

there are many sanatoriums in New Zealand which have high claims, it really does appear that Nelson possesses certain advantages which should place her high in the list. In summer Nelson might be enervating, but as a health resort for winter—a sort of colonial Cannes (or even Bournemouth)—it possesses special charms which we have all, I fancy, overlooked too long. We are given to boast of our climate as a whole, and few will care to contradict that, good as it is all over New Zealand, it is extra good in Nelson. It has been pointed out that during the recent cold snap Nelson only suffered the lightest and slightest of frosts, while during the terrible gales which have been experienced lately there were days when there were several vessels sheltering from a storm under Long Island, and when there was neither a cloud to be seen nor a breath of wind to be felt in Nelson. All this cold and wet winter, during which Wellington has hardly had a fine day, Nelson has enjoyed frequent spells of dry weather and glorious sunshine. These advantages have (as the "Mail" remarks) a distinct commercial value, and it is a great pity that they are not properly exploited by local authorities. As I have said, Nelsonians have at last awakened to the value of their climate as an asset, and efforts are being made to boom the little township after the fashion of other so-called health resorts, which have really far less claim to attention than (up to now) too retiring Nelson.

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THE POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

This department is one with which the public is daily brought into the closest of connection, and of which probably it is prouder than that of any other department of the State. It is (says the Hawera "Star") the general provider and the general server. Practically all business communications pass through it; to a large extent it is the banker of "the common people"; to the classes it represents the tax gatherer; to the aged poor it is the pension distributor; in many places it is the registry of the great incidents of life and death; it is the assurance organisation of a great many colonists; and, in fact, one can hardly live or move a day without invoking the services of this great and widespread department which stands for so much of the social and socialistic activity of the State. Naturally its balance-sheet is of interest, and it is satisfactory to know that, as in former years, this shows a substantial credit on the year's operations.

THE GUN COTTON DISASTER INQUIRY.

Captain Falconer is to be congratulated upon having come very well out of a trying situation (says the Wellington "Times"). Of his fearlessness and skill there can be no doubt; his caution alone is impugned as having been possibly insufficient. He would be less than human if he failed to profit in this regard by the two terrible casualties that have taken place under his command. Not ordinary, but extraordinary precautions must be employed in dealing with such a dangerous substance as gun cotton.

THE FEDERAL SPIRIT.

The growth of the Federal spirit in Parliament and the country since it has been realised that the Commonwealth of Australia is near at hand, is (thinks the "Post") a wholesome sign that, underlying the provincialism that is largely due to our isolation, there is a true national spirit which—apart from the purely commercial aspect of the question—once fairly aroused, will be a powerful factor in determining the ultimate destiny of New Zealand as one of the United States of Australasia. To the friends of Federation, particularly those who in recent years have patiently and persistently endeavoured to convey to a somewhat apathetic people the tremendous significance of the nation-making movement that is now culminating in an Australian Commonwealth, the lively interest now being displayed on the question in this country must be especially gratifying.

THE MINING PROSPECTOR.

WILL HE BECOME EXTINCT?
There is reason to fear (in the opinion of the Nelson "Colonist") that the prospector of the old school, the man who underwent great hardship in the hope of personal gain, but who, on making a discovery, generously shared his "good luck" with others, will soon be a man of the past. In some quarters such a contingency seems to have been foreseen, for it has already been suggested that the State should undertake prospecting. That suggestion is, we are convinced, quite out of the question, but it may, nevertheless, be desirable to offer inducements for exploration by practical men.

AUSTRALIAN CRICKETERS AT HOME.

Even the team that went Home in 1882 can hardly be regarded as equal to the team of 1899. Of the fifty-one matches played to date between England and Australia, twenty-five have been won by England, seventeen by Australia, and nine were drawn. Until this tour only three test matches—in 1882, 1888, and in 1896—had been won by Australians in England; and the tour of 1899 is the first in which the Australians have not been beaten in these matches. It is acknowledged on every hand that the Australians

won the one decisive test match of this tour in a brilliant manner, and in several of the drawn games they averted defeat by such a display of sterling cricket as delighted even their opponents. The Australians are improving at cricket. In the last nine test matches at Home and in Australia England has not been victorious once.

A SPLENDID CHARITY.

The Prison Gate Mission, with its slender means, has (says the Lyttelton "Times") succoured and sheltered scores of men and youths who, without its kindly help at the right moment, would have gone from bad to worse, until they were finally confirmed in a career of crime. Some of the older men have passed into the Samaritan Home, there to remain in some measure of comfort for the remainder of their days; while many of the youths, more weak-minded than vicious, have received good sound help, tempered with wholesome advice, and a fresh start in life.

WHY AUCKLAND WANTS NEW ZEALAND TO FEDERATE.

That the idea of New Zealand joining the Australian Commonwealth should find favour in Auckland will not (says the Oamaru "Mail") occasion any surprise to those who bear in mind the intensely bitter feeling that has been entertained in that city towards Wellington ever since the removal of the seat of government some thirty-five years ago. So deep-rooted is that antipathy that we believe many of the Aucklanders would rather be governed from Sydney, or even Timbuctoo, than from Wellington. The Auckland agitation in favour of New Zealand entering the Australian Commonwealth has, we really believe, its origin in hatred of Wellington—the city that, in days gone by, the Aucklanders used to sneeringly designate "a fishing village." Most certainly the Aucklanders have not the possibility of any commercial advantage from New Zealand becoming a part of the Commonwealth to act as stimulus for Auckland producers. Little or nothing that Australia stands in need of.

FIRST OFFENDERS PROBATION.

The Hon. J. A. Tole was not a very conspicuous figure in Parliament. But (says the Hawke's Bay "Herald") if he did nothing else, in passing the First Offenders' Probation Act he justified his presence there. According to the report of the Inspector of Prisons, 91 persons were placed on probation last year, as against the same number in 1897. Of these 31 were discharged after satisfactorily carrying out the conditions of their licenses, three were re-arrested, and one was transferred to a lunatic asylum. The amount of costs ordered to be paid by the various Courts before whom these offenders were brought was £406, of which £170 had been actually paid. The greater portion of the remainder being paid by instalments as it became due. The approximate cost of keeping these offenders had they been sent to prison would have been £2,287, which sum added to the amount of costs, etc., actually paid, gave a saving of £3,457 to the colony.

DUNEDIN HONOURS SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Sir Walter Scott was a good man—none the less because he hated cant and cared little for introspection. A great and good man, and a Scotsman, to boot!—strange would it be if Dunedin were to be backward in doing him honour.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road, he wrote in "Maruino," and we have no doubt that some of the country settlers will take Dunedin's road today in order to pay their tribute to the writer whose stories have added to the richness and worth of their mental life. We trust that the celebration will be completely successful, and that August 15th will henceforth always have due honour in the Edinburgh of the South.

LAWYERS AS M.P.'S.

The argument adduced about lawyers introducing measures to afford legal hair-splitting and litigious disputations is beneath contempt. The men who in the past and in the present have held the highest positions in the old world and the new have been men who have had a legal training, and if they are to be prohibited from sitting in a New Zealand House of Representatives, then let us pray for the millennium. — Mangaweka "Mail."

THE PROHIBITION CRAZE.

I am quite prepared to concede to the prohibitionists the right to promulgate their opinions, and to win over to their side as many converts as they can, says Mr E. S. Mantz, of Mornington, in a letter to the press. At the same time I must demand the same liberty of thought and speech that I extend to them. Once allow one portion of the community to dictate its own dietary table to the rest, we shall be landed into the arena of animosity, and the battle of the beverages would become more fierce than the unholy crusades which have stained the page of religious history. If the prohibitionists are disposed to help on the work of human progress, let them march with the times, give up their ridiculous craze, and seek to regulate with sound restrictions an institution they cannot wholly destroy. Hitherto the prohibitionists have been permitted to tread the war-path unmolested till they have mistaken apathy for acquiescence, but as they are now beginning to press too heavily upon the corns of those who will not fall in line with them they must be prepared for a rude awakening, for the masses will not always be inclined to be lectured, bullied, and insulted by agitators of the Isitt stamp.

"IF THERE WERE NO GROG SHOULD WE CLEAR OUT?"

The statement that so soon as the hotel bars were closed there would be an exodus of respectable people is not only ridiculous; it is an insult to the intelligence of the public. Just fancy, for instance, that the whole male population of the colony could be assembled together, and then, each in the presence of the other, asked to say whether in the event of his being unable to obtain his daily tot he would, despite all the other advantages which this beautiful country offers, clear out to some place where beer and whisky were not prohibited. How many men would hold up their hands, and confess their inability to exist, even under the most favourable circumstances, without the stimulating presence of their daily grog?

I fancy there are a number of things happening about us which are not generally known, or, if known, not generally appreciated, says "Momus" in the Mangaweka "Mail." It is not generally known that in this year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-nine we are so careless, so listless, or so wooden-headed, that we do not take that interest in matters concerning the general weal that we, as an enlightened race, should do. The consequence is that even in that august assembly who have the making of our laws there are a by no means small number of utterly incompetent members. We take no steps to select a good man and induce him to come forward, with the consequence that two or three candidates, probably more or less unfitted for the position, force themselves upon us, and we, poor simple we, from party or some other motives, elect one of them, and lay the flattering unction to our souls that we have nobly fulfilled the duty devolving on us as free and independent electors. Thereafter we wonder at the wrangling and squabbling, the exchange of bitter personalities, and the waste of time for which the country pays so dearly. I repeat, this is a state of affairs not generally known.

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