half of London professed itself shocked. Amongst the most bitter opponents of the waltz was Byron, who was a connoisseur in matters of moral correction. So fierce was the controversy, that it led to a duel between General Thornton and Theodore Hook, the former defending and the latter denouncing the new dance. Society in general voted the waltz as a very stupid thing. The hostility continued for some years, till the Emperor Alexander, the father of the Holy Alliance, danced it at Almacks. This put the seal of high approbation on the dance, which afterwards came into high favour, till the Turkey Trot and the Grizzly Hug partly superseded it. If such pious people as Lord Byron and Theodore Hook were shocked at the waltz, one can only imagine what their feelings would have been had they lived to witness some of our modern dances.

Ideas and Enthusiasm.

The Auckland Exhibition, to be opened next year, is being organised by gentlemen fertile in ideas and brimming over with enthusiasm. Already much of the preliminary arrangement has been settled, and the committees are energetically attending to some of the main features. The progress so far made and the enthusiasm displayed augurs well for the success of the project. Many excellent ideas have been put forward, and in due time will receive full attention. Mr. C. J. Parr, who has just returned from a visit to Australia, intimates that considerable interest has been aroused in the Commonwealth, and it is expected that the exhibition will draw both exhibits and visitors from the other side.

Sunday Concerts.

A peculiar position has arisen in Wellington in connection with Sunday concerts promoted by the Professional Orchestral Society. The city by-laws contain a prohibition against the levying of a charge for admission to Sunday concerts, when permitted, and the society in question, finding that many supporters were being deprived of seats by a big early rush, decided to reserve a certain portion of the accommodation for annual subscribers. The Council authorities regarded this as a violation of the by-laws, in that seats were being reserved for a monetary consideration, and the Mayor upheld this interpretation of the by-laws, with the result that the practice of reserving seats was stopped. The Musicians' Association also lodged a protest against such a custom being allowed to creep in. Some councillors consider the society should be allowed to reserve seats, and the matter is to be considered by the by-laws committee.

Flocking to the Cities.

The depletion of country districts of good workers by the inevitable drift to the cities has in recent times been a matter of grave concern. Not only has the movement left farmers with little labour to effectively carry on operations, but channels of employment in the cities have become overcrowded, men and their families have suffered through the absence of work, and altogether an undesirable state of affairs has arisen. The Auckland provincial executive of the Farmers' Union seeks to remedy this position by offering inducements to workers to take up their residence in country districts. The idea is to persuade the Government to erect workers' homes on sections of areas not less than ten acres, in reality creating small settlements, from which men for farm work could be drawn when required. When not needed the workers could profitably cultivate their holdings and thus would not be solely dependent on farmers for the means of subsistence. It is anticipated that this scheme would lead to the bringing into existence of a healthy country population, and relieve congestion in centres of population.

Important to Catholics.

A decision bearing on educational scholarships of immediate importance to the Catholic community is recorded in the "Tablet." Until 1910, the pupils of the Catholic primary schools were debarred from competing for Education Board Scholarships or Junior National Scholarships, but this injustice was removed by an Act passed in that year. The Catholics had been contending, however, that scholarships won by scholars from a Catholic primary school should be teachable at Catholic secondary schools. The main Act provides that the holder of a scholarship must prosecute his studies at "a secondary school or its equivalent" approved by the Education Board or the Minister, as the case may be. Hitherto the Education Department has read "equivalent" as meaning constitutionally, and not merely educationally, equivalent. It appears that the Bishops some time ago asked the Mackenzie Government for an authoritative statement, and the Solicitor-General has given the opinion that "the Education Boards in respect to Board Scholarships, and the Board and the Minister in respect to National Scholarships, have ample power to 'approve' Catholic secondary schools at which scholarships may be taken out." In other words, "equivalent" does not mean "constitutionally" equivalent, but "educationally" equivalent.

The Three-Fifths Majority.

Parliament was occupied on Thursday afternoon and evening in a discussion on a bill introduced by Mr. Malcolm to secure the abolition of the three-fifths majority in electing polls, and the substitution of a 55-45 per cent. basis. The Government was blamed by Opposition members for not making the bill a Government measure, instead of allowing a private member of the party to bring it down, and eventually the second reading was rejected by 42 to 32. The Prime Minister paired with the Hon. Jas. Allen in favour of the amendment, and the Hon. F. M. B. Fisher was the only Minister voting on the same side, while the Hon. Fraser, Heidebrand, Herries, Pomare and Rhodes recorded a negative vote.

A Race from London to India.

An advisory council has been formed in London for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements for an aviation race from London to India in September. It is expected that at least three British aviators will take part in the attempt. The route is fairly clear as far as Vienna, and after that the aviators will follow the course of the Danube as far as Nikopol, and go over the Shipka Pass to Adrianople. From Constantinople the Anatolia railway will be followed to Bozanti, and the route afterwards lies by way of Tarsus, Adana, Aleppo, Bagdad, the Euphrates, and Tigris to Basrah, along the coast of the Persian Gulf to Banda Abbas, and thence along the Arabian Sea to Karachi, which is the first point that can be touched in India. The distance, roughly speaking, is about 4,500 miles.

The Problem of Longevity.

Sugar is the secret of longevity. Saturate yourself with it, let it permeate your system, and you will live long. This is the precept of Dr. Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute. If you cannot absorb enough sugar, call in a microbe to help you. The particular microbe that will do it for you is the dog's own microbe, the "glycobacter." Our mute friend the dog has for 6,000 years and more been trying to do his best for us. We have discovered at last—or, rather, Dr. Metchnikoff has discovered—what this dumb friend wanted to give us. The discovery, is enough to revolutionise existence. Dr. Metchnikoff has stated it plainly before the Academy of Science. Never before had lecturer a more attentive audience. All the listeners were or less advanced in years. The old age problem had a peculiar fascination for them, and Dr. Metchnikoff satisfied them. He explained how a pernicious set of microbes produced indols and phenols in the human intestine. These two products are as a slow poison to the system. They are the poison of old age. If we could only get rid of the indols and the phenols we would never grow old. Men and women would remain eternally young. Sugar, Dr. Metchnikoff found, destroyed these indols and phenols. But it cannot always reach them, because it dissolves and is absorbed too quickly. Here is where the "glycobacter" comes to the rescue. He fabricates a great quantity of sugar, and with it he fights the indols and the phenols produced by the mischievous microbes. It is not necessary, either, that we should eat sugar to feed him. He finds the sugar in boiled potatoes and similar nutritious foods that contain a good deal of starch. Dr. Metchnikoff says it was not he who really discovered this beneficent microbe, but his colleague and collaborator, Dr. Wollmann, who made the researches at Dr. Metchnikoff's suggestion. The "glycobacter" is not found in the dog only, nor is it in all dogs. The canine race itself benefits little from its presence because of the indifference of dogs to any scientific regime. They eat anything they can get, and thus supply material to the other microbes, the enemies of the "glycobacter." At any rate, in the human subject as well as in rats, the action of the dog's microbe has been very beneficial. Its presence sufficed to diminish or expel altogether the noxious indols and phenols. Dr. Metchnikoff has for years been trying to solve the problem of longevity.

A New Accumulator.

Professor Hannover, of Copenhagen University, who has just perfected his new electrical accumulator, has informed me (states the Copenhagen correspondent of a London journal) that he obtained his idea at the International Congress for testing materials, held at Stockholm in 1907, when listening to a paper read by a French scientist, Professor Osmond.

"The problem to be solved," said the Professor, "was to manufacture a sheet of lead of the desired porosity. The pores in each sheet number millions, and are each smaller than the point of even the very finest needle which it is possible to produce. Having ultimately succeeded, about half a year ago, I started to make some accumulators of the new metal, which I handed to the Electrical Department of the State Railway for test and experiment. These accumulators have now been in use for some six months, and to all appearance amply justify my expectations. The electrical energy will last without being recharged from four to five times as long as any accumulator hitherto known. Professor Hannover has christened the substance 'pore metal.'"

With regard to the actual value of the invention, Professor Rung, an authority upon subjects dealing with electrical engineering, says that the new accumulators have about four times the capacity of any accumulator hitherto invented. The invention will, he says, also carry with it an enormous saving in cost, and he mentions various undertakings where a clear loss of money will in the future be changed into profit.