

much less the present, Kaffir wage; neither are white miners (and future voters) desired by the magnates, who now declare that unless unskilled labour in large quantities and at "reasonable" wages can be obtained, the mines cannot be worked, nor the debt of the Transvaal be met in the London money-market. The Transvaal Government (which of course, is non-representative as yet), is hastily pushing through the Labour Importation Ordinance, which authorises the introduction of troops of Chinese who are to be kept apart from the whites under

#### Conditions of Virtual Slavery.

The Transvaal Government has made capital of certain petitions for Chinese labour signed in the colony; but it pointedly refuses a far safer test of public opinion—the referendum. These petitions, it is freely stated, have been obtained by bribery, terrorism, and starvation, the poorer whites being unable either to live or leave until the mines are set going again. The methods of the magnates are fairly indicated by their use of hired roughs to break up protest meetings. South Africa surveys with anxiety, the prospect of a growing canker in her midst; the degradation of race on one hand, and the brutalising effects of slavery on the other. The Parliament of Cape Colony protested in January, but the subsequent elections have returned Dr Jameson and a "Progressive" (*i.e. pro millionaire*) Cabinet to power here, so no further interference will come from that quarter.

In New Zealand this un-British step is viewed with lively disfavour. In January, Mr Seddon induced the Federal Premier of Australia to join in a dignified and well-worded protest, unhappily with no result on the Transvaal's policy, though with moral effect throughout the Empire. Public opinion runs high in England, the Liberal leaders denounce the ordinance, and one bye-election has been lost to the Government

through it. But these warnings are lost on the miserably effete Government whose mismanagement of South African affairs has been revealed in the War Commission, and which has just forced the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Education Act on an angry nation. It seems likely to fill up the measure of its iniquities by putting the stigma of slavery on a British Crown Colony.

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#### The Status of Women Teachers.

Women teachers throughout the colony are vitally interested in the questions raised by the West Christchurch appointment which has lately caused such unfavourable comment in scholastic circles. The facts are these. The late head mistress of the West Christchurch School, a B.A. of long experience in standard work, resigned at Christmas. The position was not advertised, as is the usual custom, but the Committee and Board quietly advanced the Infant Mistress, with an E. certificate, to the vacant salary, passing over standard teachers of greatly superior qualifications. The Women Teachers' Institute at once protested against the appointment and the manner of it. The Board's reply was eminently vague and unsatisfactory, entirely waiving the main issue, that is, the implied slur upon the advanced standard teachers of North Canterbury, and the deprivation of incentive for women to qualify for the higher walks of their profession. The Women Teachers' Institute has pronounced the Board's stated reasons to be unconvincing; and friends of education regard the appointment as a direct injustice to the Board's faithful servants; but nothing more is likely to come of it.

But the affair has stirred up anew two long-standing grievances, one common to both men and women

teachers, viz., the present haphazard system of promotion in the service, with all its attendant evils of favouritism and canvassing, the other *the feminine disability of poor pay and uncertain official standing*.

It will be well to recall the circumstances which made the West Christchurch appointment not only possible, but, as it appears to most, part of a system of deliberate retrogression in this field of woman's work.

Two years ago the Colonial Scale for New Zealand teachers was brought in. Up till then three heads of departments were recognised in the large schools—master, mistress, and infant mistress. In small schools the infant mistress was naturally the only female head possible. In neither case did the salary of mistress or infant mistress come to more than half the master's salary, though the mistress's work was equally arduous, and in most instances was officially reported as

#### Producing Better Results,

as the records of the Education Office would show. Instead of easing this inequality, the Department proceeded to confirm it by a startling innovation. The infant mistresses, indeed, were considerably raised in salary, and their responsible position confirmed. This was no more, of course, than the importance of their work demanded, and no one grudged their deserved good fortune. On the other hand, the mistresses were deprived of headships; their salary was scarcely altered, but the nominal "responsibility" of their classes was transferred to the head master, as henceforth they were gazetted as "assistants." Needless to say, they were not relieved of one iota of previous drudgery or virtual responsibility; only all chance of claiming their rights as co-workers with men was now checkmated.

This is not the place to criticise the colonial scale. Its friends state that it