

NOTES FROM THE HOUSE.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.

(From our special correspondent.)

On Monday evening the Premier informed the House that he did not think it right to join Tasmania in sending a cable message to the Boer Government congratulating them on the success of the South African war with a view to influencing the elections.

The business transacted during the evening was of a formal character.

The House got through a good deal of business on Tuesday.

The New Zealand Consols, Midland Railway Authorised Area Land Settlement, Government Loans to Local Bodies, Encouragement of Fisheries, Rotorua Town Council, Manual and Technical Instruction, and West Coast Reserves Settlement Bills were read a second time, put through committee, and finally passed. The Maori Councils Bill passed its second reading, and was referred to the Native Affairs Committee.

On Wednesday afternoon the Premier informed the House that, in accordance with the general wish of the members, he had cabled to Lord Roberts the congratulations of the House on his birthday, and received a reply stating that he and Lady Roberts were pleased at the compliment, and saying that he would always be proud of having under his command the brave men sent to South Africa by this Colony.

Later on Mr Seddon said that some anxiety had been expressed as to what day would be proclaimed as Peace Day. It was not possible to say when the present guerilla warfare would cease, and as the Transvaal and Orange Free State had been annexed there would probably be no formal declaration of peace. The Government had considered the matter, and, with a view to giving due notice to the Colony, they had fixed the Prince of Wales' Birthday, the 9th November, as the date for the celebration.

The Representation Bill, which was read a first time on Wednesday, proposes to increase the membership of the House by six, all of whom will go to the North Island.

The evening sitting on Wednesday was devoted to consideration of the Lands for Settlement Act Amendment Bill and the Electoral Act Amendment Bill.

An Opium Prohibition Bill was read a first time in the House on Thursday. Several measures were advanced stages, and the Electoral Bill in committee took up the whole of the evening sitting.

Immediately after the House meeting on Friday afternoon Mr Seddon read a copy of a cable sent by him to Lord Roberts congratulating him upon his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, and expressing a hope that he ere long will have command of all the military forces of the Empire. Lord Roberts in his reply heartily reciprocated a hope that the office will ere long include all the military forces of the Empire.

The Premier gave notice to move that a Royal commission be appointed to inquire into the desirability of New Zealand federating with the Australian Commonwealth.

In the evening the Foreign Insurance Companies' Deposits, and Civil Service Examination Bills passed their final stages.

On Saturday morning the House went into committee on the Private Industrial Schools Inspection and Industrial Schools Act Amendment Bill. A determined attempt was made by Messrs Millar, Russell, Atkinson, Hutcheson, and others to amend the Bill in the direction of withdrawing all Government assistance from private industrial schools. To Mr Millar belongs the dubious credit of getting an amendment introduced which would have this effect were it not for a technical error.

On the motion for the third reading, the Premier said the responsibility for the step that had been taken in the Bill would rest with those who had made it. The Government would go on paying money to these schools as long as the appropriation lasted. Some of these schools had erected buildings on the understanding that children should be committed to them, and if State aid was now withdrawn they had a perfect right to compensation. The third reading was agreed to on the voices, and the Bill passed.

LOBBY GOSSIP AND NEWS.

The annual report of the Agricultural Department was presented to Parliament during the week. From it I learn that the average yield of wheat per acre last harvest was close on 32 bushels, and that of oats nearly 11 bushels. There were 1600 acres less of potatoes grown, yet from the prices now ruling the area seems still in excess of our requirements. The attempts to eradicate phyloxera have been successful. Small birds are increasing at an alarming rate. The poultry branch is meeting with the hearty support of settlers. The dairying industry has made rapid strides during the last season, butter showing an increase of 59,313 cwt, valued at £107,266. The graders' reports on butter are now universally accepted as the basis of all sales. Prices for meat exported have been somewhat better for mutton and lamb, but there is still room for improvement. The clip of wool was good, and satisfactory returns are looked for. Cattle show an increase of 2115, and cows, etc., for dairy purposes, increased by 21,722. Horses show an increase of 3711. The demand for draughts is still unsatisfied.

A correspondent of the *Catholic Times* reports the death at Brest, at the age of 70, of Admiral O'Neill. The deceased officer was of Irish extraction. He was for a time at the head of the Torpedo Department of the French army, and afterwards served in the Mediterranean squadron.

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

BITS OF CHINA, OLD AND NEW.

BISHOP ANZER IN ROME.

Mgr. Anzer, Vicar-Apostolic of Southern Shan-tung (writes a Rome correspondent under date August 15), is spending a few days in Rome on his way back to China. In all probability his Lordship will prolong his stay here until news reaches him that it will be possible for him to return to the scene of his apostolic labors, which is now completely cut off from the coast owing to the insurrection. Mgr. Anzer has had several long interviews with the heads of Propaganda Fide, in the archives of which Congregation he has deposited important documents tending to prove that the Boxer uprising has been carefully prepared and is still secretly supported by the Imperial authorities. I am informed that Bishop Anzer is preparing a lengthy report on the causes and possible remedies of the present troubles, to be submitted to the Holy Father.

THE BOXERS AND THE CHRISTIANS.

The Rev. Father Steenackers, of the Missions of Scheut, contributes to the *Revue Générale* an article in which he analyses the cause of the disturbances in China, and places the responsibility where it should properly rest. There is, he remarks, no solid foundation for the statement that the missionaries have brought about the troubles. The Chinese are not so devoid of reasoning faculties as not to come to the conclusion that their land was being gobbled up by birds of prey. National sentiment is not absolutely dead amongst them, and when they saw one place after another annexed, they felt that the best course would be to clear out the foreigners at any cost. This, and not religious fanaticism, has been the secret of the uprisings. If, observes Father Steenackers, the Boxers have been fighting for a religious idea, what religion do they think imperilled by the missionaries—Confucianism or Buddhism? The Boxers are like the mass of the Chinese, who enumerate a list of gods and good and evil spirits, but, in the true sense of the word, venerate none. The only really national religion which the Chinese practise seriously is ancestor-worship. To this cult the missionaries offer no opposition, except when it degenerates into superstition. Indifferent to religion, the Chinese are hostile to Europeans because they know they are annexationists. If the missionaries have lost their lives, it was not for having preached Christianity, but because they were natives of Europe or loved it.

FRESH DISASTERS.

The *Missions Catholiques*, of Lyons, publishes a despatch announcing fresh disasters in the much-tried province of South East Pe-Chili. Six priests have been murdered—Fathers Fink, Gaudisart, Meveux, Cesard, Giesiger and Kieffer. The mission has been destroyed. The same paper contains an announcement from the Superior of the foreign Missions at Paris with regard to the assassination of the missionaries—Fathers Georjon and Leray in Southern Manchuria. A telegram from Shanghai states that five German missionaries were massacred on August 3, at Tai-Ning.

CATHOLICS IN PEKIN.

According to information obtained at the the legation of Mgr Martinelli, apostolic delegate to the United States, (says an American exchange) there are 38,640 Catholics in the province of Peking, which has a population of 12,000,000. Bishop Alphonse Favier, Vicar-Apostolic, succeeded the late Bishop John Baptist Sorthon, to whom he was coadjutor for several years. Bishop Sorthon died in May, 1899. Bishop Favier was born in France in 1838. He has been in China many years. He has as assistants 23 European and 24 native missionaries. There are 22 residential parishes in the province of Peking. Five are in the city of Peking and two are in Tien-tsin. There are 160 stations, not residential, which are visited by missionaries. 35 churches, 115 chapels and 107 oratories. In the city of Peking are two seminaries. In the province of Peking are 133 elementary Catholic schools, 69 for boys with 1168 pupils, and 64 for girls with 1329 pupils. There is in the city of Peking an academy for boys with 115 students.

In Tien-tsin there is a college for Europeans with 20 boarding students, also a normal school and a school for catechists. There are two hospitals in Peking and one in Tien-tsin. In the province of Peking are two homes for old men and two for old women.

In the city of Peking there are two orphan asylums and three pharmacies, and there is one pharmacy in Tien-tsin. There are also in the province seven asylums for pagan orphans.

In religious institutions there are 44 Lazarists and six European and 47 native Trappists. Of nuns there are 32 Sisters of Charity having four houses in the province, and 53 Sisters of St. Joseph, all of whom are natives.

THE GRACE OF MARTYRDOM.

One of the martyred missionaries (writes a Paris correspondent) is the Rev. Pere Edouard Agnus of the Society of Foreign Missions, who has lately fallen in Manchuria. An episode has just come to light concerning him, showing that while still a seminarian he prayed for death for his faith at the hands of the heathen. It is related of him that in 1891, while studying for the priesthood at the Petit Seminaire of Cambrai, he made the Novena of Grace of St. Francis Xavier for a special intention. When asked what that intention was he replied in a manner as is said never to be forgotten. 'It is that I may obtain the grace of martyrdom.' He who gives these details to the *Croix du Nord* says: 'His prayer is answered. I can understand the sorrow of his family but for him I cannot grieve.' Another of the recent martyrs in Manchuria is the Rev. Pere Jules Bayard. He too belonged to the Society of Foreign Missions and to the diocese of Camorai. He left France for China on the 6th May last. Leaving a widowed mother behind him, he tried to console her by his letters. His last letter to her is

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