

# Current Comment.

'We are not,' announces the 'Napier Telegraph,' 'advocates of unlimited gambling, or of gambling at all. It is one of the greatest curses under which the colony labours. But we object to the totalisator monopoly because it has by its existence led to a vast increase of gambling, and because under the law which allows it one section of the community may be prosecuted for doing what may be done by another section under Government protection and encouragement.'

The conversion of prisoners into skilled, or even partially skilled, agriculturists by the employment of their energies upon the land is, in a country like this, an eminently practical proposal, in the opinion of the 'Wellington Post.' Seeing that New Zealand is almost wholly a pastoral and agricultural country, it is quite natural that the goals should be brought into line with the genius of the community, and we would once more suggest that the Government should establish one or more prison farms.

John McKenzie is the best Minister of Lands that this country has ever produced. He has had his opponents and detractors, but at this moment no one would stand forth and dispute the position he now occupies in the estimation of his adopted country. So says the 'Wairarapa Star,' and it continues: He stands forth as a man who has done remarkable work in his day; he has had a hand in making history; he has changed a system which many thought would last to the end of time.

The Prohibition question touched the lives and pockets of the people more vitally than any other question within the region of politics at the present day, and the man who said it was a fad did not read the signs of the times. They had only to look at the figures recorded at the last poll and see the progress made. In the Taranaki electorate only 564 more votes were required to carry "no license," which, in other words, meant 282 had to be alienated from the other side, and there would be trouble among brewers and publicans.' This is 'Clutha's message to Taranaki' as delivered by Mr Tommy Taylor.

'Ask and it shall be given you.' It must have been upon the principle of this Scriptural injunction, the 'Otago Daily Times' surmises that the political platform of the Trades and Labour Conference, held last week at Christchurch, has been framed. Upon no other conclusion can a number of the extravagant demands that are contained in the platform be accounted for. It is not imaginable that a number of presumably sensible men, sitting together in calm deliberation, can have supposed that many of the 'reforms' which are enumerated at the platform are attainable.

Sounding the war cry for the next general election, the 'New Zealand Trade Gazette' lays it down 'That every man of business should provide himself with a copy of the electoral roll and a supply of applications for registration. Notwithstanding that the Government canvassers are supposed to have embraced all in their net, there must be numbers who have escaped. Every day some young man or woman comes of age, and is thereby entitled to a vote. Every week some young woman gets married, and having lost her identity under her maiden name must be registered under that which she has acquired.'

'It,' says a Taranaki contemporary, 'settlers met periodically and held discussions, the great good resulting from such meetings would be surprising, and the organisation worked on thorough lines could not but be of great service to the locality where it existed. Farmers' clubs shed enlightenment, and though farmers as a body are not the most dense set of men in the world, yet I've not met the farmer who could say he knew everything, and had nothing to learn pertaining to the industry he followed. I commend the suggestion of Mr McGuire to the earnest consideration of settlers.'

It surely is better, says the Nelson 'Colonist,' to wear dungaree and work

with black hands for a comfortable living, than to wear fine-satin and be in perpetual straits for the necessities of life. The struggle is not yet so severe in this country as in older ones, but it is getting more severe every day. Parents are exceedingly foolish, who, from false pride or vanity, prefer to put their sons into employments where they are unlikely to make themselves independent, rather than have them learn mechanical callings, which in reality require far more intelligence than is demanded of the ordinary clerk.

That New Zealand is destined to play a much more important part than she has hitherto done in the supplying of produce to Australia there can be no doubt. Whether that will be done without federating with the other colonies is a question yet to be decided, but of this we are confident that a very much larger trade is to be done. Of course, the initiative will have to be taken by New Zealand. New South Wales, notwithstanding its comparatively large population and almost limitless extent of country, can never hope to compete in the raising of produce with the superior soil, certain seasons, and abundant harvests of New Zealand.—'Wanganui Herald.'

The political women of Wellington want the Premier to establish more State farms. One would have thought, comments the 'Hawke's Bay Herald,' that the disastrous financial results at Levin would have deterred anyone from proposing an extension of the New Zealand system. But, it is urged, the experience of Germany and some of the Australian colonies is in favour of the scheme. Well, there are State farms and State farms. In Germany tramps and vagrants are arrested and made to work on the farms for fixed periods at very low rates of wages, and they are punished for leaving.

We cannot be quite certain yet what the effect will be upon the effort to establish the beet industry in New Zealand, but there seems to be little room for doubting that the European bounty system is doomed to speedy extinction.—'Waikato Times.'

The Auckland Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin Club gave the fourth concert of the season on Tuesday evening last. There was a large and fashionable audience.

Little Sister: 'What's the difference 'tween 'lectricity and lightning?' Little Brother: 'You don't have to pay nothin' for lightning.'

Indignant Woman: 'This dog I bought of you came near eating my little girl the other day.' Dealer: 'Well, you said you wanted a dog that was fond of children, didn't you?'

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# News of World.

An unsuccessful attempt was made on Monday afternoon to recall the 'Frisco' mail boat after she had left Auckland. All signals failed, however, to attract attention. Important despatches had arrived for the American Admiral. They will now be sent by the Tutanekei.

Sir Henry Irving was ovated on his return to the stage after his long illness.

An Afghan in Russian territory fired at the Ameer. The intended murder, however, did not come off.

Some Chinese soldiers in the Kowloon district fired without cause on 150 British troops. They were sharply punished, several being killed in the retaliation. No British lives were lost.

Another double murder reported from Ireland, a farmer and son being found done to death at Skibbereen, in Cork.

The Dowager Duchess of Marlborough is dead. There are still two Duchesses of this title living.

Shocking confessions of corruption came from New York. Mr Cocker states on oath that candidates for positions on the judiciary must contribute to Tammany's funds and were expected to appoint partisan referees who would award a lion's share of the proceeds of the sales of estates to Cocker's firm. He names Senator Pratt and his sons as the most guilty parties.

Chamberlain will stop the 'drink traffic' in South Africa with prohibitive duties.

The Pope seems to be rapidly breaking down. At the 21st anniversary of his coronation at St. Peter's the Venerable Pontiff remarked: 'I wonder if this will be my last appearance. St. Peter's was filled with 8,000 persons for the occasion.'

News of one of the annual (or thereabouts) revolutions in South American Republics, is to hand. In Bolivia, the revolutionary leader, General Prando, has defeated the Government forces, killing 200.

There is a surplus of £186,000 in the British Budget. There had been rumours of a heavy deficit.

The Suez Canal shares, held by the British Government, have increased by £4,000,000 in the last two years.

Roland Molineaux, athlete, boxer, and society idol in New York, after a sensational trial, has been acquitted of the murder of a man named Cornish by very round-about means.

Australian growers will agitate against the proposed increase in duty on their wines in England.

No more meetings of Utlanders in Johannesburg, Com. Paul Kruger is 'apprehensive,' so he says, and has put his foot down.

Herbert Gladstone, so frequently caricatured during his father's lifetime, has been appointed the new 'whip' of the Liberal party.

Earl Beauchamp, the New South Wales Governor elect, aired his views on Federation at the farewell banquet tendered him by the House of Commons last week. It will, he says, overshadow all other questions, and will conduce to the prosperity of the colonies.

Chas. Vautin, West Australian Company floater, got 'six months' in London for defrauding shareholders of £20,000.

A trophy valued at £100, will be added to the stakes of the Melbourne Cup.

No fresh news of importance about Samoa since that of the fighting, referred to very fully, elsewhere in this issue.

The Duke of Devonshire, who as Lord Harrington, played a very important part in Imperial politics years ago, says he is likely to return altogether from the arena at an early date.

The Czar will, he says, make no changes in Finland. He was petitioned on the subject some time ago.

Germany has the very elements against her, in the Samoa embroglio. The naval cruiser Cormorant dispatched in hot haste from Hong Kong to relieve the poor effete Buzzard, at Apia, has put into Brisbane in a terrible plight. She has been ashore on the Whirlwind reef for six days, and had very nearly to be abandoned.

Since 8.30 Thursday morning last a young lady has been missing from an Auckland hotel. She is about 18, in short dress, tan boots, light brown mackintosh with cape, felt hat with green ribbon, flowing dark brown hair, dark complexion. Her brother is waiting anxiously for news, but fears she has committed suicide.

Ranjisinjhi is enthusiastic about the new Australian Eleven. The bowling is, he says, good in every way, but he laments the loss of Harry Trott as captain.

Dreyfusina becomes daily more disgraceful. Every day the honour of France receives some new shameful smirch. Esterhazy's price is set down at a thousand francs—£40.

Twenty millions of dollars have been paid Spain for the Philippines.

Fighting continues in the Philippines. The Filipinos make desperate resistance, but the Americans have captured several towns.

Forty-five persons perished when the steamer Kingswell collided with the Turkish ship Marie in the Mediterranean and sank her immediately.

The French and the Belgians have secured the four and a-half million Chinese loan at five per cent. for the Tekin-Hankow railway. Belgians have also the pre-emption for a railway from Hankow to Canton.

The bubonic plague has reached Hong Kong. Deaths are very numerous.

Thirty-seven miles express train speed has been attained by Britain's new torpedo boat destroyer.

City syndicates are seeking to secure a monopoly of wireless telegraphy in England and Africa.

Arrangements for the establishment of a naval station at Auckland are now practically completed, and are very satisfactory.

The recent gales off the British coast cost the Lowestoft fishing fleet £20,000 for gear alone.

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