

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE Council met for business on Monday last, and excepting a smart passage at arms between the late Provincial Secretary and the then Commissioner of Railways, the proceedings were of an unusually tame character. Mr. Bastings undertook to inform the Council of the intentions of the Government, but the programme unfolded was received without a comment. In the course of his remarks, he intimated that it was the intention of the Executive to bring down an ordinance to empower the borrowing of £30,000 on the Educational Reserves, and thus relieve the estimates of £25,000 put down for school buildings. He also informed members that it had been determined by the offer of the increased salary of £900 per year, to secure the further services of Mr. Conyers as manager of railways. The future management of the Dunedin Hospital was also touched upon, and a determination expressed that the medical profession should have ample opportunity in future of treating the various diseases, as is the case in similar institutions elsewhere. On Tuesday evening, when the first Order of the Day was called on, Mr. Reid gave notice of motion that the Council had no confidence in the Executive, and after some discussion, it was resolved to adjourn until seven o'clock, when the Standing Orders might be suspended in order that Mr. Reid might bring on his motion. As the news became pretty generally known throughout town, on the Council re-assembling at that hour, the Strangers and Speaker's Galleries were both filled, and later on in the evening the approaches to the building were blocked up by those anxious to know the fate of the Executive. Mr. Reid in a caustic and telling speech criticised the want of policy of the successors of his Government, and with bitter irony referred to some remarks on his conduct made by the Commissioner of Railways. Mr. Bastings replied to the strictures of the head of the late Government, but evidently the defence of the Executive had been entrusted to the member for Dunedin—Mr. Fish. That hon. gentleman commenced his impeachment of the Reid Government in a tone worthy of the times of Warren Hastings, but became sadly changed in tone at its conclusion, which was nothing more nor less than an appeal *ad misericordiam* to hon. members to give them a chance of following in the steps of the man whose actions, with strange consistency, they sought to condemn. Mr. Stout, in defending the late Government made a rather good point, and referred to the eagerness with which the occupants of the Treasury Benches sought to induce Mr. Reid to cast his lot with theirs, notwithstanding he had so frightfully bungled the Public Works Department. The appeal, however, was not sustained, hon. members appearing to think the amended Estimates anything but an improvement on those of their predecessors, and on the House dividing on the motion, the Government found themselves in the minority of five. The following is the division list:—Ayes 24: Allan, Armstrong, Clark, Davie, Haggitt, Hallenstein, Henderson, Ireland, Lumsden, Manders, Menzies, Mills, Mollison, M'Dermid, M'Kealar, M'Lean, M'Neil, Reeves, Reid (teller), Reynolds, Stout (teller), Steward, Tolmie, Turnbull. Noes 19: Bastings (teller), J. C. Browne, G. F. C. Browne, Daniel, De Launoy, Driver, Fish (teller), Green, Hazlett, Kinross, Moody, M'Glashan, M'Kenzie, Rogers, Shand, Sumpter, Turton, Wilson, Wood.

WE last week published a poem from the pen of the gifted Gerald Griffin, entitled the "Sister of Charity," and in this issue we give one on the same subject from the pen of Richard Dalton Williams, one of that galaxy of talent whose writings shed lustre on the columns of the Dublin 'Nation' ere the troublous times of '48. Dalton Williams drew his last sigh far from the land he loved so well. He was one of those who were arraigned for seditious writing during the Irish Reign of Terror, but the jury disagreeing, he was discharged, and ultimately emigrated to America, where he was appointed professor in one of the State Universities, a post which he held till his death, some sixteen years since. Duffy's 'Ballad Poetry of Ireland' contains many pieces from the pen of "R. D. W.," but, although many of them exhibit considerable ability, they are written in quite a different spirit from "The Sister of Charity." The circumstances of some Irish-American soldiers in the War of Secession discovering the lowly grave of the Irish patriot and poet, and the erection of a monument to his memory, have been made the subject of some exquisite lines, which we shall give in a future issue.

The Rev. Father Cummins, of Reefton, having made application to the Nelson Central Board of Education for a subsidy to his school, it was resolved by that body that the consideration of the application be held over until the following meeting, and that the item "second subsidy to Reefton" should be added to the estimate of the Board's requirements for the year.

A CONVIVIAL *réunion* took place on Saturday evening last, when a number of the members of "The Fourth Estate" met together to do honor to Mr. Fred Nicholls, late sub-editor of the 'Times,' previous to his departure from the city. The chair was occupied by the successor of Mr. Nicholls, and the vice-chair by Mr. Utting, of the 'Guardian.' Speeches were made by different members of the Press, expressing regret at the severance of the friendly connection which had always existed between Mr. Nicholls and his brother scribes, and the chairman presented him with a handsome meerschaum pipe, as a private souvenir of past times. A more substantial token, however, of the esteem in which Mr. Nicholls has been held by his fellow workers is in course of manufacture for presentation.

WE are pleased to see that our friends at Lawrence have taken the initiative for the establishment of a branch of the Hibernian Society in the district. At an influential meeting of the Catholic residents held on the evening of the 27th ult., presided over by the Rev. Father Larkyn, the Branch was formally opened, and all the officers duly elected. An extended account of the proceedings will be found in another column.

It would appear that the story with regard to the missing notes recently brought down by the escort is not quite satisfactory, and the matter has been made the subject of an official inquiry before Mr. Strode. The proceedings, however, were conducted with closed doors. Whether the notes had been overlooked in the first instance, or were appropriated for a while but afterwards placed where they were ultimately found, it is difficult to say; but since then some 130 pound notes have been "annexed" by those who will not be likely to be troubled with compunction, or adopt a similar course of restitution. On Saturday night the Resident Magistrate's Courthouse was burglariously entered, and money to the above amount stolen therefrom. This is hearding the lion in his den with a vengeance. As usual the police are on the track—at a distance.

An inquest was held on Monday before the Coroner, Dr. Hocken, on the body of Robert Jenkinson, whose death was supposed to have been caused by injuries inflicted by his own hand. After a patient investigation, and many witnesses had been examined, the jury returned the verdict that the deceased had met his death by self-inflicted gun-shot wounds, while in the state of temporary insanity.

WE are pleased to see that the concert which was given on Saturday night last in aid of the families of the two men Claffoy and Byers, has been most successful, and will place the sum of £60 at the disposal of the committee for the object. His Worship the Mayor presided on the occasion.

THE 'Illustrated Herald' for June has come to hand, and is without exception by far the best number we have yet seen, the illustrations being both numerous and well executed. The front page is an admirable view of Port Chalmers as seen from the river, with the town in the distance, and gives a far better representation than the engraving which figures in the "New Zealand Handbook." It also contains portraits of Rev. Charles Clark, and the late Judge Gray, together with nautical views and landscapes. One admirable illustration represents the "landing" of Chinese at Cooktown, but whether the novel mode adopted of having John and his traps in the surf is peculiar to China or Cooktown, the public are left to conjecture. There is also a mysterious illustration of the great Meteor seen on the 14th of April. The *locale* from whence the sight was observable is not mentioned, but from its strange appearance we should imagine it was an equal source of mystery to the meteor.

THE ordinary fortnightly meeting of the Hibernian Society was held in the rooms of the Society, attached to St. Joseph's School, on Monday evening last, the President in the chair. After the usual routine business had been attended to, the hon. secretary of the Band Concert Fund, Mr. R. Carroll, presented the balance-sheet of the entertainment, which showed that after defraying all expenses there remained a balance of £21 5s to the good. The hon. secretary also stated that the Committee had now in hand the sum of £47 10s. A standing committee was elected, consisting of the following gentlemen:—Messrs. R. Carroll, Burke, Griffin, Brennan, Connellan, Leary, and Moylan.

THE election of a councillor to fill the vacancy, caused by the resignation of Mr. Albert Beck for the representation of Bell Ward, took place in Tuesday, and resulted in the election of Mr. R. H. Leary. His opponent was Mr. Downie Stewart, who only secured 212 votes to Mr. Leary's 247, the latter thus winning by a majority of 35.

THE 'Southern Cross' says that twelve hundred statutes are in force in New Zealand, in addition to a large number of Provincial laws. There is no State in the world, in proportion to its population, burdened with such a waste body of law. No lawyer could master New Zealand laws in a life-time, and their multiplicity leads to litigation.

A correspondent of the Melbourne Leader says that if you have any doubt as to the purity of water in a house that you may have taken for a week or two, and have not, therefore, time to go into a more fundamental cure, you can purify the water by flinging a small teaspoonful of powdered alum into a pailful of water (four gallons), which, stirred round at the time, will precipitate any impurities, and throw them down to the bottom, and make it equal to spring water.

A few days since, an amusing paragraph appeared in the 'Ross Guardian,' concerning the engineering eccentricity displayed in the erection of a bridge. A letter has been sent to the 'Guardian' Office, stating that the contractors have been heard to say that their next engineering skill will be displayed on the bridge of the nose of the proprietor of the paper.

There is still a feeling of incredulity, says the 'Napier Telegraph,' lingering in the minds of many that our Premier purposes making not our Colony his abiding place, but will enter for stakes of a higher value, among more doughty competitors in the land of his birth. Whether the Premier's talents or his capacity for work have engendered and kept alive this suspicion we will not venture to say, but it ever and anon crops up in the form of hypothesis or positive statements. How rumours of a political nature get bruited about we know not, but that the revival of the assertion that the Premier's contemplated desertion of South Britain is again in men's mouths is certain. Mrs. Vogel's intended lengthened stay in Great Britain favours this presumption. Political prophets say the Premier will return, make his financial statement, point to the surplus he has in hand, paint in glowing colours the prosperity of the Colony, make a touching allusion to his failing health, induced by too continuous application, and in tones tremulous with emotion lament the necessity of retirement from public life, bestowing his benediction on the Colony generally, and in the concluding paragraph of his budget insert his annual modicum of piety in the shape of a fervent prayer for our future welfare, when we have passed beyond his supervision. This from one class of prophets, we hear, is the Premier's political programme.