

# News of the Dominion.

## OUR WELLINGTON LETTER.

WELLINGTON, August 12.

### The Children's Hospital Fund.

THE extraordinary success of the appeal for funds for the establishment of a Children's Hospital in Wellington overshadows all other topics this week. It is by a long way the most popular cash-collecting crusade this city has seen for many years. At the time of writing the fund had reached close on £4,000, and it is fully expected that when all the lists are closed £5,000 will have been collected. This, with the Government subsidy, will provide £11,000 for the erection of the much-needed hospital. It will be a splendid result, carried through in a very few weeks.

When the question of erecting the Children's Hospital was before the Hospital Board some time back, plans drawn by Messrs. Aitken and Bacon were submitted; these plans provided for a building to cost about £7,000. The plans were, however, set aside, to allow of the Fever Hospital being erected. It was for the purpose of obtaining this £7,000 building that Mrs. Wilford, the Mayor's wife, made her appeal to the public. The amount she asked for was £3,500; the Government subsidy would provide the rest. As a considerably larger sum will now be available, other plans will have to be drawn, providing for a considerably improved and more spacious building.

Mrs. Wilford's appeal touched the public in its most sympathetic spot. But Mr. Hugh Ward's generous assistance gave it a tremendous impetus. It is very doubtful whether the people would have shown such enthusiasm over the scheme had it not been for Mr. Ward's offer and his subsequent vigorous action in support of the scheme. After the violent attack made on "The Girl from Rector's" by a section of the local clergy, his assistance came as a sort of "sensational" and focussed the limelight on the Children's Hospital. And so the money is pouring in, and Wellington has fully redeemed itself from the charges of lack of generosity and liberality that have been hurled at it in the past.

### "The Girl from Rector's."

Still that "Girl from Rector's" discussion enlivens the daily papers. The Revs. Dr. Gibb and J. J. North and Mr. Hugh Ward have written columns of letters, to the amusement, if not the edification, of the public. Certainly the "Girl" is doing roaring business. Mr. Ward states that during the nine nights' season of the play nearly 12,000 people paid for admission. This is a big record for Wellington. And unto Dr. Gibb and Mr. North be the credit. They certainly sent much gold into Hugh Ward's purse, and he can afford to look pleasant and be magnanimous over it all.

### The Prison Farm Reformatory.

A good deal has appeared in print this last week on the subject of the Hon. Dr. Findlay's scheme for the reorganisation of the prison system of New Zealand, and the ideas set forth in the scheme are pretty universally approved of. The agricultural reformatory is particularly commended. The lines on which this farm for prisoners will be conducted have been already indicated; but little or nothing about its locality has yet been printed. It is to be established near Tokanui, in the Upper Waikato, and is to consist of about 1200 acres. I know the locality well, and as it is in a little-known but rather remarkable district, something about it will interest "Graphic" readers.

The farm will be a portion of a large block of Government land in the King Country—now a misnomer—extending from Tokanui eastwards for some miles towards the Wharepunga range. It is just on the Southern or "Maori" side of the Punui River, the old-time "Aukati" line, the boundary between the Maori country and the European frontier settlement, on the land which was confiscated from the natives after the Waikato war in 1864. It is within sight of famous Orakau, where the final battle in the war was fought, and where the Kingites made their last heroic stand. Once there was a large Maori population above Tokanui and the south bank of the Punui River,

but the natives have sadly dwindled away.

The country here is open fern land, with a good deal of easily drainable swamp. Much of it was cultivated by the Maoris, and riding over it you come across the remains of old villages and cultivations, old kumara and potato pits, and older trenched and parapeted hill-forts everywhere. It is a beautiful free open countryside, with wild pigs and wild cattle and horses roaming over it—and also, unfortunately, rabbits; these pests, however, are not so plentiful as they once were. Tokanui means "Big Rock"; it is the name of one of three round hills which rise just behind the old Tokanui settlement, and which are called by the white settlers in the vicinity the "Three Sisters."

These remarkable hills are terraced artificially from foot to summit; they were fortified holds in the ancient days. It is close to the base of Tokanui, I believe, that the headquarters of the prison farm will be located. The land there is good volcanic soil, lying well to the sun, with a gentle slope to the Punui River, a few miles away to the north. The main road from Kihikihi—the old-time southern-most frontier township of the whites—to Otorohanga, on the Main Trunk railway line, passes close to Tokanui. The farm will be in an excellent situation—not too far from market, and yet sufficiently far removed from other settlements to ensure the effective isolation of the prisoners.

### The New Mental Hospital Site.

A few miles away from Tokanui to the west will be the new Mental Hospital establishment—the main one for the North Island. This big institution, the scope of which was outlined in the press some time ago, will be located near the base of Kawa Hill, a prominent and rather picturesque volcanic cone rising from the plain just to the left of the Main Trunk line as one goes south, a short distance beyond where the Punui River is crossed after leaving Te Awamutu. It is an excellent site for the new establishment for the mentally afflicted. The district is healthy, breezy, and far removed from any town; the outlook is grand and the whole surroundings should be conducive to the recovery of those whose cases are not altogether hopeless.

This Kawa Hill is a remarkable place. It is terraced from foot to top, just as Mt. Eden is, for it was a fortified "pa" in ancient Maori days, and many stories are current about it in Ngati-Maniapoto folklore. One story concerns a chief who was once besieged on its summit, and who escaped with his tribe when surrender and death seemed inevitable by means of a subterranean passage which he had previously wisely caused to be dug from the fort to a clump of bushland some distance, and the whole surroundings should be conducive to the recovery of those whose cases are not altogether hopeless.

### Police Inspector Gillies and the Capture of Winiata.

Mention of the King Country reminds me of an incident in the career of Police Inspector R. J. Gillies, who has to retire from the force. A paragraph which has gone the rounds of the newspapers says that Inspector Gillies was the officer who arrested the Maori who murdered a young man named Ducker—who was a farm-servant at Epsom, near Auckland. The Maori got away to the King Country, and lived there for many years.

Now, it was not Mr. Gillies who actually arrested the murderer, whose name was Winiata. Gillies was then police constable at Te Awamutu, one of the frontier townships, and he helped to arrange the arrest; but the man who captured Winiata was a big half-caste named Robert Barlow. He got his man in a particularly clever and daring fashion.

It was in the year 1883, and the Queen's writ did not then run south of the Punui River. The King Country was at that time purely Maori territory.

There was a reward, I think, of £500 for the murderer's arrest. He had been living in the King Country for some years, having fled there after he killed Ducker.

Barlow and his Maori wife went to Otorohanga, where Winiata was living, and professed to be buying pigs. He produced a bottle of rum, and managed to

get Winiata "under the influence" in his whare. Then, in the dead of night, Barlow, who was armed with a revolver, packed the Maori on to a spare horse he had brought with him, tied him securely with the aid of his daring wife, and got quietly out of the village without so much as a solitary mongrel giving an alarm. Had Winiata's Maori friends got wind of the capture, Barlow would probably have been killed, in spite of his revolver. But they were all peacefully sleeping in their whares.

Barlow took his pinioned prisoner down to the nearest European settlement, arriving there soon after daylight. Winiata awoke from his drunken sleep on the way, but Barlow threatened to shoot him if he made a sound. The prisoner was handed over to the Armed Constabulary of the nearest redoubt, and then given into Gillies' charge, and in the end he was hanged for his crimes.

Barlow got his Government reward, but somehow from that day he failed in health. He was a man of giant size and strength, but he fell sick from some mysterious cause. In Maori belief, he was "Makutu'd"—bewitched. He died when still in the prime of life. He and his people believed that he had been bewitched by some King Country "tohunga" in revenge for having captured Winiata and delivered him over to his death. The wizards of the Rohepotae had "put the coner on him." Barlow survived his prisoner only a very few years. For some time after Winiata's arrest many half-castes were looked on with much suspicion in the King Country, for Winiata was not the only man on whose head there was a price.

So that was how Winiata was captured—an exciting incident in those days of the early "eighties," when things were by no means as settled and prosaic on the King Country frontier as they are to-day.

Although Inspector Gillies—then a constable—did not personally capture Winiata, he had some rough-and-tumble work with the Maoris at various times, and he earned a high reputation as a plucky and brainy police officer. Since those old Waikato days he has gone through all ranks of the force, and it is a great pity to think that his splendid record of thirty-six years' service should have to terminate in such an unfortunate fashion.

### Our Island Dependencies.

In Parliamentary circles one hears approval of Mr. Frank Lawry's suggestion that the Cook Islands, our dependencies in the Eastern Pacific, should have representation in the New Zealand Parliament. The islands in this group are of great importance to New Zealand, commercially and in other ways, and legislation affecting them is passed by Parliament. Now, very little is known by members about our tropical isles; only one or two, such as Dr. Bucke (Te Rangihiroa) have spent any time there, and have any real acquaintance with the conditions of life there. The native population of the islands is about 13,000; and, in addition, on Niue and Savage Island, there are more than four thousand natives. The total white population of the islands is somewhere about 150. The native islanders are sufficiently numerous at any rate to deserve representation in Parliament, and possibly legislation may be introduced empowering them to send a member of their own to Parliament. Probably provision could be made for a white member to represent both natives and Europeans, if desired.

### The Young Person and Her Riding Costume.

That telegram from Auckland about the Agricultural Show Committee desiring to put long skirts on the skittish young ladies who ride in show competitions, or, rather, on one particular young lady, caused a good deal of amusement here. Masculine, or semi-masculine, rig is becoming so common amongst horsewomen that the Committee's attitude seems an excessively prudish one. To talk of its indecency is only to provoke ridicule. I remember seeing some time back a feminine horseback costume which ought to fill the bill for show competitions. It was worn by a young lady from England—no less than Miss Corst, the daughter of the celebrated Sir John Corst. It was kluki-coloured, and consisted of a long coat, trousers, and leggings; a Cossack costume, its wearer called it. It was a neat and becoming costume, and would not have shocked even Mr. Teddy O'Rorke. And certainly it was a safe and comfortable riding rig-out, and that is a big consideration. The old style riding habit may be picturesque to some eyes, but it is dangerous. Now

that so many women are adopting the same "astride" seat as man, they should be allowed to select their own costumes. To talk about masculine costume on a horsewoman as "shocking" is surely antiquated and Puritanic in this age of feminine emancipation.

### A Model Farm for the Maoris.

A Wangsaku man well known in Wellington, Mr. Gregor McGregor, has been appointed manager of the Native farm at Hanana (London), some distance up the Wanganui river. No more suitable man could have been found to launch the new scheme for training Maoris in farming. The farm consists of about 7,000 acres in the Morikau No. 2 Block, and comprises fine easy country. Part has already been cleared, but some is in manuka, and the balance in light bush, so that it is an admirable selection for the purpose. Mr. McGregor proceeds up the river on Saturday to take a preliminary survey of the place, and will commence farming operations at the earliest moment. His intention is to employ all Maori labour if possible, and do all in his power to develop farming instincts in the young Maoris. The object of the scheme is to prove whether or not the young Maori can be made a farmer. Hence this farm will be watched with particular interest. Mr. McGregor was the officer in charge of the Maori "pa" at the New Zealand Exhibition in Christchurch in 1908-7.

### New Prison System.

At the reformatory farm at Tokanui, near Te Kuiti, according to the Hon. Dr. Findlay, there will be accommodation for between 400 and 500 men. There would, he said, be a system of associations as a reward for very good conduct, and prisoners would also work separately. A systematic training would also be given in all agricultural and pastoral work, including training in general branches of agriculture, with specialisation as well. It was intended to turn out thoroughly practical farmers in a course of two or three years. Those sent there from the lower courts would be there long enough to take a short course. In concluding, under the head of prison reform, Dr. Findlay said that the Sherborne system would be applied to women. They would be trained in the domestic arts on a scientific system, and on lines parallel to the farm training which the boys would receive.

### Prison Diet.

A matter which requires alteration, in the opinion of the Hon. Dr. Findlay, is the prison dietary. A prisoner, he held, was entitled to a sufficiency of plain, wholesome food, but our prison fare was the same day after day, every month of the year, and this provoked dyspeptic troubles. The diet was: Breakfast—bread without butter, a cup of tea without milk; dinner—meat (never varied) and vegetables; tea—a piece of bread and tea, without milk. On the tree-planting camps the men had porridge and tea or bread and tea for breakfast, and took with them for lunch bread and cheese. The combination of keen air and strenuous work made this diet insufficient, and he proposed to give prisoners a plain diet of meat for breakfast, with porridge and tea if they wanted it. The whole of the prison dietary was under consideration. He did not mean to err on the side of indulgence, but he did not want to err on the side of a painful and sickening monotony which induced dyspepsia.

### Industrious Inventors.

The alphabetic list of inventions issued quarterly by the New Zealand Patent Office is always an interesting document. During the present year inventors have displayed remarkable ingenuity and activity (says the Wellington "Post"). Naturally, with the flying-machine in the air nowadays the aeroplane and airship are well to the front in the list. There are about a dozen patents issued for various brands of flying-machines. Boot manufacturing machinery takes up a good position in the list, but apparently most of the inventions are those of outsiders, not New Zealanders. The difficulty of securing proper treatment of flax has led to a large number of inventions—over 30. Of different import are ten patents dealing with hat-pins. Among the inventors is Mr. G. M. Thomson, M.P., with a device to protect hat-pins. Most numerous, however, of all are the inventions which deal with the dairy industry. There are 28 milking-machines and eight other appliances for the treatment of milk in