

Current Comment.

SOME PRESS AND PERSONAL OPINIONS.

Smarting under the defeated vote of confidence to Mr Brown, at New Plymouth, the Taranaki 'Herald' observes:—"The custom of proposing a vote of confidence in a member at political meetings is one which might well be dropped, for in three cases out of four the result of a show of hands is not a reliable indication of the feeling of the meeting. Most people do not care to wear their political hearts on their sleeves."

"It has been the fashion," says the Nelson 'Colonist,' "to declare that Britain is unprepared for any sudden emergency, but when one of her youngest colonies shows a readiness to send men willing to fight for the Empire, and those men are prepared to take up their duties at a few hours' notice, some indication is afforded as to what would happen throughout the whole Empire were Britain placed on the defensive. In this connection the offer, first made from Auckland, provides an object lesson that will not be without results."

In the dairying industry it appears that old Weller's advice, "Beware of the widders, Samivel," does not apply. According to the Manawatu 'Herald,' a young man from Home, who asked an old stager's advice as to the best way to ensure profit, was told to first obtain a farm, then marry a widow with 13 children, so that the latter could do the milking, and so make the industry pay. We conceal the name of the young man, in order to give spinsters a chance.

It will afford some consolation to business men and give them hope for the future when they notice our judges are beginning to be more severe on bankrupts whose position is due to reckless trading or extravagance. Judge Kettle led the way in this matter, and proved to many debtors that the Bankruptcy Act is really an operative measure, and can punish offenders. Now Judge Conolly at Auckland has taken up the cheering strain, and dealt very plainly with a bankrupt who appeared before him last week. Thus, the Raingitikei 'Advocate,' in a capital leader on business responsibility.

In the course of a leading article advocating the erection of a public battery at Mackaytown or the vicinity of the Ohinemuri 'Gazette' says: "In the old days, when men took up an acre or so of ground for legitimate working, looked their dirt out and took it to the old Martha or Ivanhoe or Waitakauri batteries, treated it for about 6s a ton, sold their gold to the bank, and paid their way with it, there was a lot more independence among the men. Now there is very little of the latter quality. Even in these days of Unions the men are in the hands of the big companies. Perhaps it may be better for them, but the fact remains that with few exceptions the old blue-bloused, bluff, and independent digger has disappeared into the Ewigkeit."

Wellington is sighing for suburban expansion. Writing on the need of this the 'Post' editor observes: "Crofton, Khandallah, Johnsonville, Tawa Flat, and Porirua might be made populous and accessible suburbs, and so reduce the congestion of the city, as well as reduce the death-rate of the community, if the Government would but propose to Parliament to purchase the Manawatu Railway. Why it is that the great number of electors concerned are so apathetic upon a question that so nearly concerns their personal welfare we have always been at a loss to understand."

Once more touching the Samoa contingent. "There are," observes the Raingitikei 'Advocate,' "some of course who will assert that the fame of the charms of the dusky beauties of Samoa has spread afar and may have reached the ears of the gallant Aucklanders; but these are detractors, who cannot distinguish between the relics of the old Berserker fury and delight in war, and the milder pleasures of flirtation."

The real weakness of the education question has been discovered by the Waikato 'Times.' Thus says the Editor: "But the fault is not in the syllabus. The fault lies with the teaching staff. On a question of such moment to the whole community it is almost criminal to blind ourselves to the facts. The syllabus is like a bill of fare a useful index to the mental food suitable to the requirements of a national feast, but, as with the bill of fare, we shall make a horrible mistake if we persist in swallowing every item. We must select and discriminate. To one, roast pork is perfidious, to another veal is vanity and vexation, and so on. Similarly, in school a pupil may thrive and expand on history who would mope to death on mathematics."

Minor Matters

Shootists will be interested to learn that the best bug from one gun reported from the Lake Ellesmere district in connection with the opening of the shooting season is that of Mr C. Chapman, of Little River, who, from his cylinder on the lower side of the lake, shot sixty-one ducks. When Mr Chapman had secured forty ducks the right barrel of his gun was disabled, and he had to depend on a single barrel.

Don't give your horse to hold unless you know who's who. A man who arrived in Christchurch late last week had his horse stolen in a very impudent manner. Dismounting at the Caversham Hotel, he gave the reins to a man who was standing by, and went away for a few minutes. Upon his return he found that both horse and man had disappeared, a trail of dust indicating the direction which had been taken by the thief.

The Cambridge Chrysanthemum Show is one of the most important in the North, owing to the enthusiasm of local growers. It takes place this year on Friday and Saturday, 21st and 22nd of April. The display will, 'tis said, eclipse all records.

At the sports at Rongotea the other day, a Maori haka was the great attraction. The dancers were partly dressed in native costume, and their performance was viewed with great interest. The burden of the song accompanying the dance was to the effect that the Maori race would not always be in the background of the Europeans. Their period of power might come with another generation, who, led by a strong man, would bring about just laws for all. All the 'Graphic' can say, by way of comment, is, "So note it be."

A big native marriage took place at Maketu last week. Miss Pirihia, daughter of Hiram Mokoapaki, one of the principal chiefs of the Ngatipukenga, to Mr Kiri Tapsell, eldest son of Mr Retreat Tapsell. The Rev. W. Goodyear performed the ceremony, and a great wedding feast and dance was held in honour of the occasion.

In Marton, the Amateur Operatic Society are rehearsing the 'Gondoliers.' This paper wishes them success.

According to the local paper, as a 'take off' on the action now being taken in Masterton against cyclists riding without lights, a procession of wheelmen paraded the streets the other night carrying all the most ridiculous lamps that were obtainable; huge street lamps and kerosene tins with glass fronts being brought into requisition. Some of the waggish wheelers also carried cow-bells.

The Flower Show at Motueka (Nelson district) was, the 'Graphic' notes, a big success. So was the ball in the evening, which terminated the holidays.

Seldom are so many shooting parties left over as during the Easter holidays. They have scattered in all directions, and if the 'bags' secured bear any reasonable proportion to the stock of ammunition carried out the feathered tribe suffered severely. Accounts from the country state that game is more plentiful this season than for some years past.

Mr Ayson has presented to the Masterton Museum some fine specimens of moths he obtained in Canada and some strontia from Ohio.

The purchase money of the Waikuhui estate was paid over on Thursday. Mr Allan McLean agreed to take £230,000 in Government debentures, and £70,000 odd in cash. The total purchase money was a little over £300,000 for 47,320 acres.

Quite a sensation was caused in Pigeon Bay, Canterbury, last week, by the news that a whale was stranded in the bay between some rocks and the mainland. A number of people collected on the beach, and one of the shepherds on an adjacent station fired eleven bullets into it before it was finally despatched. A rope was then made fast to it, and a team of bullocks hauled the monster up into a paddock, where it was tried out, yielding between six and seven barrels of oil.

There is evidently money in honey in New Zealand, and the 'Graphic' wishes it kept best instead of merely working as busily. The other afternoon Mr W. E. Brown, of Nelson, brought from his farm at the Moutere a load, which he claims to be unique as far as Nelson is concerned, consisting of a ton of honey. This is the product of twenty-four hives, but had not Mr Brown been kept in town at the best part of the season for nearly a fortnight, the quantity taken would have been double. In addition to the honey obtained, an additional ten hives of bees were secured from the increase, so that next season the output will be much greater. The whole consignment attractively labelled, was delivered to the order of Mr W. A. Roughton.

According to the Christchurch papers, in his speech before unveiling the Kaipohia monument, the Premier devoted some attention to the fate of the notorious warrior Rauparaha. He had been arrested by Sir George Grey, his mana had departed from him, and his memory was not preserved with respect like that of the Ngai Tahu chiefs he conquered. The Rev. W. Ronaldson, who stood on the platform close by, here interjected: "I buried him." "And it was the best thing you ever did in your life," said Bishop Julius, amid general laughter.

In the matter of woman's rights Abyssinia is far ahead of Europe and America. According to an authority, the house and all its contents belong to her, and if the husband offends her she not only can, but does, turn him out of doors till he is duly repentant and makes amends by the gift of a cow or the half of a camel—that is so say, half the value of a camel. On the other hand, it is the privilege and duty of the wife to abuse her husband, and she can divorce herself from him at pleasure, whereas the husband must show reasons to justify such an act on his part.

Exchange Notes.

The Auckland Exchange reopened to better business after the holidays. May Queen shares advanced this week from 5/4 to 6/2, with steady buyers left at the latter price.

Tararu Creek Company cleaned up after crushing 1,350 tons for a yield of bullion worth £1,208.

New Zealand Crown mine shares are in demand at 13/, but holders ask 16/.

Leyland O'Brien timber shares had buyers at 21/9. A dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. has been declared.

Banker's Hill mine at Coromandel yielded another 19lbs of specimens this week. Shares are easier, but the leader still looks well.

The Waitakauri Company's crushing this month yielded £5,629 from 1,938 tons. Holders were not quite so firm, and 40/6 would have been accepted, but the best offer was 38/, which was declined.

Enquiry has set in again for Imperial shares now that the low level has passed through the hard bar of country. The lode is now three feet wide, and shows good minerals.

Insurance stocks had little demand, the only offer this week being 17/9 for Nationals.

Auckland Gas, old issue, sold at £14 12/6, and Gisborne Gas could be placed at 38/.

Shareholders in the Waitakauri King mine this week authorised the directors to dispose of reserve and forfeited shares. A ton and a half of ore from this mine yielded £7 worth of bullion, so the shares should be readily placed.

Old colours of gold are met with in the lode now being worked in the Welcome Find mine. Coromandel shares in this company had buyers at 9d this week. The manager is of opinion that a valuable deposit of ore is near at hand.

Waiki Silverton shares advanced 4/ this week owing to the discovery of a new reef of an average value of £6 10/ per ton. Sales were made from 7/3 to 9/6, and there are still buyers at half a guinea. The return this month was also more satisfactory, being the best since December, 1897. One thousand tons of ore yielded bullion worth £1,521 9/8.

The Sheridan Company's mine and battery sold for £306. Shareholders expended £4,000 on this property within the last two years.

The Hauraki Company obtained £1,350 for the past month's operations, 120 tons of ore and 158lbs of picked stone being crushed.

Good headway is being made with additions to the Mahara Royal Company's battery at Tapu. The reef in the mine has opened out considerably, and shows colours of gold when broken down.

Ten tons of quartz and 587lb of picked stone from the Royal Oak mine when crushed this month yielded bullion worth £1,000.

The Waitakauri mine yielded bullion worth £20,378 for the first quarter of this year, making a total output since December, 1897, of £169,920. About

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