

A PETITION has been presented to the Taieri County Council by the inhabitants of Outram, begging for the removal of the toll-bar on Buckeye Hill to a position near the West Taieri Church.

THE Conference of County Councils is to be held at Wellington on July 21st next.

SEVERAL slips have occurred, owing to the wet weather, on the Blueskin section of the railway. That at Deep Creek was the most extensive.

At the next Session of Parliament a vote will be asked for to carry out the proposed railway between Canterbury and the West Coast.

It is rumoured that a London Company have purchased 170,000 acres of land in Southland, for the purpose of sub-dividing and selling it in the form of small farms.

IN consequence of the floods having shown the necessity of raising the railway line by two feet in addition between Inverlief and the South Molyneux Road, the Toiro section of the Balclutha and Four Mile Creek Railway will not be opened until some time in August next.

A RICH specimen of quartz has been picked up in Mr. Loughnan's paddock at Mount Pisa.

THAT well-known fortune-telling manual, "Napoleon's Book of Fate," has been translated into Maori. It is believed that the publication will gain considerable influence over the minds of the natives.

THE usual weekly meeting of the Dunedin Catholic Young Men's Society was held on Friday evening last, the President occupying the chair. After the ordinary proceedings of the meeting had been disposed of, the remainder of the evening was devoted to social improvement, and we are happy to say with satisfactory results. We regret that we were misinformed in stating that the nomination of officers for the ensuing half-year takes place this evening; the nomination night is that of the fourth meeting in July.

AT a meeting of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute recently, Mr. Colenso drew attention to a bell which he had found in the interior of the North Island in '36. It seemed to be a ship's bell, and bore an inscription, said to be very ancient and in Javanese. This had been copied and sent to various places for translation, but no one had translated it satisfactorily.

THE Napoleon Hill claim at Ahaura promises well. Sixteen ounces were washed there from two sets, and it was calculated that in the same week the return would be fifty ounces.

THE hearing of applications for leases at Longwood has been postponed to the 29th inst, as it is found that the diggings are in the hundreds.

REWI maintains that his interview with the Governor, Sir George Grey, and Mr. Sheehan, will result in a lasting peace.

A PARTY of Maoris in the North Island lately expected a visit from certain of their copatriots, whom they were not anxious to receive. This is how they prepared to welcome them: they lit a fire of wood, and when it had burned low, they spread over the hot embers some sods and above them a mat. There they led their guests and bade them sit down, which they unsuspectingly did. They, however, rose up again incontinently.

IT is expected that the land revenue received during the financial year will be found to amount to close upon £1,600,000.

SOME roots of Shamrock were recently sent out from Ireland to Melbourne. They were dug up from the Hill of Tara, and are said to have reached their destination in sound condition.

A NEW thing in travelling by railway was witnessed the other day in Taranaki, where the passengers were obliged to alight and push a train in order to help the locomotive up the Waiongona Hill.

SUBURBAN sections, at Gisborne, Poverty Bay, were sold recently at £90 per acre. Five years ago these sections were purchased for £5 per acre.

TRAVELLING along the beach in the neighbourhood of Karamea must be somewhat precarious. It appears that, in certain stages of the tide, it is necessary for persons so engaged to run from rock to rock. A gentleman, who was occupied in this perilous progress, was carried away lately among the breakers, and, although he managed to get back again to the shore, received a very painful battering.

A REEF has been discovered at Ruakaka, opposite Dieffenbach Point.

A COMPANY has been formed to work the Kanieri quartz reefs.

A NOTICE, published in the *Wananga* by Mr. Roes, and directing natives everywhere to come to him before disposing in any way of their lands, has excited unfavourable comment.

THE Corporation of Gisborne have decided on sinking the artesian well undertaken by them 50 feet in addition to the 260 feet already sunk. So far the cost of the work has been £325.

THE value of gold obtained during the year by the Moanatairi Company was £57,717.

THE gold returns of the Thames, for the week ending June 1st, were 1042 ozs. 10 dwt. 12 gr.

WE learn from that source of much that is edifying and instructive, the Dunedin School Committee, that, instead of education, free and secular, being made compulsory in the city alluded to, it is contemplated to make it an act of favour to admit children at all to this doubtful benefit. The attendance at the schools is to be limited so as to prevent over-crowding, and hence a number of would-be pupils will certainly either be relegated to the streets or to private schools. Yet the private schools which afford refuge from idleness, and probable destruction to numerous children, and cloak the embarrassment of the Government, are subjected to fines for their usefulness. If the majority consider this justice, or do not see it is a glaring injustice sufficient to make New Zealand ludicrous and contemptible in the face of the world, all we can say is that the majority reminds us still more strongly than before of a heathen idol, for it has eyes and sees not, and ears and hears not. The squabble of the Committee with the Board still continues, but as both of the august bodies alluded to have appointed a sub-committee, chosen respectively from their members to fight the matter out, it is expected that the row may actually terminate some time between this and doomsday.

A WRETCHED affair has occurred at Milton, where a woman has died in giving birth to a child under most distressing circumstances. The child was born while no one was near to give the least assistance to the poor mother; but a neighbour, who had been sent for by her, came in about an hour afterwards, and found everything in the most deplorable condition. The sick woman had only to cover her a worn counterpane and an old coat. Ten children were huddled together in one bedroom with hardly any bedding to lie on, and there was no food of any kind to be found in the house. One of the children was sent to fetch some brandy, but the publican to whom he applied refused to let him have it, although he said that his mother was dying. In short, a more painful case we have never had the misfortune to hear of. It casts a slur upon colonial life.

THE purchasers of the *Anno Gambles* continue to suffer uneasiness. The present phase of their torment is caused by the discovery that certain light fingers have been busied amongst the cargo.

THE following subscriptions to the Cathedral Fund have been received since the list given in another column was printed:—Miss Bridget Farrell, £2 10s; Mr. Angus Wilson, £4.

IN our correspondence column will be found a letter from the Rev. Father Joly, of Sydney, acknowledging the arrival there of the organ presented to the sister in the South Sea Islands by certain friends in Dunedin, and returning thanks for the gift.

THE *New Zealander*, the Government organ, attributes the whole responsibility in the affair of costs arising from the Jones libel case to the Hon. Frederick Whitaker. Our contemporary affirms that a majority of the House undertook "a risky transaction," and laid "the odds of good solid money to nothing." Surely even for the sake of making a point against an enemy this is strange blasphemy to employ in alluding to the popular idol. But if the matter is to be viewed in this light then, we should say, the responsibility lies, not with Mr. Whitaker, but with the majority. It appears, however, that a minority also had something to do with this sacrifice "of good solid money to nothing;" for we cannot suppose that the counsel for the accused conferred with an hon. member—now a minister, and patron if report speak true of the *New Zealander*, over the jury list to the prejudice of the accused. If an hon. member advised the defendant's counsel at all it evidently must have been in the defendant's interests, and thus to all appearances an hon. member, now a minister, had something to do in determining the untoward result of this "risky transaction."

AT the meeting of Justices in Dunedin, the other evening, it transpired that Mr. Watt, R.M., has no faith in the discretion of the Press. Mr. Watt was evidently concerned lest intending criminals should lose something of their reverence for the Bench by learning that J.P.'s were subject to the weaknesses of ordinary flesh and blood; that, for instance, they had their little jealousies, and were inclined to consider themselves snubbed when empowered only to deal with "drunks and disorderlies." Mr. Watt clearly is desirous of obtaining for the magisterial dignity the aid of such mystery as it is possible to maintain; he is quite right, there have occurred one or two cases lately when the Bench seemed much in need of every stay that could be afforded it.

IT is rumoured that certain circumstances relating to native land transactions at Maketu, in the North Island, are likely to be brought under the notice of Parliament at the approaching session.

OUR contemporary the *Daily Times* in a gushing leader anent the candidature of Mr. Oliver for Dunedin, speaks sportingly of the candidate as being "put through a preliminary canter to show his paces." We, however, noticed an ugly buck-jump or two in the course of his trial that renders him anything but a "favourite" with us, and we should rejoice to see him scratched, or disqualified in some manner.