

dresses. Each girl is dressed, as far as possible, in the national costume of the country she represents, and as she makes a little speech setting forth what is being done in that country in regard to our work, the result is not only exceedingly pretty, but highly educational from a temperance point of view. Moreover, it always attracts a large number of persons who will not go to a temperance meeting. But it must be clearly understood that any Union wishing for this entertainment must be prepared to take off Miss Hughes' hands any work which can be delegated to another, such as getting out notices, selling tickets, procuring the musical items with which the characters are interspersed, and in every way helping to make it a success. Both Miss Hughes and I take the financial responsibility of any meetings, etc., and the proceeds go to the organising fund (you will remember the contributions asked for from the branches only covered the support of one agent for one year, and as there are two working and we want the work to go on year after year, it becomes necessary for us to do our utmost to make our work as far as possible self-supporting). Both Miss Hughes and I spend a large proportion of our time in visiting ladies likely to be interested in the work and inviting them to a meeting of the Union, at which a number of them join. These, of course, bring in a revenue to the local funds and the Union benefits by these and by the increased interest excited in the work. Those Unions which have not already been visited will receive an intimation from one or other of us and can then say whether they wish a visit.

Will the President or Secretary of each Union kindly see that this letter is read at the next meeting, so that the matter may be understood.

You will see by our monthly reports that the work is prospering. Several new branches have been formed and promise to do well, and those already in existence have received more or less help from the visits of your organisers.

With warmest White Ribbon greetings,

Yours in the work,

M. S. POWELL,

N. Z. Cor. Secretary.

If you have not slept, or if you have a headache, or sciatica, or leprosy, or thunderstroke, I beseech you by all angels to hold your peace, and not pollute the morning to which all the housemates bring serene and pleasant thoughts by corruptions and groans.—Emerson.

Parliamentary Jottings.

Parliament was opened on June 28th. A day or two earlier, the Premier delivered a long and spirited address at Newtown, in which he showed prospect of carrying through the session despite his late serious break-down in health. He promised early licensing legislating to deal with voided polls and other matters; and though defending the "no license, no liquor" clause of last year, he seemed otherwise desirous to meet the expressed wish of the country at large. It is plain, however, that the Parliamentary battle of the year is to be fought on the land question; the struggle of Leasehold *versus* Freehold cannot long be delayed. In his speech, the Premier strongly denounced the "flippant demand" that Crown tenants should have the right to purchase their land out and out; which demand is the one avowed and solid plank in the Opposition programme. Mr Seddon declared that on no account would he ever consent to such an immoral breach of contract as this reversion to freehold, which, he argued, would immediately result in the State making an inopportune present of £2,000,000 to Crown tenants now, and finally result in barring the land to every poor man hereafter. Leasehold, as at present, means land for the people; freehold, as proposed, means land for the rich man, and double gain to the money-lender, whose catspaw he declared the Crown tenant to be, as championed by the Opposition. But the House, he said, having saved farmers from the money-lenders by the Advances to Settlers Act, was not likely to pay seven millions to put them again at his mercy.

The conclusion of this speech treated in an admirable and statesmanlike tone of certain national aims and reforms. His plea for close settlement of every acre, for a self-supporting and self-containing system of life and industry, strikes every thinking mind as the true safeguard against those hitherto recurrent cycles of depression, which he declares can be avoided. His warning against the menace of trusts (a curse to any country) is significant. But most practical and cheering of all was the maintenance of his late excellent proposals for checking infant mortality, and reducing the perils of maternity among the poor.

The Governor's speech supplemented the Premier's outline of the session by

three additional proposals,—first, to appoint four Parliamentary under Secretaries, as employed at Home, to cope with the growing pressure of departmental business. Secondly, it is announced desirable to appoint a High Commissioner of New Zealand, as in Canada and South Africa, to safeguard the colony's interests at Home. Lastly, it is proposed to set up a Commission to deal with the land question. As all three proposals involve expenditure, they are likely to be keenly debated. It is possible that a Commission is the best way to get at the vital points of the land problem. On the one hand there are the keen and safe arguments of the land reformers, such as Messrs Ell, Taylor, Laurenson, and Fowlds; on the other hand, there are the seemingly practical and sincere arguments for possible freehold, put forth by the Farmer's Union. Meanwhile, alas! many valuable Crown lands are being put up for sale; soon it will be too late to shut the stable door.

Notable despatch is being shown so far; the Address in Reply only lasted two days. A batch of Government Bills has been read already, the most important being the Referendum, the Shop and Offices' Bill, and the Midwives Bill. The Referendum differs little from that of last year, save in a longer list of tabooed questions, not to be submitted under the general referendum. These include altogether, local public works, raising of money, revenue of crown, taxation, electoral franchise, and abolition of Legislative Council. This last gives the Bill hope of passing the Upper Chamber; but on the whole one wonders what is left, except the Bible in schools, which has been expressly held over on the promise of the larger bill. It has already passed its second reading in the House.

The Shops and Offices' Bill is also being pushed on. It provides, among other things, that shops are to stay open 52 hours a week, not more than 9 in one day, nor are employees to be kept more than 5 hours without stopping for a meal. Overtime is to be paid at the rate of one and a half; and is only allowed at stock taking. Saturday half-holiday is to be referred to the country next general election, and when settled there, will stay in force 6 years. Temperance and other reformers are strongly for the Saturday half-holiday.

The Midwives Bill, the outcome of the Premier's ultimatum of last May on Infant Mortality, has been well launched;