

A Dutch paper reminds us that the ex-Crown Prince has taken a Berlin University degree. We can only suppose that nobody saw him take it.—“Punch.”

Mr. C. K. Wilson, of Te Kuiti, who has been visiting Wellington in connection with the Producers' Conference, has been interesting himself in the pise de terre method of building, and has been urging the Public Works Department to make an experiment. Mr. Wilson points out that the high cost of building in Britain has been responsible for directing attention to this ancient method of building, and an enthusiastic advocate and practical experimenter has been Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey editor of the Spectator. Pise de terre, literally “hammered earth,” consists of earthen walls built by dry earth being rammed down hard between wooden casings, a depth of about four inches being rammed at a time. The casings, or shutterings, which is the correct term for them, are shifted as the work progresses. The result is the creation of a wall in the likeness of a smooth, close-grained sand stone, into which a nail can only be driven with difficulty. There are pre-historic pise buildings in Arizona and New Mexico which are said to be at least 4000 years old. Dutch colonial farm houses in South Africa stand as solidly as when built a hundred years ago, and many pise houses can be found in Britain three and four hundred years old.

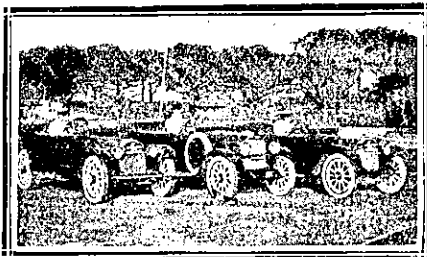
“I am grateful to you for using the word ‘cobber.’” said General Birdwood to the Mayor of Christchurch. He stated that he had been rather afraid that he should not use the word, for once he had met a soldier in France near a certain battery, and asked him if he belonged to the battery. “No,” said the soldier. “Got a cobber in the battery?” the General suggested. “Yes,” said the soldier. “Not that that's the expression I should use myself.” “I found he was a professor out here,” the General explained, “and evidently he did not approve of the word ‘cobber.’ I am glad to think that I am exculpated by the use of the word by such a high dignitary as the Mayor of Christchurch.”

In his report to the Electric Power and Light Department of the Dunedin City Corporation, Mr. M. C. Henderson, city electrical engineer, gives some interesting comments on his recent tour through the United States and Britain, from which we take the following:—A journey of 175 miles by motor car in almost any direction in California could not fail to attract the attention of a visitor from the South Island of New Zealand at least, on account of the long stretches of “State highway,” as they are called, which provide such an excellent surface for rapid and comfortable road transit. It appears that these have all been constructed within the last seven or eight years, and are being extended very rapidly. The State highways vary from 16ft. to 20ft. in breadth, and were originally laid with 4in. to 4½in. concrete. It has been found, however, that the provision of such a fine surface has increased the road traffic to an enormous extent, so that some of the original concrete roads are already suffering from traffic that they were never designed to carry.

Mr. W. Smart, who recently retired from the position of superintending engineer of the Union Steamship Company, was farewelled by the head office staff and presented with a gramophone and records. The general manager (Mr. D. A. Aiken) presided, and said that Mr. Smart had joined the service as third engineer of the Penguin in August, 1883, and had thus served 37 years with the company. During this time Mr. Smart had worked through all the various grades, attaining to the highest position in his department, which he had occupied for the past 17 years.

“One thing is quite certain,” said a well-known Wellington property owner, “the stiff rents and stiff prices for property have had the effect of forcing people to purchase the place they are living in or some other suitable place, and that is a good thing. One only has to stroll round the streets of any of the suburbs to find alterations and improvements taking place on all sides. If enquiry were made you would find that in nine cases out of ten a rent-payer had become a landlord, and he was once setting about to improve his property. This, if carried out to a conclusion, would mean a spontaneous town improvement campaign, for he is a very poor sort of man who does not take a pride in the little bit of land he may own.”

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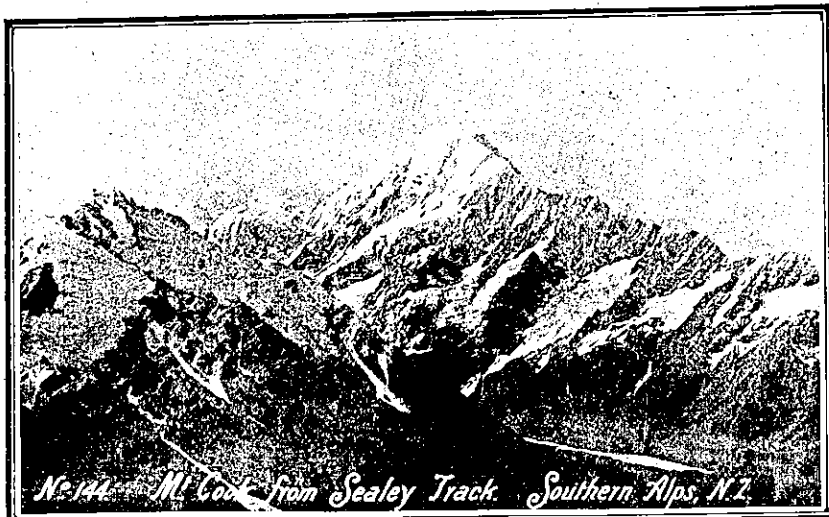
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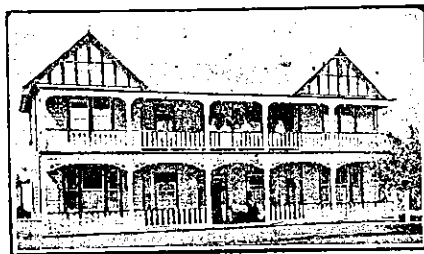
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