

HOGG AND HUTTON'S ADVERTISEMENT.

PORT WINE, 1834 Vintage, 42 years old; per dozen, 110s.

PORT WINE, 1844 Vintage, 32 years old. A bargain. Per dozen, 75s.

BBROWN SHERRY, 10 years. Just received. Rare value Per dozen, 75s.

COLONIAL WINES, 30s. to 35s. per dozen.

LORNE WHISKEY (Genuine), 48s. per dozen.

HOGG AND HUTTON, Octagon.

V.



R.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.

LEASE OF THE REFRESHMENT ROOMS AT THE DUNEDIN RAILWAY STATION.

TENDERS for the period of twelve months, from the 1st JANUARY to the 31st DECEMBER, 1877, for the Lease of the above room, now held by Mr. H. J. WALTER as a Bar, will be received up to Noon of the 30th INSTANT, at the General Manager's Office, Dunedin, where terms and conditions can be seen.

The Government does not bind itself to accept the highest or any tender.

WM. CONYERS,
General Manager.

December, 19, 1876.

N O T I C E .

PHOTOGRAPHS and lithographic portraits of the Most Rev. the Lord Bishop of Dunedin may now be had on application to the Lady Superior, Dominican Convent, Dowling-street, Dunedin. These pictures are being disposed of to aid in the erection of the new conventual buildings, and orders for them are, therefore, solicited.

N O T I C E .

We beg to remind our Subscribers that the continued success of the NEW ZEALAND TABLET depends on the punctuality with which their subscriptions are forwarded to this office. Money Orders may be made payable to Mr. JOHN F. PERRIN, Manager, NEW ZEALAND TABLET Office, Dunedin.

New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1876.

THE ABOLITION AND COUNTIES' ACTS.

THERE is high legal authority for saying that these Acts are not really in force. The Government, it is true, is enforcing them, but it may well be questioned whether all they have done and are doing in reference to them since the prorogation of Parliament is not invalid. It would appear that the prorogation of the last Session of Parliament was illegal, and that consequently the Abolition and Counties' Acts cannot be enforced. According to one of the provisions of the Abolition Act, it was not to come into force till after the prorogation of the last Session, and secondly, the coming into force of the Counties' Act was to be contingent on the enforcement of the Abolition Act. Consequently if the last Session was not legally prorogued neither of the above-mentioned Acts is now in force. These, however, are questions for the lawyers. But if the prorogation of the last Session was not legal, this fatal irregularity is only a fitting ending to "the blundering and plundering" of the last two Sessions.

Meanwhile, elections are being held for seats in the various county councils, and although, in Otago at least, there is generally a disposition to have nothing further to do with counties, and to leave the care of roads entirely to Road Boards, there is, nevertheless, a determination in a few places to put the entire Act into force, and to start with a full complement of even well-paid officials. This will be a spectacle, and will afford all Provincialists a "sweet revenge." But electors ought to attend to two considerations. First, it is necessary for them to be very much on their guard against loafing poli-

ticians, particularly when they possess, as they sometimes do, considerable abilities; and in the second place enquiry should be made as to the amount of funds likely to be available. The county system appears to be a farce, and to have never been intended to become a reality. For years to come, if ever, there will be no land fund for distribution, the revenue from this source has been forestalled; and the consolidated revenue will hardly suffice to meet the expenses of general administration and the demands of the public creditor. Where, then, are funds to come from for county purposes? The only source from which such can be derived is local taxation. But what amount of revenue can be expected from four or five thousand people scattered over an immense area?—for this is about the average population of counties. And these counties are expected to keep all district and main roads in repair, open up new lines, build bridges, and provide hospitals, benevolent institutions, &c., &c. In addition, by way of encouraging the county system, every hamlet of forty or fifty ratepayers can form itself into a municipality and spend all its own revenue on its own streets to the exclusion of the main thoroughfares of the country. There is grim irony in this, and it proves pretty clearly that the real intent of the Act is to drive the people into pure Centralism. But whether this be the intent or not, it must, probably, be the inevitable result. Before the end of three sessions of Parliament there will be a universal demand made for the repeal of the Counties' Act, and the substitution in its place of either Centralism, pure and simple, or of the old Provincialism somewhat modified to suit altered circumstances. And is it for this that two sessions of Parliament will have been wasted, the prosperity of the country checked, and bitter animosities aroused? Truly there is not much political foresight to be found in some of our leading politicians.

THE DUNEDIN HIGH SCHOOL.

LAST year, on the occasion of our noticing the annual distribution of prizes of this institution, we drew attention to the fact that although supported for the most part by public funds, this High School is denominational. This would not be a circumstance to be complained of, were all denominations treated with equal justice. But such is not the case. Each year a Presbyterian minister has opened the proceedings by prayer; this stamps the seal of Presbyterianism on the school, independently of the consideration that the teachers and managers are almost exclusively Presbyterian, and that, in fact, none but Scotchmen and Presbyterians can ever feel themselves at home in this institution. Such being the case, what can be said of the justice of devoting thousands annually out of the public funds to help to give a high education, with a Presbyterian bias, to the sons and daughters of well-to-do people. We always make it a point to call attention to this injustice, not in the expectation of contributing to effect a reform in the direction of justice, but to mark an historical fact, and remind Catholics how blatant boasters and hypocritical advocates of civil and religious liberty put their principles into practice. We are happy to be able to say there are none even calling themselves Catholics to be found amongst either teachers or pupils in this school. It is well known by the authorities that Catholics cannot be forced or bribed into giving the least countenance to such an institution; and care is taken by those concerned to prove to them that they are not expected—that, in fact, there is no place for them there, notwithstanding the hollow profession that the institution is open to all. True it is open to all in the same way that Knox Church is open to all—that is, so far as Catholics are concerned—by an abandonment of their religion, and a profession of either Presbyterianism or infidelity.

CONCERNING CHRISTMAS.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace to men of goodwill."

CLOSE upon two thousand years ago there was a cave near an eastern village, where the shepherds of the neighborhood were accustomed to lead their flocks for shelter in inclement weather, and where wandering cattle might enter at all times. It was a dreary place abounding in litter, and whose only furniture was a manger. It was hardly fitting for the rough men who came there now and then, and except in seasons of storm or rain, or bitter cold—the open air was preferred by them. Yet this was the refuge found by our Lady, in which to give birth to the Saviour of the world. She came there at evening attended by St. Joseph, an elderly man of a gracious and