



# A JOURNAL FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

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## Table Talk.

THE elections in New South Wales are now within measurable distance, and will likely take place during the latter part of July, so that the new Parliament may meet early in September. What the result may be can only now be conjectured, but there is reason to believe that it will be disastrous to the Dibbs Ministry. Not alone on the question of protection but from a variety of causes. The working classes are dead against the present Government, and the freetraders are, it is believed, stronger than the protectionists. On the other hand, the Catholic vote will be cast in favour of the present Government. On neither side is there anything yet in the shape of organisation, and the result is that every constituency is swamped with candidates over-running each other, but perhaps this chaos will be reduced to something like order before the day of nomination arrives.

That cumbrous piece of machinery, the New Electoral Act for New South Wales, is causing infinite trouble, and the general impression on all sides is that it will be found impracticable and unworkable. In the Amending Act recently passed it is provided that persons temporarily absent from any electorate in which they usually reside may vote at the place they may be staying at the time. This proceeding will necessitate every returning officer being in possession of the whole of the rolls. And it will be impossible to declare any candidate actually elected until the final returns have been received from the 130 electoral districts. It is a most complicated affair, and the expense of taking the election will be enormous, the estimate being something like £50,000. As a clear proof that there has been considerable roll stuffing, there are hundreds of names on the rolls which cannot be traced by the canvassers, names of persons who never had any existence, and who never resided at the addresses given. These names will be carefully watched when polling day comes.

The labour trouble is by no means set at rest in New South Wales. Mr. A. A. Dangar, president of the Pastoralists' Council, has stated that there was every possibility of a shearers' strike over the whole of Australia within the next fortnight, and that the strike might lead to a general labour crisis. Mr. Dangar has since stated that the assertion must not

be taken as literally correct, but there is no doubt that the feeling of employed against employers is very bitter both in Queensland and New South Wales. The men talk freely of reprisals, and boast that no police patrol or military protection can prevent bush fires in a dry season. The "active service brigade" of the Anarchists is a more widespread organisation than the Governments of those colonies are willing to admit, and if employers persist in their present policy of forcing down wages by creating an artificial surplus of labour a conflict is inevitable.

THE sentences in connection with the prosecution of the proprietors of the Sydney organ of the "Active Service Brigade," for criminally libelling Mr. T. M. Slattery, the Minister of Justice in New South Wales, cannot be deemed harsh. "Tommy" Dodds, H. T. Douglas and W. Mason were sentenced to nine months' hard labour, J. Dwyer to six months, and J. H. Macniven to one month. Douglas and Dodds protested that they had nothing to do with the publication of the libel, and in a subsequent issue of the paper an apology was made to Mr. Slattery. Dodds, however, wound up his statement in court by asserting that unless the authorities took some means to alleviate the misery in the country, they had best look after their own "dirty skins."

SIR Henry Parkes has a popularity in New South Wales which is not shared by any other public man. This is due in a great measure to his own strong individuality, and also to his sense of patriotism. Undoubtedly at times he says unpleasant things, and very often injudicious things, but for all that it is known that he has an honesty of purpose and goes straight. Lately when he has visited the different parts of the colony he has received quite an ovation, which proves that the grand old man of New South Wales does not "lag superfluous on the stage" of politics. Despite his eighty years of life he at this time shows more energy of mind and body than any other member of the Assembly, and of the whole class of politicians is the only one worthy of the name of a statesman.

THERE has been considerable activity amongst members of the Opposition during the week, and Mr. Shiels has no cause to complain of lack of enthusiasm amongst his followers, in fact, they are a little too enthusiastic. It takes time to convince volunteers that discipline is better than individual energy. Leaders may make mistakes, but the

blunders should be left for their opponents to discover, instead of being shown up in public. The present object of the Opposition is to ascertain on what points they can come to an agreement upon with the waverers on the Government side of the House. A large defection is not advisable until the financial proposals of the Ministry are announced. Nevertheless, so much dissatisfaction has been expressed at the Government measures, by their own supporters, that it is difficult for the Opposition leader to restrain his own inclination, and that of the fighting section in the left corner, to have a pitched battle on what would really be only a side issue. The Premier would have a much better chance of appealing to the country, if defeated on a vote of want-of-confidence, before than after the financial statement had been made. The appeal to electors, to be decisive, must be after Ministers have been tried and found wanting in administrative ability.

THE *Credit Foncier* scheme of the Victorian Treasurer, Mr. G. Downes Carter, as incorporated in the bill to amend the Savings Bank Act, is about the most unsatisfactory measure ever placed before Parliament. It transfers the control of savings banks deposits, and of a possible issue of £5,000,000 of mortgage bonds, to the Treasurer. The Commissioners to be appointed are his nominees, removable, one at a time, each year, and the general manager is his nominee, removable at his pleasure, by or against the desire of the Commissioners, or he can be retained in defiance of their wish. The auditors can also be appointed by the Treasurer. As the Government guarantees deposits and bonds, some State control is necessary, but surely it is not the intention of Parliament to allow the bank to be under political control. Nevertheless clauses 12 and 13 permit the Treasurer to appropriate, for Government purposes, almost as much of the funds of the bank as he chooses. The bill goes into very few details of the administration of the bank or its loan on mortgage branch, but the Treasurer, with his nominee commissioners, have a very free hand to make regulations. As the bill stands, members of Parliament are in the position of a lot of shareholders, asked to assent to the starting of a bank by directors who have drafted for their approval only a memorandum of association which binds shareholders to articles of association which may lead to a wholly unexpected course of business.

THROUGHOUT his long speech Mr. G. Downes Carter never once entered into details concerning