

they would reject it with prompt indignation. Let us, he said, show Ireland we have nothing in view but her good—nothing but mutual forgiveness in our hearts. Let every man who feels with me, proclaim that were the alternative offered him of the Legislative Union, or the re-enactment of the Penal Code, he would prefer the latter as the lesser evil. He would rather confide in the justice of Irish Protestants, than lay his country at the feet of foreigners. If any man be so degraded as to consent to the extinction of the name and liberty of Ireland, I would at least call on him not to leave to strangers, whom he cannot control, the direction and management of his commerce and property."

We can say that in this crisis of the Colony we are, and have been actuated by similar sentiments. We have always been opposed to a multiplicity of small Provinces, but we have always been in favor of sovereign insular Provinces. We have opposed Abolition because it was proposed with a view of centralising everything in Wellington: and notwithstanding the declarations of Ministers in reference to the powers to be given to Shire Councils, there is no doubt whatever in our mind that abolition means nothing, and can mean nothing else than a crushing centralism. Where the legislative power is centralised, there also is inevitably centralised the administrative power. It is in the nature of things that it should be so, and therefore we are not surprised at finding from history that it has been so. So convinced are we of the evils inseparable from centralism, that to prevent it so far as it is in our power to do so, we are prepared to put in abeyance till a more opportune time our claim for justice in the matter of schools, in order that we may not be a source of embarrassment to those who are opposing abolition. We have made up our minds to adopt, during the coming struggle, the following policy:—Under all circumstances to oppose an abolitionist; in cases where all the candidates are abolitionists and secularists, to abstain from voting—where an abolition candidate is opposed by a provincialist and secularist, also to abstain from voting—in cases where all the candidates are in favour of abolition, but some of them denominationalists, to vote for the latter on the principle that by so acting we could do no harm, and might effect some good.

Our policy is a generous, and we think a wise one. Our agitation of the school question now could be attended with no good result, and would be sure to do harm to interests of the very highest importance. There is nothing the two Islands should labour for so earnestly as to preserve each its autonomy, that is its right of self-government; and now that the question has been raised and must be settled, it would be most unwise, and somewhat selfish to do anything to interfere with a speedy and satisfactory settlement. One thing at a time is as much as can be done well. When this question has been disposed of, we shall renew our agitation for justice in education. Meantime, we shall look upon the man who endeavours to raise the No-Popery cry for any purpose, as base, idiotic, and the greatest enemy of the country.

IS IT POSSIBLE?

If we are to believe the telegraphic summary of the Hon. Mr. BOWEN's speech at Kaiapoi, the Government intend to bring in a Bill in the next session of Parliament to bestow on Shire Councils all administration that can possibly be managed locally. These are to have not merely the residue of the land fund, but also the power to distribute this amongst Road Boards without their borders; they shall also have power to raise loans on special rates for special works; they shall have main roads and bridges to attend to; they shall also have power to make, if necessary, branch railways or any necessary works except great trunk lines within their borders; they are to have the control and management of navigable rivers in the shires; in a word these Shire Councils are to have all the powers which Provinces now have in these matters.

Is there any sane man who fancies for a moment that the Government means to carry such a measure, or could even hope to do so. A measure of this kind would not even obtain a hearing in the Legislative Council. Can it be reasonably expected that the gentlemen, who, a couple of sessions ago, throw out the Bill which proposed to allow the Provinces to borrow money for reproductive works, will pass a Bill to enable Shire Councils to raise loans and tax their property *ad libitum*? It was intolerable that the representatives of Provinces should have the power to bor-

row on Provincial security, but the Government wishes to make people believe that it hopes to carry a measure enabling Shire Councils to borrow on Shire security. Let who will believe it, we refuse to do so. In our judgment the proposition is merely an electioneering contrivance, and cannot be meant seriously. It is inconceivable that any men in the position of ministers, with the failure of the county of Westland before their eyes, could seriously make such a proposition. There the county system was tried under the most favourable conditions, and what is the result? Such a measure as this shadowed forth by the Minister of Justice has not the remotest chance of ever becoming law, or if it did would soon prove a failure. There is not a tittle of evidence to show that the people want shires. But the contrary is apparent from the fact that in Otago they never availed themselves of the law enabling them to have them, and in Westland they petitioned to have their county abolished.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

We are pleased to see that the Catholics of Arrowtown have made arrangements to hold a Fancy Fair and Bazaar in aid of St. Patrick's Church and Presbytery, on 27th, 28th, and 29th December. The promoters earnestly solicit donations, all of which will be gratefully acknowledged. We all know the struggle that is now going on throughout the Province to erect and maintain our Churches. Our Catholic population is very scattered, and, as a rule, not over wealthy, and the heavy tax of keeping up our schools, which is a matter second in importance only to religion itself, renders it necessary, almost periodically, that something of a special character should be done for the purpose of raising funds in connection with our Churches and Schools. Great numbers of people always have something that they can part with, without inconvenience or feeling the loss, and there is a novelty and a charm about these fancy fairs that tickle the fancy of nearly everyone. A person who could not afford to give more than a pound for almost any purpose, will think nothing of patronising one of these bazaars to the amount of four or five pounds. We, therefore, hope that the request for donations will meet a hearty response, and that the undertaking will turn out as satisfactory as the good people of Arrowtown could desire.

H.A.C.B. SOCIETY.—It will be seen by the programme, published in this week's issue, that the Fête Committee have gone to work in earnest, and have laid themselves out for a great success. Judging from the programme and the excellent arrangements made by the committee for carrying out the day's amusements, we can very little doubt as to the result. We understand that Mr J. Moylan, who is the prince of committee men, has secured the most eligible piece of ground in Green Island. This is very fortunate, for where the comfort of some thousands of people is concerned who have gone out with their families to enjoy a holiday, a well-situated and comfortable paddock is no small consideration. It will be seen that Messrs Dowse and Kirkaldy have consented to act as referees, and we have no doubt but that this step will give great satisfaction.

THE Caledonian Society will hold their annual gathering on the 1st and 3rd of January for the 14th time. We remember when these gatherings were started. The attendance was not so good in olden times, even in proportion to our population, but year by year the gatherings have increased in popularity, until now the multitudes attending are so great that the fact in itself has become one of the great attractions, and the vast crowds to be seen is a sight worth paying for. You are sure to realize the old saying of seeing the "world and his wife!" This year we fully expect to see 10,000 people on the grounds. We see by advertisement that the large amount of £450 is to be given in prize money, and amongst the sports we notice a champion belt is to be competed for, and that the celebrated wrestlers, Robertson and Tyson, are amongst those who will endeavour to carry off this prize. We have been requested to call attention to the fact that entries will close on the 22nd December, at six o'clock in the evening.

We sincerely regret that we have to chronicle the death of Mr Benjamin Britton, master of the Industrial School. He was seized with bronchitis on the 7th of this month, and died on Saturday at 12.30. Mr Britton has filled the important post of master of the Reformatory from its foundation. He was peculiarly suited for the office; and we are in a position to say that he watched over the interests of the children under his care with a devotedness that would have done credit to a father; in fact, we have seen him surrounded by a crowd of these poor little waifs, sporting with them and entering into their childish amusements with all the zeal of a father. In Mr Britton, we lose an industrious and able officer, and we feel certain that none will be more fully alive to the loss than the children of the school. A touching tribute of respect was shown on Sunday last by these children, for, although, there are nearly 200 of them in the institution, a passer-by might well have imagined that the place was deserted, so quiet were they.

DURING the holidays there is to be no lack of amusement, and amongst the list claiming public attention, the Annual Regatta will perhaps be one of the most popular. With most people this is a favorite sport, and here, in Dunedin, with our lovely bay shining like a silver lake beneath the city, this manly and healthful exercise is especially inviting. We see from the programme there are nine events, and that upwards of £100 is to be given as prize money.

We would call attention to Mr. Sim's swimming classes. Mr. Sim says that he has been guided by a desire to extend the utility