

**NEW WOOLLEN MILL AT MILTON.**

A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE COMPANY AND DISTRICT.

ONE of the most important events which has yet occurred in the annals of Milton, was the laying of the foundation stone of the Bruce Woollen Company's building, which took place on Tuesday, March 23rd. The first step in the direction of starting the venture, which has now reached such a practical stage, was taken in May last, when a meeting of residents was held in Milton to discuss the practicability of starting a woollen factory in the district. The meeting, from various causes, was not very well attended, and very little enthusiasm was exhibited over the matter. After the meeting, however, the project began to be talked about a good deal, and before long another meeting was called. The attendance on this occasion was much larger, about thirty gentlemen being present. A large quantity of information was supplied to the meeting, from which it appeared that a Company, such as it was proposed to form, had every prospect of a successful career. This information was given by Mr James Dalziel, at that time occupying a responsible position in Messrs Ross and Glendinning's Roslyn Mill. From the rough sketch given, those present were very favourably impressed with the idea. A strong point in connection with the proposed company was that Mr Dalziel and four fellow workers were prepared to substantially back their statements as to the excellent prospects which the Company had, by investing £2,000 in the venture, besides making liberal terms till the factory proved a financial success. It was soon realised that the proposal must be a good one, in order to induce men to throw over lucrative positions to embark in a new venture, which must necessarily have a difficult battle to fight before it gained a firm hold on the colonial trade. After a deal of discus-

sion by the meeting, a list was drawn up, and 2,225 shares were promised in the room. A committee was also formed for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of support which could be reckoned on in the district. Mr R. A. Pyke was appointed interim secretary, and continued to hold the office till the end of September, when Mr Dalziel took over the duties. The task of obtaining shares did not prove a very easy one at first; in fact, right up till a few months back, obstacles were continually being encountered. But by dint of hard canvassing, all voluntary, the promoters succeeded in increasing the total shares promised to about 7,000 within a month, this result being secured without going outside of the district. It was then thought that the success met with locally justified a canvass in Dunedin, where it was believed that a considerable number of shares could be obtained. At first the opposition shown to the Company by a section of the business people of Dunedin threatened to blast the whole venture, and for a time it hung fire, no progress being made for some weeks. Eventually, however, Messrs Moore and Henderson, two of the present directors of the Company, visited Dunedin and made an active canvas, with such success that new life was once more infused into the concern. A renewed effort was made in Milton and district, and on August 28th a large meeting was held, when it was reported that 12,000 shares had been taken up. It was then unanimously decided that the Company be registered, with a share capital of £25,000 nominal. After registration the Company proceeded quietly till 30th December, by which time about 14,000 shares had been promised. On that date the statutory meeting of shareholders was held, about 200 being present. A great deal of enthusiasm was displayed throughout the meeting, and about 1,500 shares were taken up in the room, bringing up the subscribed capital to over £15,000. For the position of directors there

were fourteen candidates, and a ballot resulted in the election of Messrs W. Moore, James Allen (M.H.R.), J. A. Duthie, J. Gray, M. Henderson and J. B. Scanlan, with Mr J. Dalziel as managing director. By this time it was felt that the company had passed a critical point.

Up till the date of the meeting the provisional directors had no real standing, but on the appointment of the permanent board it was felt that it would not be long before there was some practical proof of the Company's existence. A large amount of work had to be done by the directors, but it was finally got through, and orders for machinery of the latest types, were sent home to some of the best makers in England, the specifications for this part of the work being drawn up by Mr Dalziel, and by him presented to the Company. A splendid section, containing three and a half acres of land, was purchased alongside the main south railway line, and close to the Milton railway station. Having reached this stage, the plans and specifications for the building were commenced by Mr D. Paterson, of Dunedin, and tenders having been called, the contract was finally let to Mr Owen Kelly, of Gore, who was not long in starting work on the ground. The building, which is a substantial brick structure, is 192 feet by 102 feet, divided by brick walls into several departments. It is of the style commonly known as fireproof, and is constructed on the most approved lines, provision being made for extending in the event of the business requiring it in the future. The engine and boiler room, 48 feet by 48 feet, stands in front of the main building, while the chimney stack will be 81 feet high, and the engine 120 i.h.p. Having got thus far on the way to a successful start, the foundation stone was duly laid, as we stated above, on 23rd March, Otago's Anniversary Day. A fine day was experienced, and there was in consequence a large gathering of people from all parts of the district, as well as a big contingent of visitors from Dunedin. Among those



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1. Mr J. Scanlan, Director. 2. The Pottery, Milton. 3. Mr Owen Kelly, Contractor. 4. The Mill.