

port in favour of a scheme of Government superannuation, which is in the main approved by *The Schoolmaster*, the organ of the National Union of Elementary Teachers. The scheme thus recommended provides for superannuation payments to the teachers who become qualified under its provisions, from three sources, the income derivable from these being termed *annuities*, *pensions*, and *auxiliary pensions*, respectively. The annuities are provided for by compulsory yearly contributions from teachers, the State pensions from funds provided by the Government, on a scale graded according to the number of years spent in the service. The annuities and the State pensions together constitute the superannuation income proper. The auxiliary pensions are intended for those who break down between the ages of fifty and sixty-five, the latter being the age of compulsory superannuation. The scheme is hailed, as we have said, by the organ of the elementary teachers, with much satisfaction, on behalf of those whom it represents. We fancy such a scheme would not find much favour with teachers in this Western world, seeing that it not only arbitrarily taxes their scanty earnings without their consent, but because it actually militates, as could easily be shown, against the large increase in salaries which they justly claim and the possession of which would enable them to safeguard much more effectively their own futures.

The Hudson Bay Railway.

The loan of two and a half millions of dollars, said to have been pledged by the Ottawa Administration to a certain Company, as a loan to be employed in the construction of the first stages of the projected Hudson Bay Railway, is likely to cause a good deal of discussion, and prove not a little embarrassing to the Government. One needs really to have lived a year or two in the Northwest in order to be able to realize fully all that such a road in prospect, or even in hope means to a dweller on the prairie. If it be true, as alleged by some, that the Hudson's Straits are navigable for six, or even for four months in the season, the prospect is certainly alluring to the North-West farmer. That question of fact is the first which should be authoritatively settled. This can hardly be done save by years of careful observation and experiment. Assuming, moreover, that question to have been decided in the affirmative, it surely is not or would not be necessary to bonus the road up to or beyond the full measure of its prospective cost, which, over the level prairie, at least, would, there can be no doubt, be considerably less than the \$10,000 a mile which is being now talked of. If Government must advance the whole cost of construction it should at least build the road as public property, thus doing away with all the unfairness and uncertainty arising from having handed over that road with its immense value to a Company which had risked nothing of its own in the enterprise. If the people have to pay for the roads let the people own them, or at least have security for expenditures, and a deciding voice in the matter of freight and passenger rates.

Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain

The apprehensions which were abroad in Opposition circles a week or two since, of a break-up of the alliance between Mr. Chamberlain and the Conservative leaders, has been pretty effectively quieted, for the present at least, by the somewhat remarkable effusiveness of Mr. Balfour's expression of admiration and regard for the Unionist leader, in his speech at the annual meeting of the Primrose League, on Friday last. This speech is believed to have saved the Opposition from the disaster of a rupture of the alliance which is their main hope

of victory in the coming struggle. But the speech is also taken to mean that, in the event of the Predicted Conservative and Unionist victory, the Unionist leader will be found leading the victorious parties in a programme which will involve, in addition to his well-known projects of local reform, the carrying out of the scheme of Local Government for Ireland to which he was formerly committed, and which was replaced by the more radical policy of Mr. Gladstone, in 1885. Serious doubts are, however, entertained as to whether some of the stronger of the old-fashioned Tories can be induced to submit to his leadership in such a matter. Seldom has the future of political parties in England been so uncertain as at the present moment, when it is quite among the possibilities that the Government may be defeated and an appeal to the country determined on before these lines go to press, while it is equally possible, judging from the history of the session thus far, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer may carry his party safely through the session and appeal to the country with all the prestige which belongs to a successful administration asking for a renewal of the public confidence. Thus far, it must be admitted, Sir William Harcourt has gained about as much as Lord Rosebery has lost in reputation for capacity in leadership. If the good luck which has followed the former thus far, continues till the end of the session, he will go to the country with a powerful influence of a reputation for success.

The British at Corinto.

To a mighty and magnanimous nation nothing can be much more distasteful than to find itself obliged to employ force in order to protect its subjects against the insults and aggressions of some feeble state. There is neither glory nor gain in such an operation. And yet it seems to be sometimes necessary—a national duty, in fact. Much as we may dislike such episodes in the national history, it is really difficult to see what else Great Britain could have done in the case of Venezuela. It would never do to permit the petty Republic, because of its insignificance, to maltreat British citizens, to say nothing of British officials, with impunity. One of the first duties of a great nation is to protect its citizens in all parts of the world. It would be almost impossible to overestimate how much it means for civilization, for commerce, for humanity, in all parts of the world, that the simple words, "I am a British subject" should have power, not only to ensure proper treatment by the civilized, but even to check the rage and cruelty of the semi-barbarian, in all parts of the world. What then was to be done with "insignificant, insolent, impudent, arrogant, and anarchical Nicaragua," if we may venture to borrow from the opulent vocabulary of the *St. James' Gazette*, save to take the affair into its own hands and compel the payment of a fine for the past misconduct, leaving the memory of the smart to serve as a warning in the future? The impertinent little Republic has managed, certainly, to play a pretty sharp trick upon the British tars, by leaving them to collect the required indemnity from an empty city and a closed port. The joke is not a bad one, albeit a little trying to John Bull's temper. But that will be held in check, while some other means of collecting the fine is being found. Meanwhile he laughs best who laughs last. Britain's method of procedure, to her honour be it spoken, has been a model of forbearance, which should have its effect upon on-lookers.

Hypnotism and Crime.

It now appears that the story upon which we commented last week, of the Kansas judge who was said to have ordered the conviction of a man alleged to have caused another to commit murder while under hypnotic influence, was "purely a fake," though it was telegraphed all over the country and was given