

Queensland.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BRISBANE, July 21.

THE annual agony of the civil servants has come round again. In other words, the House has gone into committee to consider the estimates-in-chief. At present we have only discussed the Governor's extras, and, needless to say, we have not allowed so favourable an opportunity to fling a few stones at his Excellency to slip. Still, considering recent events, the Queen's representative has got off pretty well on the whole. Of course the yellow agony made its appearance, but not very much was made of it. Mr. Meeson, the member for Rosewood, who is the parent of a bill to reduce the Governor's salary, had a dark story to unfold of opium supplied, duty free, to the almond-eyed domestics at Government House, and retailed by them to their countrymen in the town with advantage to both buyer and seller, but with none to the Treasurer. This story was earnestly vouched for by its relater, but the Treasurer (Mr. McIlwraith), affected not to believe it, while, at the same time, promising to look into it. Morehead, the member for Mitchell, who, by the way, has just had a fearful castigation in the Press for McElhonnium in the House, suggested that the Governor could do away with such disagreeable innuendos and charges by getting rid of his yellow establishment, and substituting a white one—a recommendation not at all likely to be followed. There was a pretty generally expressed opinion that the House was going outside its functions in attempting to dictate to his Excellency what kind of establishment he should keep. Finally, the member for Wide Bay, Mr. Bailey, succeeded in getting £250 knocked off an item of £500, for uniforms, postage, and &c.'s, and justice was satisfied.

The Electoral Rolls Bill has at last passed the Lower House. This bill has exercised the Assembly in general, and the Colonial Secretary in particular, greatly. The Colonial Secretary, who stood in loco parentis to the bill, very foolishly allowed some of his own followers to do some tinkering to it, and a very bad job they made of it. The bill at last, what with this and that amendment, and this and that new clause, got into such a hopeless muddle that Palmer, for the first time in his career, probably, fairly lost his head, and was forced to accept a suggestion from the enemy that he should try back, and make a fair start on a future occasion, and the debate was abruptly adjourned. A few nights afterwards the bill was again considered, and as some of the confusing improvements had meanwhile been withdrawn, it went through in a couple of sittings, and it now remains to be seen how it will get along in the Upper House.

Before this measure passed, it was discovered that the civil servants, those hitherto meek and somewhat oppressed individuals, had become a power, and a dangerous one too, and it was proposed by certain nervous members that this power should be destroyed while there was yet time. This was to be effected by disfranchising the paid servants of the State, and Mr. O'Sullivan moved a clause to that effect. The civil servants were then much discussed, and those of them who occupied seats in the gallery must have felt quite elated at finding themselves playing such an important part. They must have felt quite surprised at suddenly finding themselves included in the "dangerous classes." Mr. O'Sullivan drew an alarming picture of the future of this

van drew an alarming picture of the future of this colony should the Civil servants be allowed to continue to vote. He declared that before long they would have all the voting power in their own hands, and would soon be voting their own salaries, and be, in fact, the masters of the situation. However, the majority of members took a less gloomy view of affairs, and, consequently, the Civil servants have not been disfranchised yet. Mr. O'Sullivan, however, does not mean to let the matter drop, and has given notice of his intention to introduce a bill of the same tenor as the resolution which he was forced to withdraw. I am not quite sure that the Civil servants would have broken their hearts had they been deprived of the franchise. A vote in their hands is rather a dangerous luxury, especially when they come to use it in small communities where it is difficult, the ballot notwithstanding, to vote without making enemies. And when a Civil servant, whose hard lot it is to dwell in a colonial Little Pedlington, does make an enemy, his doom is but too often sealed.

The Government are taking no steps towards finding a seat for the Attorney-General. Mr. Pring, notwithstanding the great inconvenience they suffer in not having a law officer in the House. They probably are of opinion that, in the present temper of the country, any attempt to put Mr. Pring into Parliament would only be a work of supererogation. The Opposition lose no opportunity of twitting Ministers with the absence of a legal adviser. Mr. Pring was made the subject of a queer little debate a few nights back. In the morning a Crown case reserved was heard in banco in the Supreme Court. This was the case of a bigamist who had been sentenced to a term of imprisonment, but whose release his advocate claimed on the ground of the illegality of his first marriage, in consequence of its having been celebrated after 8 o'clock in the evening, and before the same hour in the morning. The Attorney-General informed the court that he should not argue the point, but should leave it in the hands of the judges to decide, and he then left the court. The leader of the Opposition interpolated the Colonial Secretary on the subject that same evening, and gave it as his opinion that the Attorney-General had done a most improper thing in allowing the case to go without argument. Later in the evening the Colonial Secretary read a long written statement by the Attorney-General, the gist of which was that he had come to the conclusion that the first marriage was not a legal one, and that under those circumstances, and following the strict line of practice in this respect, he left the matter in the hands of the Court. This only served to add fuel to the flame. The matter cropped up at the next sitting, when Mr. Palmer expressed a hope that Mr. Griffith did not contend that the Attorney-General should bring forward arguments in defence of a case he did not believe in. Mr. Griffith's reply was—"Yes, unless the case is perfectly clear," whereupon the Premier, with well-affected horror, exclaimed, "Then thank God I am not a lawyer!" Mr. Griffith, not in the least abashed by the rebuke, and audaciously declared that he had often argued against his conviction, and sometimes the court had decided in his favour—a lifting of the professional curtain which has amused the public.

"We have got " Pastor " Chiniqny here. I don't think he will create quite such a sensation as he appears to have done in Tasmania. The press, apparently, intend to ignore him. He preached twice on Sunday to crowded congregations, but the papers have not favoured us with his remarks. The Bishop of Northern Queensland (Dr. Sturton)

the papers have not favoured us with his remarks. The Bishop of Northern Queensland (Dr. Sturton) also preached on Sunday, and what he said appears at considerable length in both the morning papers. The Catholic authorities have passed the word that there is to be no demonstration *vs* the Rev. Chiniquy, and the Church of England is passive. To-night the "pastor" will give his first lecture, and then we shall see whether everybody will keep their temper.

We are promised a good riddance of bad rubbish. The Government have made up their mind to get rid of that eyesore to Brisbane—the gaol, and to remove the prisoners to St. Helena, there to cultivate sugar. The gaol will, when the last prisoner has left it, be pulled down, and the site and materials converted into hard cash, of which a good amount should be realised. The gaol is not only an eyesore, but it is a place of torture as well. It is quite unfit for habitation, even by prisoners, some of the cells, during hot weather, being veritable ovens, in which the unhappy inmate can scarce draw breath. The prison, too, is considerably overlooked by houses, and is altogether demoralising to the crowded neighbourhood in which it stands. The preliminary step towards a complete clear out has just been taken by the Colonial Secretary, who has just informed the head gaoler and chief turnkey that their services will no longer be required.

The preparations for the National Association's Show in Bowen Park are going on apace. The exhibition promises to be a great success. It will be a sort of rehearsal for your International Exhibition. The public have responded well to the appeal made to them that the colony should be well represented in Sydney. It is fortunate we have such an active institution as the National Association. Had we not,

I fear we should have been too depressed by the bad times to have successfully exerted ourselves in the matter of making a good display in Sydney.

Things commercial are mending very slowly; so slowly, indeed, that the improvement is scarcely noticeable. At the present moment there is not a draper in town who is not selling off at a tremendous sacrifice. Strange to say, these sellings-off are not the delusions and the snares they usually are. The ladies are picking up some decided bargains, and the shopkeepers are satisfied to have some unaccustomed cash in their tills. Unfortunately, the majority of us are too poor to avail ourselves of the opportunity of renewing our wardrobe at a cheap rate.

We have had a few public balls this winter, but the season, on the whole, has been by no means a gay one. Of amusements there are none, and the theatre and School of Arts are both empty just now, the Cora company having vacated the latter last week after a rather so-so season. We are promised a "farewell" visit by Joey Gougenheim shortly. Strange to say, we have now been without a panorama of the American war for some weeks. I cannot furnish you with a better proof than this of the depth to which we have fallen in the estimation of the show people.