

# News of the Dominion.

# The Wide World.

### OUR WELLINGTON LETTER.

WELLINGTON, May 7.

#### The New Government House.

**Y**ESTERDAY I had an opportunity of going through the new Vice-Regal residence at Mt. View, Newtown. This up-to-date Government House is a much more handsome structure than the first published plans indicated. Some modifications and alterations have been made, much to the advantage of the house from an artistic point of view. From Kelburne and the surrounding elevated positions of the city the building is a conspicuous and very rightly one, its white front and sharply flag-tower showing out well against the dark background of pines. Wellington has no beautiful setting for a Government House such as Auckland possesses; funeral-looking pines are about the only trees that Wellington seems to encourage. Nevertheless, our site can be made a very beautiful one in time. Though in Newtown, and directly overlooking the least picturesque section of our city, it stands at a considerable elevation above the "mean streets" of the suburb, and the sombre pines, if serving no other purpose, will at least help to conceal the unartistic suburb from the fastidious eyes of Vice-Royalty. The house itself is pretty well finished as far as the outside is concerned, but another good month's work is required before the carpenters and plasterers are out of the interior. The northern aspect, that which we see from the city, is a very fine one—a long two-storied structure, in white, or nearly white, discolour, relieved by dark oiled pitch timber—a combination pleasing to the eye. The front is over three hundred feet long. It is higher than one would imagine from its great length; the flag-tower is 80 feet above the ground. The first glimpse of his new home should somewhat remind Baron Lington of Old England, for that portion which is not timbered is "rough-cast," as builders call it, with concrete and shingle (on a backing of boarding and iron), in imitation of the construction of old-fashioned manor houses and cottages in England, and in certainly an improvement on much of the public architecture one sees here and in other towns. The main entrance to the house is not, however, on this northern side, but on the southern side, where some of the present old mental hospital buildings are to be cleared away in order to make room for a fine sweeping drive leading up to the pillared main doorway. The interior is just now in an incomplete state, but one can see enough to judge that the future Governors will be very handsomely and comfortably housed, certainly much more so than at the old Government House. The bathroom measures 40 feet by 20 feet, which I think, is about the size of that in the Auckland Government House. The total cost of the new house will be between £25,000 and £24,000.

Lord Lington will, I believe, stay at the Wellington Club for two or three months after his arrival, until the new house is ready for him. The grounds will be still very raw looking and new, but very handsome lawns and flower gardens are to be laid down, and by next summer the place should be in trim for vice-regal entertaining.

#### Our Citizen Army.

The announcement by the Premier that the Government has adopted Lord Kitchener's military training proposals in their entirety seems to be pretty universally approved of in Wellington. A new feeling in the matter of compulsory training is coming over the people. It will now, I believe, become a point of honour and of pride with our young fellows to do their share of soldierly work in the field. A youth who manages to get exempted, on whatever ground, is not to be envied. I look forward to seeing military training taking the place to some extent of the football, which occupies so large a share of the thoughts and the spare time of young New Zealanders, and forms the topic of popular conversation to a wearisome extent. Here in Wellington the defence scheme is attracting particular attention. There is here probably a larger proportion of eligible recruits than in the other centres, for a great many of the younger Civil

servants come within the age of service. It will be some few years before the full benefit of the scheme is apparent, but in ten years' time I believe the New Zealander will be a very much better set-up man than he is to-day, and far less "slack" and slouching. If military training will do nothing else, it will put some "ginger" into his walk and teach him to keep his hands out of his pockets. An Austrian friend of mine tells me that he has always been grateful to his country for having compelled him to do a year of soldiering. It "set him up" for life, made him smart and active and well-posed, and incidentally taught him how to use his rifle. It was hard at the time—far, far harder than anything the New Zealand youth will ever be called upon to undergo—but it did him lasting good.

#### Comet Parties.

The latest popular diversion takes the form of "comet parties." Out at Kelburne some up-to-date persons have lately organised excursions by taxi-cab to the top of the hills to see Halley's comet, etc., etc. In other parts of the city similar expeditions are all the go, and at all unearthly hours of the night and morning you may hear the far-away voices of the amateur astronomers, male and female, after their kind, taking the most roundabout of ways, one would imagine, to see the comet rise. Certainly, it is a good excuse for a ramble "down the flowery dell," as the old song says; but I have heard that some wise mothers are coming to the conclusion that it is carrying scientific enthusiasm rather too far when the "young men" call at 11 p.m. or so in order to take the daughters of the family out to see the comet rise.

All the same, it was worth getting up this morning to see that glorious triangle in the north-eastern sky, bright Venus as the apex, the comet at the left, and the crescent moon—Marama, "goddess excellently bright"—on the right forming the base of the triangle. I wondered as I looked on it what the old Maori tohungas would have prophesied after gazing at such an amazing celestial combination—a "tohu" of vast import, surely!

#### "A Hundred Years is a Very Long Time."

So says the old sailors' chanty about the girls in London town, when Jack and Bill walked up and down "a hundred years ago." But there is a wonderful old gentleman down this way whose memory goes back more than a hundred years. This is Mr Henry Burling, of Waikanae, who celebrated his one hundred-and-ninth birthday last Sunday. Mr Burling is still hale and sturdy, and bids fair to see a few more years of this good old world. When he came out to New Zealand in the early "forties," he was already about forty years old. Think of a man still living who was born before Nelson fought at Trafalgar, and who can well remember hearing, as a schoolboy, the news of the battle of Waterloo! Not long ago the veteran "kicked off" in a game of football at Waikanae in order to show that there was "life in the old dog yet." He has a promising-looking son, too, a chirpy young fellow of between seventy and eighty, who can kick a ball just as well as his dad can.

#### Dr. Bell and the Antarctic Expedition.

It was thought some time ago that New Zealand would have the credit of sending out at least one of the members of Captain Scott's forthcoming Antarctic expedition. Dr. James M. Bell, the energetic young Director of the New Zealand Geological Survey, volunteered to join Captain Scott's party as geologist, but it was lately announced that he could not go. It is understood that the reason is that the Minister for Mines, the Hon. Frederick McKenzie, did not look with approval on the idea, and that he vetoed it with emphasis. The Hon. Mr. McKenzie prides himself on being what he calls a "practical" man above all things, and has "no time" for science, it is popularly reported, and such like fallacies. All of which is rather rough on Dr. Bell, who is one of the smartest young scientists we have in New Zealand, and who, I am certain, would acquit himself with credit in such an expedition. He should be insured to cold, for he comes from Canada, and has done a good deal of exploring in the great frozen wastes of the Far North West.

### CABLE NEWS IN BRIEF.

#### IMPERIAL.

**T**HE political feature of the week in Britain was the issue of the Parliament (Veto) Bill. The preamble foreshadows an ultimate second chamber on a popular basis. The bill provides that within a month of a money bill being sent up to the House of Lords their consent may be dispensed with on the King's assent; the Speaker's certificate, declaring it a money bill, to accompany its presentation to the King. Bills other than those relating to finance are similarly to become law if rejected a third time by the House of Lords, after passing the House of Commons, but not necessarily in the same Parliament. The maximum duration of Parliament is to be five years. Extreme Radicals denounce the preamble. The "Daily News" fears that certain phrases indicate it is proposed that the restrictions in the House of Lords shall be imposed only pending the creation of a new second chamber, and declares that what is won must be declared permanently won.

Mr Hardie, in a speech in Wales, remarked that he did not want a written Constitution. The moment the powers and duties, either of the House of Lords or the House of Commons were defined by an Act of Parliament fresh tyranny would be established. Loyalty to the Throne was a great superstition and very advantageous to the ruling powers, but it mattered nothing to the working classes whether the official head of a State was a King or a President.

The "Daily Mail's" prize of £10,000 for the flight from London to Manchester having been won by Paulhan, the company has offered another £10,000, of which £5000 will be for a prize in England and £5000 for a flight from London to Paris.

The Cunard Shipping Company is arranging for oil fuel to be consumed in the new sister ship of the Lusitania and Mauretania (32,000 tons), this departure being possible owing to new oilfields solving the difficulties of cost and adequate supplies. It is estimated that by the use of oil £12,000 will be saved on each round trip between Liverpool and New York.

King Edward VII., after a short illness, passed away at midnight on Friday. The Ministers are all returning to London, and Parliament will meet as soon as possible.

The "Pall Mall Gazette" eulogises New Zealand's defence scheme, and says that it affords a valuable object-lesson to the people of England.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Extraordinary precautions were taken in the capitals of Europe to prevent the usual May Day riots, many drafts of troops being called out. As a result, the demonstrations were very orderly.

The Albanian rebellion continues to cause trouble to the Turkish authorities. The origin of the insurrection is the inhabitants' indignation at being compelled, under the new regime, to pay taxes to the Turkish Government. The Albanians formerly were left mostly to their own devices. It is reported that Diakovka is in the hands of the insurgents. A battalion from Ipek, proceeding to Diakovka, was ambushed, and returned to Ipek with heavy loss. Large forces of Albanians have occupied the mountains westward of Katchanik Pass, cutting the Turkish line of communication with Prizrend.

A Haytian plot, organised in Kingston, Jamaica, to depose General Antoine Simon, and proclaim General Firmin president, was checked owing to ex-President Nord Alexis, who was financing the Firminist Revolution, dying suddenly in Jamaica, the cause of death being unknown. The discovery of the conspiracy at Port-au-Prince (the Haytian capital) resulted in the imprisonment of many popular persons.

The shortage of meat in Chicago has brought the extract business to a standstill, and packers are working out new schemes to utilise the works. No contracts for foreign armies are being placed in Chicago at present.

It is stated in St. Petersburg that Russia and Japan are fully agreed on all Far Eastern questions. A terrible earthquake devastated the northern portion of Costa Rica. Cartago is in ruins, and hundreds of lives were lost.

#### THE COMMONWEALTH.

According to the Federal Prime Minister (Mr Fisher) the revenue is coming in excellently, but he anticipates a shortage for the coming financial year of £800,000. Still he hoped to pull through without an appeal to the money market by the issue of Treasury bills. Mr Fisher, speaking regarding the financial agreement, stated that his Ministry was quite prepared to adhere to the 25/ per head arrangement with the States, but it must be limited to 10 years.

At no time in the history of Australasia has there been such an enormous amount of tonnage under construction for the trade as at present. Orders have been placed, or are about to be placed, by different companies engaged in the Australasian shipping trade for 50 steamships, aggregating 361,000 tons. The barque Loch Katrine, bound from Glasgow to Sydney, has been diamasted, and ten members of her crew were brought on by the steamer Tasmatic.

The spending power of the one million inhabitants of New Zealand is more than the spending power of the five millions in Scotland. In all the large towns of New Zealand—Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland—the drapery establishments are on a much more gigantic scale than anything in our provincial towns outside Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool.—Mr. Robert Allan, J.P., Edinburgh.

### NORTHERN STEAM SHIP COMPANY, LIMITED.

Weather and other circumstances permitting, the Company's steamers will leave as under:—

**For Russell.**  
CLANSMAN .... Every Monday, at 7 p.m.

**For Russell, Whangaroa, and Mangonui.**  
CLANEMAN. Every Wednes., at 5.30 p.m.  
No Cargo for Russell.

**For Awani, Waiharara, Honohora, Whangaroa, and Mangonui.**  
APANUI ..... Every Monday, at 2 p.m.  
No Cargo Whangaroa and Mangonui.

**For Whangaroa, Helena Bay, Tuhaka, and Whananaki.**  
PAEROA. .... Monday, 20th Dec., 1 p.m.

**For Great Barrier.**  
WAIOTAHU. Every Wednesday, midnight

**For Waiheke and Coromandel.**  
LEAVE AUCKLAND.  
DAPHNE. Every Tues. & Thurs. Forenoon.  
LEAVE COROMANDEL, VIA WAIHANGA.  
DAPHNE. .... Every Wed and Fri., Early.

**FOR WAIHERA.**  
Sat. at 2 p.m., commencing 4th Dec.  
**FROM ONEHUNGA.**  
For Hokianga.

CLAYMORE. .... Every Thursday.  
For Raglan and Kiriwhia.

CLAYMORE. .... Every Monday

**WHANGAREI SERVICE.**  
Steamers leave Whangarei as under:—  
S.S. NGAPUHI.  
Train Whangarei 8.30 Coromandel  
to Whar. Leaves

Goods rec. Pas.	Hongapal.	Paru	Bay.
2nd. 9.15 a.m.	1 p.m.	10 a.m.	1 p.m.
4th. 9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	No str.	11 a.m.
7th. 9.15 a.m.	2 p.m.	1 p.m.	No str.
9th. 11.45 a.m.	3.45 p.m.	2 p.m.	4 p.m.
11th. —	Press. day.	9 a.m.	No str.
14th. —	Press. day.	9.30 a.m.	8 a.m.
16th. 9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	9 a.m.	11 a.m.
18th. 9.15 a.m.	11.45 a.m.	No str.	No str.
21st. 9.15 a.m.	1 p.m.	11 a.m.	No str.
23rd. 11.45 a.m.	3 p.m.	1 p.m.	3 p.m.
24th. —	No cargo.	2 p.m.	No str.
28th. —	Press. day.	9.30 a.m.	8 a.m.
30th. 9.15 a.m.	11 a.m.	8 a.m.	11 a.m.
31st. —	No cargo.	11 a.m.	No str.

\*Goods outward by steamers leaving on following dates, viz.: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, and 30th, must leave un-country stations by afternoon train previous day.

NORTHERN CO., LTD. Agents.