

Overland Route—Auckland to Wellington.

We are advised by Messrs. Thos. Cook and Son that on January 2nd a start was made with the new overland journey to Wellington by special launch between Taumarunui and Pipiriki, the first party, as organised and booked by the firm consisting of Sir Donald and Lady Robertson and friend, Mr and Mrs Joseph Gould, Mrs and Miss Elworthy, and Messrs. Baker (2), nine in all.

Until such time as good accommodation can be erected at Taumarunui, Messrs. Hatrick and Co. provide for up-river passengers their floating house-boat midway between Pipiriki and that point, down trips being arranged to suit the demand. During the summer months from now onwards, however, Messrs. Hatrick and Co. intend running a launch weekly, leaving Taumarunui every Saturday morning at 6.30 a.m. At the present time accommodation is available at Taumarunui for 8 to 10 people. Trains leave Auckland daily at 10 a.m., arriving at Taumarunui 8.10 p.m. The Saturday launch leaves that point at 6.30 a.m., and arrives at Pipiriki about 5 p.m. same evening. The Sunday can be pleasantly spent at Pipiriki, and the river steamer taken on Monday onward to Wanganui, from which place daily communication can be had with the South to Wellington, or back to Auckland via New Plymouth. A pleasant change in route is afforded by taking coach from Pipiriki to Tokaanu, steamer across Lake Taupo, coach on to Rotorua, and rail back to Auckland, this ideal round trip covering the greater part of the North Island's finest scenic and wonderful.

The cost of trip from Auckland, first rail to Taumarunui, launch and steamer onwards to Wanganui is £3 12/0, or if second rail be taken £3 5/6 (exclusive of hotel expenses en route); if from Auckland to Wellington, first throughout £4 8/7, or if second rail £3 15/7. From Auckland back to Auckland, via Wanganui River, returning via New Plymouth, travelling tickets first throughout would cost but £5 16/; if second rail is taken £5 4/2. The round trip from Auckland to Pipiriki by way of the upper reaches of the Wanganui River, thence by coach, etc., overland through Rotorua and back to Auckland, is £9, and a more enjoyable round trip for an Auckland or visitor in search of new scenic fields cannot well be found.

Messrs. Thos. Cook and Son represent Messrs. Hatrick and Co., the proprietors of the steamer service, and have received a large number of inquiries concerning this attractive trip already, and there is every prospect of it becoming an exceedingly popular one.

Auckland Timber Workers' Picnic

The combined timberworkers' first annual picnic, held at Motutapu on Dec. 31, passed off very successfully. There was a monster gathering, and the weather being delightfully fine a very pleasant day was spent. The attendance for very little short of 4000. The sports were very well patronised. Some of the races brought out keen competition. Appeared are the results:—

Boys under 18 (in two heats)—W. Simms 1, E. Webster 2, L. Snooks 3. 100yds Mill Employees.—D. Kellett 1, B. Jones 2, E. Tylecoat 3.

Three-legged Race.—Webb and Brown 1, Hartlett and Spragg 2. Half-mile Run.—C. Austin 1, H. A. Martin 2, A. Webster 3. Sack Race.—McNair 1, Byham 2, Walker 3.

100yds Timberworkers.—B. Jones 1, D. Kellett 2, G. Tylecoat 3. 100yds Mill Employees' Wires.—Mrs J. Simms 1, Mes J. Roberts 2, Mrs Saunders 3.

100yds Girls under 16.—Lillian Foreman 1, Miss Cava 2, Miss Denny 3. 300yds Timberworkers.—D. Kellett 1, E. C. Watson 2, S. Hazard 3. A protest was entered against the placing of Watson.

Open 50yds Married Ladies.—Mrs Goodall 1, Mrs J. Simms 2, Mrs McDonald 3. Human Wheelbarrow Race.—McNab and Walker 1, Morris and Harlin 2.

100yds Athletes.—J. Green 1, B. Jones 2, C. Davidson 3. Swimming Race (about 100yds).—F. Warbrick 1, B. O'Hare 2, R. O'Hare 3. Obstacle Race (about half-a-mile).—Morris 1, Allen 2.

200yds Amateur.—J. Hooker 1, H. E. Corvill 2, W. Tyler 3. Motutapu Employees.—Brydon 1, Craig 2, Webster 3.

Roadmen's Race.—Nadder 1, Mitchell 2, Hunter 3. Curriermen's Race.—Wallon 1, Smith 2, Walters 3.

Tag-of-War.—Six teams entered. Cashmore Bros. 1, Parker, Lamb and Co. 2.

Burglars About.

DARING HOUSEBREAKING IN SYMONDS-STREET.

A HAUL OF JEWELLERY.

A particularly daring robbery in a house near the city police barracks notifies citizens that burglars are once more about. This robbery was practised upon a house whose occupants were away on holiday, and it is no doubt only a matter of time for other robberies to come to light. The house, which is occupied by Dr. Rayner, is situated on the corner of Symonds and O'Rorke streets, and it is thus in one of the most exposed places near the city. The police-station overlooks it, and there are numerous well-filled boardinghouses in the vicinity, so that for the greater portion of the day it is always under observation by passers-by. On Christmas Eve Dr. and Mrs. Rayner left Auckland on a holiday jaunt, leaving everything in and about the house secure. The doors and windows were locked as securely as possible, and the side gate (that nearest the police station) was nailed up with a piece of timber. This was forced open for some reason not easily understood, for it would seem easier to go in by the front gate. How the gate could have been forced open without the intruders being observed is strange. The thieves are presumed to have obtained entry into the house by means of the scullery window. The latch is broken, as though the sash had been forced up from below with a chisel, and no glass is broken. When they got inside they must have moved very expeditiously and thoroughly, for they turned practically everything.

They were evidently after jewellery and cash, for with one exception they took nothing else.

What they got in the way of jewellery is valued at about £60, being chiefly composed of articles for personal adornment and keepsakes from many friends in different parts of the globe, their extrinsic value being, therefore, inexpressive in figures. In addition the thieves helped themselves to a revolver which Dr. Rayner purchased some months ago (during the previous burglary scare), and had left fully loaded in his writing desk. This was all the thieves could find of a portable nature, for Dr. Rayner had placed all his cash and unneeded valuables in the bank for safety.

The robbery was discovered by the servant when she went to prepare the house for Dr. and Mrs. Rayner's return. When she entered the house, it seems, she found everything turned upside down, and the house looking as though a cyclone had got adrift inside. Clothes were piled up in the bedrooms in a bewildering chaos, being pulled out of wardrobes and trunks and thrown down anyhow. The jewellery was mainly found in a heavy English dressing case of considerable value, and our national habit of making locks inviolable led to the wanton destruction of the bag. It was deliberately slashed open with a knife and utterly ruined. The lock of a trunk was forced open and the contents ransacked. Dr. Rayner's writing desk was searched systematically, every document being opened and thrown down. Such a systematic and complete robbery is rare, and to have effected it the thieves must have been several in number, and have devoted much time to their investigation. The police have charge of the matter now.

Interviewed at Dunedin, Mr James Mills, managing director of the Union S.S. Co. of N.Z., said that while negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily with the Canadian Government for the Vancouver mail service, the matter could not mature till the Commonwealth saw the result of the calling for tenders for the different mail routes. He said that there was no truth in the report that the company was fitting the new steamer Manuka with a turbine, but a turbine steamer is to be built for the company's trade between Melbourne and Luncannon, to be ready about the same time as the new Fiji boat, in September. The Manuka, by the way, is practically a sister ship to the Moeraki. Mr Mills said the company hoped to develop the direct trade between India and New Zealand, and he regarded the outlook as hopeful.

Tenders for building a bridge over the river at Cambridge were last week laid before the representatives of the contributing bodies by the Mayor of Cambridge, Mr. T. Wells. The American Bridge-building Company (J. Burns & Co., agents) forwarded three designs of a cantilever bridge, No. 1, 14ft. wide, £9784; No. 2, 14ft. wide, but lighter in construction, £4826; No. 3, similar to the latter, but 2ft. wider, £8750. Since these had been received Messrs. J. Burns and Co. telegraphed stating that it was probable an extra 10 per cent. would need to be added on the imported ironwork. The Cleveland Bridge Company, of Darlington, England (A. Brittain, Christchurch, agent), tendered for a cantilever bridge at £10,500; W. Brown and Co., Liverpool (A. Brittain, agent), 14ft. wide suspension bridge, £14,352; G. M. Fraser, ironbark suspension bridge, with steel cables, 16ft. wide, £5250. The tenders will be further considered by the various local bodies concerned.

On Boxing Day between 60 and 70 people assembled on the Ruapuke Beach for the purpose of holding a working bee with the object of uncovering and bringing to the light of day that buried ship which in some past age was stranded at the mouth of a creek running into the sea. It was discovered many years ago by Mr. T. B. Hill, and the late inspector of schools, Mr. O'Sullivan, who on returning from a bathing excursion rode right across its deck. The spot was never properly located, and nothing resulted from the working bee, as the old vessel's position could not be determined. There was a great deal of difference of opinion regarding the position of the wreck, and she still lies probably clothed with twenty feet of sand, with her treasure trove—if she ever had one—still intact, awaiting the advent of an energetic antiquarian who will spend time and money in the prosecution of his search for relics of by-gone days.—(Kawhia Correspondent.)

Dr. Pomare, the Native Health Officer, has been telling a Southern newspaper man that a great change is being effected in the home life of the Maori, in the direction of the abandonment of the

old communistic habits in favour of European methods. It is becoming a general custom for the houses to be built on European lines, and for the Maoris to prefer the comfortable bed to the mat on the damp and uncomfortable ground. Moreover, the young Maori builds himself and his wife a new house when he gets married, instead of crowding into the family whare. Everywhere the doctor finds himself much respected, and the news of his visit is the signal for a general drastic spring cleaning of the pas.

A good response was made to the proposals for the National Scholarship examinations on January 5th and 6th. The following figures, arranged in order of applicants and number of available places, shows the entries received: Auckland, 80 and 44; Wellington, 45 and 15; Christchurch, 22 and 11; Dunedin, 20 and 12; Napier, 24 and 4; Blenheim, 17 and 8; Masterton, 10 and 3; Whangarei, 13 and 4; Taranaki, 10 and 6; Ashburton, 9 and 1; Naseby, 8 and 3; Oamaru, 7 and 1; New Plymouth, 5 and 3; Westport, 5 and 4; Gisborne, 1 and 1; Hamilton, 13 and 0; Palmerston, 12 and 0; Timaru, 12 and 0; Waikanae, 9 and 0; Greymouth, 8 and 0; Hokitika, 8 and 0; Kaikohe, 7 and 0; Lawrence, 6 and 0; Opoitiki, 4 and 0; Tapanui, 3 and 0; Tauranga, 2 and 0; Dargaville, 2 and 0; Akaroa, 2 and 0; totals, 235 and 127.

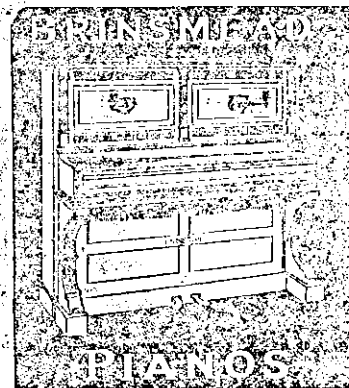
All previous records for Christmas holiday business were easily beaten this year. While letters and cards despatched had increased on last year's figures by 32,022, both books and newspapers showed a rise of upwards of 25 per cent.

Two English Ladies who are founding the colony at present are Miss Neilsa Daniell and Miss Appach. They have booked passages by the Waikare for the Souths trip, and after doing Mt. Cook and the Cold Lakes and the Otira Gorge, they proceed to Auckland by way of Wanganui and the Hot Lakes, making the return journey to England via Fiji and Vancouver. Miss Appach, who is at present making a short stay in Wellington, is a relation of Major General Babington.

W. P. HOFFMANN, QUEEN STREET, Auckland.

Pianos and Organs on Time Payment.

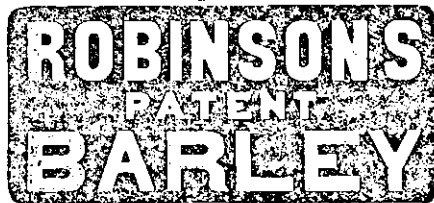
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