

German Emperor for the passing of his Army Bill—and let us note, besides, the contrast, on which M. Belloc has passingly touched, between the good will with which the French people support their military burden and the struggle necessary to sustain theirs on the people of Germany. Let us hope, in conclusion, that whoever the enemy may be the army of England, either independently or in alliance, may not be identified with them. The misunderstanding about Siam will, we trust, be peaceably settled. The probabilities of the matter are infinitely preferable to its possibilities.

POLITICAL JOTTINGS. AND is that all that philosophy is good for? But still, we must admit that the New Liberalism leaves to its adherents—even to their leader—a very full freedom of the individual. Nothing, for example,

could be more free than the manner in which last week, Sir Robert Stout replied to the attack made on him by Mr Fish. Mr Fish, indeed, said several nasty things. He brought against Sir Robert, to all intents and purposes, a charge of influencing the Government to swindle certain creditors in order that he himself might be saved from incurring any loss. The case was that of the Fernhill railway. The mine connected with the railway, Mr Fish said, was, in fact, owned by Sir Robert Stout—who had first instigated the commissioners to take possession of the line, and had now, also through the commissioners, induced the Government to re-vest the company with it—making no provision for the payment of debts due to other people. Mr Fish added that Sir Robert Stout was generally in the habit of employing go-betweens to do things with which he found fault. But we might have thought that this opportunity was one on which Sir Robert Stout would gladly seize to give to the Colony, and indeed to the world at large, to which, as we know, he is so anxious to afford a much needed example, a pattern of philosophical forbearance, and calm dignity of repudiation. He did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, as we have said, he availed himself of all the freedom which the New Liberalism leaves in the hands of the individual. He in turn, attacked Mr Fish, and discharged in that gentleman's face every accusation of crooked dealing that had been brought against him throughout his public career. It is not our business to pass any judgment in the case. We may possibly conclude, that, as is common when there is a quarrel, there were faults on both sides. Meantime it remains for us, like M. Jourdain on a somewhat similar occasion, to exclaim in tones of chastened remonstrance and surprise, "Monsieur le philosophe!" We may add that rumours are about to the effect that Sir Robert is bent, if not on a complete overthrow of the Government at least on a reconstruction of the Cabinet. We may conclude, in short, that the New Liberalism leaves also to its adherents, and especially to its leader, a freedom to consult closely for the interests of number one.—The scene between Mr Fish and Sir Robert Stout was not the only rumpus that during the week conferred a particular liveliness on the House. There was also an outbreak on the part of Mr T. Mackenzie. Mr Mackenzie fell foul of the Government with respect to the works at Catlins, where, he declared, he had found it impossible to obtain employment for deserving and needy men. He accused the Ministry of making use of the co-operative system to promote the interests of party, and of reserving employment for those alone who were of the right colour. Mr Earnshaw, who, by the way, seems not disinclined to do a little dirty work in seconding the intention attributed to Sir Robert Stout of at least ousting the present Premier, partly sided with Mr Mackenzie, and admitted that there was some justice in his charge. The hon Member, took the opportunity of speaking a word or two in his own favour. He denied that the right colour had anything to do with the matter. He himself, for example, he said, had found employment for men who had voted against him and would do so again. The row culminated in a scene in which Mr Mackenzie accused the Minister for Labour of telling an untruth, and recommending him to show a little more decency. Mr Rolleston finally persuaded the irate Member for the Clutha to cool down and withdraw his offensive words.

Mr Spera, it seems, distinguished himself in the Financial debate by a very smart speech, in which he criticised hon Members generally in anything rather than a complimentary manner. Mr Spera, however, appears to share the inconsistency that, strange to say, is everywhere a characteristic of the Liberal workingman. The whole position of this party is based on a community of interests, on a universal brotherhood, and yet, not Mayfair, not the Faubourg Saint Germain, is, in its particular way, more exclusive or jointly monopolistic. Mr Spera's contention was for the particular interests of the North. We, nevertheless, are quite willing to make a compromise with him. He complains that every Minister hails from the South. Let him, then, take Sir Robert Stout and elect him for a Northern constituency at the approaching election. It may be doubted whether Sir Robert, if he were to oust Mr Seddon, would retain his popularity on the West Coast. Possibly, indeed, the intention of doing so with which he is accredited, might prove a hindrance to his being again returned there. In the South, much as we admire Sir Robert and fond as we are of him, it is also doubtful as to whether

he would be returned. We are used to him, and therefore not now so much affected by that brilliant philosophic strain, which, on the principle *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, so took the House by storm the other day. Mr Fish, as we see, though hardly understanding more than other Members, remained undazzled. All the difficulty would be solved by their taking Sir Robert up to Auckland and electing him there. Every one must admit, besides, that it would be much prettier for him to kick Mr Seddon out from a different standing point than that which he occupies at present, and on which many friends of the Premier and the Cabinet were so eager and did so much to place him. "If the North had not been vanquished by the South, why were its representatives expected to bow down their necks under the yoke of Southern supremacy?" So inquired Mr Spera as reported by the correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times*. But, there, we offer them the choicest firstling of our flock. What more can they desire? To Sir Robert Stout, in whose heart the universal brotherhood is no vain sentiment, all constituencies are necessarily alike and cardinal points are indifferent.—Mr Ward's reply to the critics of his Statement appears to have been in every respect sufficient. Indeed, he very fully brought out the weakness and querulousness of their fault-finding. On that disputed matter of the surplus, too, he spoke in a manner to reassure us. But, in fact, Mr Rolleston had admitted that the surplus was real. The only qualification he made was that it was an accident. They, however, tell us that it is always the unexpected that happens, and, even if they exaggerate, it very often is so. Therefore we may hope for a like casualty next year. Mr Rolleston, meantime, complains that the winding up of the Financial debate was brought about unfairly and in a manner that "jockeyed" several members of the Opposition out of their opportunity to speak. But if, as seems almost certainly the case, these Members had nothing better to say than had those of their party who had spoken, they may be congratulated on an escape from making a display of their emptiness, and the country has gained something by way of a saving of time.—Mr Taipua, representative of the Western Maories, gives warning that, if surveying of Native lands be continued as it goes on at present, serious trouble may be the result.

The righteous soul of Mr W. Hutchison is vexed because of the sum of money that leaves the Colony, with the hazardous destiny of supporting Tattersall's sweeps at Sydney. He has consequently applied to the Hon Mr Ward for a Grahamisation of letters so addressed. Mr Ward, however, declines to do anything in the matter. And, indeed, *cui bono?* what better use would gamblers make of the money restored to them? How would it do, meantime, to pass an Act confiscating to charitable uses the money so devoted? But then Tattersall, no doubt, would invent an alias. We are hardly as yet arrived at that pitch of perfection in moral legislation when it will be possible to appoint a general postal censor at every post office, authorised to open at will every letter and dispose of it as the public good seems to him to demand. Times, however, are advancing, and, although, as we have said, the New Liberalism leaves to every man a fulness of individual freedom, it provides also for a interference of the State in his affairs. The near future, therefore, may bring forth all that is requisite. But Mr W. Hutchison's righteousness seems generally on the *qui vive*. We learn, again, from the *Otago Daily Times* that it is his intention to propose a clause in the Education Act Amendment Bill, to permit of Bible-reading in the public schools. The clause is to the effect that, on the requisition of 20 parents or guardians of pupils, a school committee shall permit of the reading in question, with or without comment—"Provided," and here is where the room for doubt occurs, "the requisitionists appoint a suitable person for the purpose, and provide a fund for the payment of his services and other expenses, and appoint a committee of five to act in conjunction with the school committee." Is it, then, Mr Hutchison's desire "to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds," as the old saying is? The accommodating nature of the hon Member is well known. Does he mean to conciliate the Evangelical by the measure, and to conciliate the secularist by making it inoperative? In any case those 20 parents or guardians will not make themselves accountable for one penny. They will have Bible-reading, and Bible-teaching if they can get them for nothing, but as to paying for them, that is another matter altogether. The case is one in which the "Word" must be given to them literally without money and without price. Mr Hutchison's righteousness, then, may, perhaps, be taken as tending, not quite inconsistently with the hon Member's general reputation, to cheat the devil in the dark.

BIGOTRY AND INSOLENCE.

THE refusal of the Auckland Board of Education to accede to the request of the Most Rev Dr Luck, that they should authorise the inspection by their inspectors of the Catholic schools is possibly only what might be expected by any one acquainted with the character of the Board's members. For our own part, we had known nothing whatever about the gentlemen in question. The report of their meeting, however, as given by the *New Zealand Herald* of July 19, is quite sufficient to place us *au courant* of their general disposition.