

call it?—I will call it a parable that some one has come in to rouse you up. It is a God-send, to use a technical term.' Without this rousing up the Council, he went on to say, had an 'illicit' existence.

The outcome of the late public meeting held in Picton in reference to the doings of the Picton Borough Council, was a very breezy meeting of the Council afterwards. The Mayor however, ruled that he was not obliged to take notice of any resolutions passed at a public meeting. In that case he was resolved to let matters remain in statu quo till the next election of councillors, when the ratepayers could express their opinions by electing whomsoever they chose. The whole fiasco arose out of the appointment of the Town Clerk to be also Inspector of Works, in addition to half a dozen other appointments which he holds. The ratepayers consider that the wisest plan would be to pay an experienced man who could do the whole of the borough work. Another point of difference between the ratepayers and the Council was the unjust raising of the water rates, and the letting of water power to a councillor for lighting his hotel with electricity at a much less rate than another was paying for his malt-house.

Owing to the recent unusually bad weather, no mails came to Picton from Thursday of last week till Tuesday this week. Marlborough people thought they were being isolated again. The heavy seas breaking on the coast at Port Underwood were distinctly heard in Picton on Saturday night, and fears for the safety of coasting craft amid such terrific breakers as there must have been was felt by most people.

Current Comment.

ROADS AND BRIDGES VERSUS PENSIONS.

Was it better to give access to the land and bring the produce to market than to give pensions to old people? If roads and bridges were made he thought the settlers would be in a better position to provide for their aged relatives themselves. (Applause.) He was not against the principle, but against the Bill. It was, amongst other things, merely an extension of the principle of charitable aid. The more a man worked and saved the less chance he had of getting a pension. The principle was bad and opposed to the rules of political economy. He hoped his hearers would consider his objections reasonable and sufficient.—Herries, M.H.R., at Cambridge.

THE BARE MAJORITY.

Recognition had been given lately to the great principle of the bare majority, more especially on the question of local option. The three-fifths majority might be all very well, but if a majority was right in one case why not in all; let us have it fair all round. (Applause.) He trusted that whoever went to the House from this district should go infused with the necessity of carrying into effect the great and good principle of rule by a bare majority. (Applause.)—Mr White in the Waikato.

THEIR OWN TRUMPET

The people of the colony had just cause to be grateful to the Opposition for their efforts; they had done yeoman service during their 10 years in Parliament. (Hear, hear and applause.) They had sat up late and worked their hardest to keep the present Government in check, never despairing and never dreaming of giving in. If they were few, he maintained that they had gained a great moral victory. It had been a great triumphal success and he ventured to predict that the Opposition would not go in again as an Opposition, but as the party out of which the Government of this country would be created.—Captain Russell in several recent speeches up North.

News of World.

Two thousand workmen have been discharged from the Woolwich Arsenal.

Once again there is a pow-wow in the Transvaal, and an alleged conspiracy, resulting in the arrest of seven Englishmen and a Dane, has been discovered. The men are stated to have been enlisting men for service against the Transvaal Government. They are apparently persons of no influence or importance, and the incident will not, it is hoped, interfere with the compromise which it is thought will result from the meeting of Kruger and Sir A. Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa.

The Australians won the Surrey match very easily by an innings and 70 runs. Howell's bowling is arousing a furor of admiration. Trumble trundled triumphantly in Surrey's second innings, getting 5 wickets for 35.

Earl Stafford met his death last week under extraordinary circumstances. He fell off a platform of a station on the Great Northern Railway just as an express train was passing through. It is presumed he had a fit, and so fell. He was decapitated.

As a concession to religious feeling the projected Sunday issue of the 'Daily Mail' has been abandoned by Harmsworth Brothers.

The war in the Philippines progresses, and slowly but surely American troops are capturing all the main towns. Sanisidion, on the island of Luzon, has been taken this week.

The Bank of New South Wales is flourishing, and declares a dividend of 9 per cent. The New Zealand business is reported to be excellent.

The much talked of Peace Conference began its deliberations on Friday. Owing to the Queen's Birthday holiday we are obliged to go to press early this week. At the time of writing the news is as follows:—

M. de Staal, the Russian Ambassador to England, has been elected president of the Conference. The proceedings are secret. The Conference telegraphed to the Czar its desire for the successful result of the deliberations. The programme to be discussed consists of three sections, namely, Disarmament, the Laws of War, and Mediation and Arbitration. The Czar has authorised the Commission to report upon the advisableness of abolishing the transportation of criminals to Siberia, realising that the present system is ruinous to the future of Siberia. The Conference has declared questions affecting privateering and neutrality of merchandise which is not contraband of war to be outside the scope of the Conference, the subjects not having been included in the Czar's circular. M. de Staal, in addressing the Conference, said the question of mediation and arbitration would be placed in the forefront. The laws of war and the question of reducing the armaments of the nations would come next. The newspaper correspondents are indignant that secrecy is being maintained in regard to the proceedings. Several have left the Hague as a protest.

A large Russian loan will probably soon be placed on the London market.

The prospects in the Transvaal are none too hopeful. President Kruger's reform proposals are considered illusory. They are limited to the reduction of the qualification for the full franchise to nine years. Mr Goschen, First Lord of the Admiralty, speaking at the South African dinner, said Sir A. Milner, the British High Commissioner for South Africa, was not a suitable man to deal with the Transvaal tangle, which must be unravelled. The Johannesburg conspirators include two agents provocateurs, and several drunken wastrels. The attempt of the Government organs to magnify the affair into a second Jameson raid excites derision. The Commission of Police is supposed to have discovered the plot in order to retain control of the Detective Department.

The outbreak of cholera in India may approach serious proportions, a very large number of deaths are reported from Karachi.

At the time of going to press the condition of the Ameer of Afghanistan was still critical, he is unable to walk or stand. Sirdar Hubidilla Khan, the Ameer's eldest son, is popular, and is likely to maintain the inheritance. His chief rival is Hrak Khan, the Ameer's brother, who is at present in Russian Turkestan.

Two more notes stolen from Parr's Bank have been cashed.

Despite the loss of the China the P. and O. Company have declared a dividend of 7 per cent. on deferred shares.

Postmen in Paris have struck owing to a Bill passed by the Chamber of Deputies for an increase in their pay being rejected by the Senate.

Owing to the liquidation of the Australasian Mail Line Co. the steamers with their contracts are to be sold.

The foundation stone of the new South Kensington Museum has been laid by the Queen. Her Majesty, who was escorted by the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York and Cambridge, and a brilliant concourse of peers, was received with great enthusiasm by the public.

The Northern Steamship Company have had a very successful year, and pay a dividend of 7 per cent.

All is quiet in Samoa now, according to reports per H.M.s. Royalist.

The British troops occupied Shanghai, in the Kauling province, and hoisted the British flag. The troops have now returned to Hongkong. The Russian Minister insists on an extension of the Pekin railway concession, and China is expected to yield unless Britain supports her. Lord Salisbury, addressing the Railway Benevolent Institution, ridiculed the idea that foreigners participating in the Chinese railway concessions would seriously imperil British interests.

Touching the Pacific cable, Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Canadian Premier, states that Canada will only agree to contribute to the Pacific cable if the work is carried out on the principle of co-partnership with Britain and Australasia. The New Zealand Government have received a cable from the Imperial authorities confirming the offer of a subsidy not exceeding twenty thousand pounds per annum for 20 years towards the Pacific cable route by Norfolk Island, with a branch there to New Zealand. The estimated cost is £1,517,000.

New South Wales Lancers will assist at the celebration of Her Majesty's birthday in London.

The Imperial Institute is to be converted into national property. The east wing will be devoted to the London University.

The leader of the Belgian Antarctic expedition, Lieut. De Gerlache, says that the work of the Belgian Antarctic exploration party is finished, and that the scientists are now on their way to Europe.

The usual cruelty charges brought against African explorers, are being levelled against Major Marchand. It is alleged he hanged and shot runaway porters, turned women into baggage bearers, and was guilty of other enormities.

The direct trade between Manchester and the colonies is said to be booming. Much interest and activity is being shown in Manchester.

A reaction appears to be setting in in the Dreyfus case. Owing to the revelations in the 'Figaro,' a large section of the Nationalist press in Paris declare they will accept the verdict of the Court de Cassation. But imagine such a declaration being necessary! Fancy the 'Times' saying it would accept the decision of the Court of Appeal!

The Queen has visited Kensington Palace, which is about to be handed over to the nation, and was delighted with all she saw. The palace will no doubt be one of the most popular 'show places' in London when it is opened to the public.

The Earl of Huntington, who, with his wife, has left for a tour of these colonies, is a young fellow about 30 years of age. He is owner of some 15,000 acres of land, and is an enthusiastic hunter, being master of the Ormole Hunt. He is the fourteenth earl, and an ancestor, John de Hastings, was Seneschal of Aquitaine, a claimant, by the way, to the Scottish throne. His full name is Warren Francis John Plantagenet Hastings. He is a Conservative, rich, and married to a charming woman. New Zealand is included in the tour.

America will, from this time forward, be a factor in European politics. Her inclusion in the Peace Conference invitation has, Signor Crispijns having pointed out, created a precedent for Yankee intervention in all European questions.

Admiral Fairfax, who was out here some years ago as Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Squadron, has been appointed Commander-in-Chief at Devonport.

'Review of Reviews' Stead has been allowed to lecture in Russia to British residents. He denounced the censorship over all publications brought into the country as idiotic and mischievous, and complained that no peace society was allowed to be organised in Russia.

With regard to the Pacific cable, the Agents-General and Lord Strathearn, High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada, have interviewed Mr Chamberlain and strongly urged an Imperial partnership. They pointed out that the colonies had no means of surveying the route or laying the cable.

Misfortune never comes singly in the shipping world. Besides the missing Perthshire and the wrecked Tekapo, there have been disasters to the steamer Age, which ran aground at Newcastle; to the Duke of Buckingham, which is ashore in the Brisbane river; and to the Orowaiti, which ran on a sandbank in Strahan Harbour.

The Henry Dramatic Company commenced its Auckland season on Saturday, the drama staged being 'Shamrock and Thistle.' A good house welcomed the players, who represent a fairly strong combination, and have in their repertoire several pieces that ought to secure them a warm reception. The drama with which they once more seek the patronage of the Northern City is a really good one of its class, sensational and emotional to the last degree, and crowded with strong situations. The staging leaves nothing to be asked for, and some of the players, notably Mr Henry, who is capital in his role of the Scotch servant, take their parts well. On Tuesday evening the company staged a dramatisation of Ouida's 'Under Two Flags.'

The organist of Knox Church, Parnell (Mr J. P. Bennett) has been asked to act in a similar capacity at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Devonport, but is unable to accept the post owing to his being only a short time in his present position.

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