

News of the Dominion.

OUR WELLINGTON LETTER.

Wellington, July 1.

The Victoria College Students.

HERE have been just two glad breaks in this week of drab, wet, cold days—the "Capping Day" diversions of the Victoria University College students, and the long looked for visit of the Sheffield Choir. I have not yet heard the Choir—it's much too cold to-night to leave one's fireside for a hundred choirs, but it is the theme of praise in the superlative degree from all those who braved last night's miserable weather to hear it. The only complaint is on the score of the cost. But the students' street festivities this week were a free show, and gave the lunch-time crowds a lot of fun. The students made a really clever display; their procession was a marvellous mixture of pantomime and vaudeville entertainment, and a long way more interesting than the Civic procession on Coronation Day. Perhaps the two best items in its affair were the lorries bearing the Socialist party and the Liquor party. On the Socialist wagon the crowd recognised some of its favourite Queen-statue "red-flag" orators, who held forth volubly on the right of labour to strike early and often, and to get well paid for doing so. On the liquor wagon there was the "Last of the Barmalides," a buxom, hubble-skirted peroxidised damsel, who cuddled Sir J. G. Findlay most brazenly, the while she served him with free beers; upon the scene of depravity certain well-known temperance advocates turned protesting coat-tails, but presently repented so far as to sing a paean of praise to strong drink. Auckland was not forgotten in the procession. There was some tom-fool business about rats and murgues, which did not hold very much humour, but the knighting of Captain Knycvett by a very well-got-up Lord Islington, on top of a cart, was an incident with a laugh in it. The youth who stood for Mr. Knycvett, wore a fearsome scowl, which did not depart even when His Excellency whacked him severely over the head with a waddy, and called upon him to, "Rise, Sir, Captain Knycvett!"

The "capping" ceremony in the Town Hall in the afternoon was a quiet affair, as Cappings go. The students are evidently learning to behave themselves at the indoor gathering, and to work off their ideas of humour in the street, fun-making. In the evening, though there was a good deal of mirth at the "Carnival Extravaganza," as the students titled it, given in the concert chamber of the Town Hall. This jeu d'esprit, written by some of the students had for its theme the following: "Reform all round," from College to gaol.

One of the phases of the "Reform" business was a prison scene wherein one Dr. Finlee inspected a most luxurious gaol, with the prisoners lounging around in arm chairs and on couches, and smoking big cigars and quaffing what purported to be champagne. The Dr. expounded his prison reform scheme in a plaintive recitative, followed by a duet with a Typical Criminal.

Sang the doctor:
 "For those who wish to come to gaol and taste its varied pleasures,
 I've introduced a score of most humanitarian measures:
 And lest you cannot find the way or know not where the gate is,
 I've studied up some entry tips and give them to you gratis."

And then follows a few points on how to enter the Perfect Prison, which was to be made so exclusive and select, that only the very best-connected and most influential criminals could hope to pass within its portals. There were the inevitable digs at the Coronation honours, and the recipients thereof, and Sir Joseph Ward, Bart., had a song all to himself. The college songs and the capping choruses were well sung; perhaps the best chorus was the last of all; to the tune of the Old Brigade, its theme was, "Wisdom is more than gold!"

For this is the burden of the world,
 Which it speaketh day by day,
 Though many a worldly lip be curled
 With a sneer that it does not pay;
 In our ears is the voice of a Mammon
 above,
 In our hearts is a tale that's old,
 The tale of our garnered heritage—
 The Wisdom that's more than gold!

Plant A Tree.

There are signs that the tree-planting chances of Arbor Day will not be entirely neglected in Wellington this year. The city schools, at any rate, are moving in the direction of beautifying their grounds. I don't think I have ever seen more dreary and utterly repellent playgrounds than those of the Wellington schools—nearly bare asphalt yards, with never a tree or a flower to redeem their gaol-like aspect. Any youngster who plays truant from such schools has a very good cause in these alleged playgrounds; the very sight of them, and of the still uglier school buildings, is enough to strike terror to the soul of the average child. Now, however, the school authorities are waking up, and they are discovering that school grounds need not be so much like prison exercise yards, and that a few trees and flowers about might even be a good thing for the children. The soil is unpromising, but something can be made to grow if the work is gone about in the right way. So several city schools have applied to the City Council for trees to plant. The City Reserves Committee, it is stated, is short of trees at present, and the Acting-Mayor suggests that the State nurseries might be able to supply the schools. One hopes that between the Council and the State the schools won't lose their trees; it is good to find some one recognising that green foliage is more lovely than bare asphalt.

A Warning to Shirkers.

The first youth prosecuted under the new Defence Act for failure to register his name as a Territorial under the universal training system, was before Dr. McArthur, S.M., at the Police Court yesterday. His name was Arthur Davis, and he pleaded guilty. He said that he had passed his eighteenth year, and that the reason he had not registered was because of his trade; he was a cabinet-maker. He thought the training would interfere with his trade. The S.M. pointed out that that was not the slightest excuse. He adjourned the case until next Tuesday, warning the defendant that if he did not register before that time a penalty would be inflicted. He gave him that much grace because he (the youth) would no doubt find a fine a hardship, but it must be distinctly understood that heavy penalties would be inflicted in the future. The youth got off lightly; but others who have been dodging their responsibilities had best take warning. Possibly the next delinquent will give Peace Society religious scruples as his excuse for evading his duty to the nation.

Colonel Newall, C.B.

Colonel Stewart Newall, C.B., who has just been awarded by the Government the auxiliary forces officers' long service decoration, is a Wellington resident, and one of our best-known military veterans. He is a brother-in-law of Colonel Roberts, late S.M., of Tauranga. Stewart Newall joined the New Zealand forces back in 1863, as a very young man, served in the Waikato war, and then in the Taranaki campaign; later on he was in Whitmore's column of armed constabulary and Morris which fought its way through the Crewea Country in 1869. For some years after that he served in the armed constabulary; was stationed chiefly in the Waikato, and received a handsome present from the Government in recognition of his services in preparing an excellent strategic map of the Waikato district. Colonel Newall has South African experience too. He commanded the New Zealand contingent in the Boer war and got his C.B. in acknowledgment.

Lifts for the High Levels.

The residents of the Terrace it is officially The Terrace now, not Wellington Terrace, and adjacent high-lying parts

of the city are getting very tired of tramping up the various Jacob's Ladders that lead to their lofty homes, and are worrying the City Council for elevators. Twelve hundred of them have petitioned the Council to build a subway from Houkott-street under the Church-street steps, and erect elevators for the conveyance of passengers. It is stated that a tunnel, 220 feet long and a shaft, 120 feet deep, will be necessary, and it is suggested that there should be two lifts, each capable of carrying ten twelve-stone persons. The capital cost is put down at £4250, and the annual charges at £874. The fares suggested are a penny for each ascent and a half-penny for each descent; this would cover interest and sinking fund and the expenditure necessary. It is stated that 475 Victoria College students would be benefited by the lift. No one has suggested so far that it might do the students more good to climb the steps daily, by way of gentle exercise. But the podgy business man and civil servant have resolved to have those lifts, and won't be happy till they get them. Certainly they would be a boon to all of us, especially those who miss the last Kellburne cable car at night. The Council has referred the matter to its engineer for a report.

New Zealand Trout Fishing.

An officer of the British army, who has enjoyed much good trout fishing in New Zealand, is quite at a loss to understand why the Government does not increase the license fees for trout fishing in New Zealand. "I can quite understand," he said, "their not wishing to increase fees for New Zealanders, many of whom can only snatch a few hours at week-ends to fish, but with visitors to New Zealand it is a very different thing. Why, at Home we would have to pay anything from £500 to £2000 per season for a stretch of good trout water, not a quarter so good, however, as you have at Taupo. You New Zealanders have a splendid asset in your trout, but you make it too cheap. Put a proper value on the fishing license, and you will have more people coming from abroad to fish in your waters. When they hear in England that fishing licenses may be obtained for £1, they in imagination see one of their own little rivers with people sitting a yard apart along the banks. Charge £20, and they will consider that they might have a chance. Here a man catches with one rod 63 tons of fish. Why that must be a world's record, yet I do not hear of the Government seizing on the fact as a really great advertisement for New Zealand. It would be a better advertisement than all the titles that are being distributed."

The Chief Justice in Rarotonga.

The Chief Justice of New Zealand, Sir Robert Stout, and Mr. Waldgrave, Under Secretary for Justice, who were sent down to Rarotonga to investigate complaints against the administration of the Islands, returned to Auckland last week by the s.s. Talune. The complaints broke down completely on investigation, and the view of unprejudiced outsiders is that a tremendous mountain has been made by a Wellington newspaper out of a micros-

copic moshill. Of course the report of the Commissioners remains secret until presented to the Government. They visited the Islanders at a number of places and discussed their requests, which were not by any means in the nature of complaints. In fact, at a meeting of natives and visitors, which was something official in character, held in Makea Ariki's palace, speeches were made by natives, in which they stated that they understood that Sir Robert Stout had been sent to the Island for the purpose of ascertaining whether they had any complaints to make. The natives wished it to be understood that they were thoroughly satisfied with the work and administration of Captain Smith, the Resident Commissioner, and they had no complaints whatever to make. They added that if they had any complaints to make in the future they would not hesitate to give expression to them. The only important request they made was for the appointment of a Native Land Court judge. Art Auckland, not connected with official party, declared that there were only three persons on the Islands who were dissatisfied with Captain Smith, and one of these was a policeman whom the Commissioner had discharged. The Commissioner has done excellent work, notably in providing an excellent water supply for some of the

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 TIME-TABLE S.S. NGATUI, JULY, 1911.
 S.S. Coromandel Leaves Bay.
 Date, Goods re. Passen- Mangapai Parou
 ceived till, reg. train.
 1st—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No. str. 11 a.m.
 4th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 10 a.m. No str.
 8th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. Noon. 2 p.m.
 8th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No. str. 9 a.m.
 11th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 9 a.m. No str.
 13th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 8 a.m. 11 a.m.
 15th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No str. 11 a.m.
 18th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No str. 11 a.m.
 20th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 10 a.m. 1 p.m.
 22nd—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No str. 11 a.m.
 25th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 9 a.m. No str.
 27th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. 9 a.m. 11 a.m.
 29th—8.45 a.m. 11.25 a.m. No str. 11 a.m.
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