

erations than to the present is that raised by the Rev. Dr. Grandison, a negro preacher and lecturer of considerable force and intelligence and of splendid physique, while here. It is—what is to be the future of the negro race? Dr. Grandison, in all hopefulness, holds that the factors of climate and temperature are so overwhelmingly, in favour of the coloured as against the white races of the earth, and their superior fecundity is so marked, that given the wider developments of education in the arts of both war and peace, which, thanks to the white man's enterprise, are now available, a development which is only a question of time, the coloured races will not only hold their own but will drive the white man back to the extreme limits of the temperate zones, keeping for themselves, those prolific sections of the earth which are their own proper heritage as children of the Sun. Were the negro's dream realized, it would be a curious repetition on a gigantic scale, of the old law that the fittest shall alone survive. Educated India, civilized Africa, modernized China and Japan, and developed Central America, armed, trained and united in one idea of possession would make a power before which the white man must recede or perish.

Major General Herbert's frank, outspokenness on the demerits of our militia has raised up for him, as, no doubt, he expected, a considerable amount of defensive rejoinder. The players at soldiers who object to any criticism, and their name is legion, speak of him as the cautious stranger who is judging a voluntary force by the high standard of the regular soldier. The professional politicians seize his utterances as a means of bringing discredit on their opponents' administrators and the contractors who may be implicated are naturally indignant at the suggestion that this money has been unfairly gained at the expense of the equipment. Accordingly he suffers the fate of all who try to draw truth out of her well. A "wiser" man would have let her stay there and drown comfortably. Possibly General Herbert is neither more nor less than a straightforward gentleman who understands thoroughly the duty he is appointed and paid to perform, and who simply performs it without fear or favour.

The continued success of the Ottawa Electric Car Company in disposing, without the slightest hindrance to operation of the heavy snow falls of this unexceptional winter, will be a most important argument for the adoption of the system elsewhere. Ottawa, by reason of its situation, was an excellent city for testing the experiments and any one who has seen the gigantic brushes of the "sweepers" steadily working their way backward and forward over the track would understand how completely the difficulty has been solved, and how much a matter of mere child's play the "snow boggy" has become.

Mr. Foster has made his Budget speech, giving a respite for a year of most uncomfortable uncertainty, to the manufacturing interests hitherto nursed by the National Policy. Next session is to see the action which may be deemed necessary by his several commissions of enquiry. Meantime, coal oil is to lose some of its guard, and bladder-twine finds its defence reduced by one-half. An ominous and timely note was

sounded in the ear of the lumber kings who are clearly marked out for early restrictive measures.

The poor Civil Service, despised and degraded already beyond the bounds which a self-respecting country should be willing to allow, is made the subject of a Government Bill of many words, the points of which, however, may be summed up in half a dozen. Is to have a "Supervisor", a gentleman who with a salary just one hundred dollars above that of the maximum of a second-class clerk, is to have inquisitorial powers and to, practically, control the machine in all its branches. His duties, besides being disagreeable to himself and embarrassing to the Departmental heads, will require superhuman qualifications.

"The ancient poet's Argus prize
Because he had a hundred eyes.
How much more praise to (him) is due
Who looks a hundred ways with two."

Then a "conduct book" is to be kept, in which the deputy heads are to enter daily, a "record of conduct, based on punctuality, industry and performance of duty of each officer, clerk or employee." Shades of our grandmothers, Sunday school teachers and the late lamented Dr. Busby! There is but one thing lacking—the switch, and no doubt that will come with the next amending act. With "Tickle Toby" for the naughty, and, for the favoured virtuous, "a mug for a good boy", the country will at length have a perfect civil service—from the infantile point of view. If the comic papers "catch on" to it, the composers of this Bill will be teased out of their lives.

Joking apart, the civil service is largely composed of educated men on whom, and not on their temporary heads, rests the smooth working of the very intricate machinery which performs the country's business. It is their knowledge, tact, discretion, experience, and faithfulness by which the country is ably served, and a little more sympathy and a great deal more justice than is shown in the present Bill is only their fair due. The present system with its abuse of power, and of social and political influence, its sins of omission and commission does indeed require amendment, but the service does not, as the present proposals would appear to suggest it does, stand in urgent need of anything merely funny. As a matter of fact, judging from floating talk, it is by no means in a laughing mood.—ZERO.

THE REFERENDUM.

The "Referendum" is now an essential feature not only of the federal constitution, but of the cantonal political systems of Switzerland. All revisions of the constitution to which the two branches of the federal assembly agree must be submitted to this reference. When one of these councils agrees to such revision, but the other disagrees, or when fifty thousand voters demand amendment, the question of the proposed change must be submitted to a vote of the Swiss people. If a majority of the Swiss voters, in such case, vote in favour of making the amendment, then there must be a new election of both councils for the purpose of preparing the necessary change. The measure is then prepared by the federal council and submitted for the consideration of the two houses of the federal

assembly. But the amendment when passed by the assembly, does not go into force until it has been approved by a majority of the Swiss people, who vote on the question, and by a majority of the cantons of the confederation. All federal laws are also submitted to the vote of the people if thirty thousand voters, or eight cantons, demand such a reference. The same proceeding is necessary in the case of a federal resolution which has a general effect and is not of an urgent nature, the nature of urgency not being, however, a matter clearly susceptible of definition. In the case of a constitutional amendment the referendum is "obligatory," but when it is only employed on the demand of the electors, it is "facultative" or "optional." In the cantons many important matters are submitted in the same way to the popular vote. On the whole, authorities declare that the system is popular and that it has the practical effect of making the people generally, take a greater interest in public affairs. Some may think it must diminish the importance of the representative bodies, since their decisions on any question are liable to be reversed; but it also certainly tends to bring the members more in touch with public opinion, and force them to exercise greater discretion in legislation than if this popular vote were not hanging over them. This very democratic feature of the Swiss political system may be compared with the practice that exists in Canada of referring certain by-laws of municipal bodies, for the construction of public works, contracting loans, and giving subsidies to railways, to the vote of ratepayers of the municipality, and to the opportunity given to the people in a district to accept or reject a local option law, like the Canada Temperance Act, at the polls on going through the forms required by the statute. There is also in Ontario, as in England, a statute which enables a municipality to establish a free library at the public expense, provided there is a majority of the ratepayers in favour of such an institution. (1). High authorities do not consider such references to the popular vote at all inconsistent with sound principle. It is not always essential "that a legislative act should be a competent statute which must in any event, take effect as law at the time it leaves the hand of the legislative department. A statute may be conditional, and its taking effect may be made to depend upon some subsequent event." In many cases "the legislative act is regarded as complete when it has passed through the constitutional formalities necessary to perfect legislation, notwithstanding its actually going into operation as law may de-

1.—The first example of a local option law in Canada was the Canada Temperance Act of 1864. (Can. Stat. 27, 28, Vict. c. 18). In this case the municipal council submitted a by-law prohibiting the sale of liquor within their jurisdiction, to a vote of the people; and if a majority of all the votes polled were for the by-law, it was legally adopted. By the Canada Temperance Act of 1878, (Dom. Stat. 41 Vict., c. 16) it is provided that when a petition has been received by the dominion secretary of state from one fourth or more of all the electors of a county or city in favour of prohibiting the sale of liquor under the act, the governor in council will issue a proclamation providing for a vote on the petition. The vote is taken by ballot, and with all the formalities observed at legislative and municipal elections. A majority of all the votes in favour of the petition brings the law into operation. Similar measures are taken when it is wished to repeal the law after it has been in force for three years. See also Ont. Stat., 1890, c. 56, sec. 18. In the case of free libraries the by-law of the council must be adopted by a majority of the qualified ratepayers of the municipality. For the procedure in Ontario in the case of municipal by-laws for the construction of water works etc., see Rev. Stat. c. 184, s. s. 293 et seq., and 340 et seq.; c. 192, s. s. 48, 49.