

A preliminary examination was held on Friday, Oct. 21st, in the Roman Catholic School, Ahaura. The local clergy and some of the laity acted as examiners. The senior class contested a valuable prize. It was won by Master Frank M'Ivor, nephew to the late Mr. Hayden, he having answered ninety per cent. of the whole within a strict examination of twenty minutes. Master Thomas Kinsella, a boy nine years old, was awarded a second prize for his answering. The examinations having been resumed in the afternoon, Master Piercy Ryan distinguished himself in the Latin declension of nouns and adjectives, and Robert Boylen in the extraction of cubic roots. The answering, on the whole, was most satisfactory. Both the efficiency and discipline reflect great credit on the teacher, Mr. Timothy O'Brien, late of Christchurch.

Telegrams.

(REUTER'S SPECIAL.)

LONDON, November 20th.

At the wool sales to-day 8,000 bales were catalogued. The tone of the market was active in all descriptions. Foreign purchases continue limited. Scoured wools are 3d higher.

The bandy vintage of France is only one-third as much as that of 1878.

Among the arrested in Ireland are a barrister and one of the proprietors of the *National* newspaper, Mayo. There is great excitement throughout Ireland in consequence of the action of the authorities. Further warrants are issued for the arrest of prominent agitators.

CALCUTTA, November 20th.

General Roberts is taking precautionary measures to prevent an outbreak of Affghans. Five regiments, which arrived at Turkestan, were disbanded at Cabul. It is expected others will follow.

(SPECIAL TO THE MELBOURNE ARGUS.)

LONDON, November 20th.

The Cabinet has directed the arrest in Ireland of Davitt, a released Fenian, who killed a barrister and a daily newspaper proprietor.

The Home Rulers convened a meeting in Ireland. England was denounced, and it was resolved to raise a defence fund.

Count Schouvaloff has resigned, as he is disgusted at the duplicity of Prince Gortschakoff in the Afghan disclosures.

An escape of petroleum in a tunnel caused an explosion in California. Fifty Chinamen were killed.

(SPECIAL TO THE MELBOURNE AGE.)

LONDON, November 20th.

The Government hesitate to arrest Mr. Parnell for sedition, as the House of Commons will deal with the case.

The garrisons in the principal Irish towns have been augmented. The dragoons have been ordered to Ireland.

The *Times* expresses astonishment that Mr. Graham Berry should state that leading politicians in England generally would not object to a plebiscite.

(REUTER'S SPECIAL.)

LONDON, November 21st.

Three per cent. consols, 96½.

November 22nd.

Later news from the Cape states that Sir Garnet Wolseley stormed Sococeni's stronghold. The aspect of affairs at the Transvaal is less threatening.

DUBLIN, November 22nd.

A crowded meeting has been held to protest against the recent arrests. Mr. Parnell and other leaders of the Home Rule party were present, and condemned the action of the Government. They advised the Irish people to persevere in their efforts to secure free land.

(SPECIAL TO THE MELBOURNE ARGUS.)

LONDON, November 22nd.

The ex-Empress Eugenie will traverse France for the present. Her mother is dying at Madrid.

A turbulent meeting was held at the Rotunda, Dublin. Thousands were unable to gain admission. Parnell's and other speeches were moderate. Afterwards the mob drew Parnell's carriage to the hotel, and he spoke from the balcony in stronger language.

The *Central News* asserts that Fenians in New York have prepared two steamers, with arms and ammunition, to land in Ireland and assist in an intended rising.

It is intended to indict Davitt, Keller, and Daly for conspiracy.

The Irish agitation, recently confined to Mayo and Sligo, is now spreading.

The press is most unanimous in its approval of the idea that probably the Government can assist emigration of a certain class. Reinforcements are ordered to be in readiness.

The wool competition maintained great vivacity, and opening rates were freely sustained. The principal rise is in combings. Cross-breeds, medium, faulty, scoured, show an advance of 2d to 3d; greasy, 1d, little offering.

MESSRS. R. SAUNDERS & Co., Princes street, Dunedin, have received a new and magnificent stock of drapery and tailoring of all descriptions.

MR. J. MORONEY, of Itchen street, Oamaru, continues to execute all orders given him for boots and shoes in a style unsurpassed in the colony. Mr. Moroney only supplies work to order; he keeps a regular ready-made stock on hand. He also undertakes repairs.

Commercial.

THE LABOUR MARKET—NOV. 26, 1879.

Mr. SKENE reports a quiet tone in general. The last few days of rain, although the life of the country, have hindered engagements. Stations can fill their gaps too easily this year, so many "swaggers" being about; but in many cases these cheap hands prove expensive in the long run. There are always a few couples, shepherds, musterers, ploughmen, and dairy people needed. Female servants are decidedly scarce, and any who are well-trained stay but for a short period in the market. As far as general business is concerned, the week may be considered over, for between the cattle show and the races people will be bent on pleasure and amusement.

PRODUCE MARKET—NOV. 27, 1879.

MESSRS. MERCER and McDONALD, Rattray street, report:—Fresh butter (best and favourite brands) 11b. and ½lb prints, 10d per lb.; good ordinary butter, 8d to 9d per lb.; salt butter in kegs 8d per lb. Eggs are not so plentiful and are now selling at 1s 3d per doz; bacon, 8½d per lb.; hams, 10d per lb.; cheese, 8d per lb.

Mr. J. Fleming reports for the week ending Nov. 19, 1879:—Wholesale prices, oats, 1s 10d to 2s per bushel; milling wheat, 4s 9d to 5s per bushel; chicks, 3s 6d to 3s 9d; barley, malting, 5s 6d per bushel; feed, 3s to 3s 6d; pollard, £5 0s per ton; bran, £4 10s per ton; flour, £11 10s to £12 per ton; oatmeal, £12 10s per ton; potatoes, £6 10s to £7 per ton; hay, £4 per ton; chaff, £4 to £4 5s per ton; straw, £2s 5s per ton; onions, 30s per cwt.; new kidney potatoes, 25s per cwt.

OUR IRISH LETTER.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

DUBLIN, October 9th, 1879.

Your readers will remember that ere I closed my last letter to dispatch it on its long voyage, I made brief mention of a conference of the Home Rule League that was being held as I wrote in the historic round room of the rotunda. The meeting was small and its constituents unimportant. Only three members of Parliament, Messrs. Parnell, O'Conner Power, and Callan, graced it with their presence. Nobody else of any note was there. Its outcome was, however, sufficiently ostentatious. It was resolved that there should be a grand National Convention of the Irish people to deliberate and decide on the Irish demands and the Irish policy. The convention was to consist of 300 delegates, and the manner of their election was to be singularly simple. Each Irishman paying one shilling was to be qualified as a voter and to be entitled to give a single vote for each of the three hundred delegates that he wished to see elected. Three hundred votes for one shilling! the market value of the suffrage had certainly never fallen so low before. Poor dead Butt, whatever his faults might have been, while he held the leadership of the Irish party, the national policy was at least never rendered contemptible in the eyes of its friends and foes; of course sensible men saw at once that this notable scheme must end in ludicrous failure. Mr. Mitchell Henry, M.P., one of the most sensible members of the Home Rule party, and Mr. Shaw, M.P., its titular leader, instantly and vigorously repudiated the movement. It was naturally a fertile source of ridicule to the hostile English press, and already seems virtually consigned to the Limbo of political failures.

Perhaps no event occurring within the month that has elapsed since my last letter has excited such general and such lively interest as the publication of the examination returns under the Intermediate Education Act, on the 18th ult. It is necessary to say just one word about the effect of the Irish Intermediate Education Act passed last year, in order to account for this excitement. By the provisions of that act a kind of general intercollegiate contest was established in this country. Each school was entitled to send as many boys as it chose to compete. The competitors were divided into three great grades; the junior, middle, and senior. To a tenth of the number passed in the junior grade exhibitions of £20 a year for three years were awarded; to a tenth of those who passed in the middle grade exhibitions of £30 a year, and to a tenth of those who passed in the senior grade prizes of £50 for a single year. The interest this system excited may well be conceived. It was of course a race of college against college, and to a certain extent of religion against religion. There were six thousand competitors. It was anticipated that the Protestant schools, which have always been most lavishly endowed would, for the first few years at any rate, achieve an easy victory over the Catholic schools which, until this bill was passed, had never received a single farthing's assistance from the state. The result proved quite the reverse. The Catholic schools, despite the heavy disadvantages under which they had laboured, achieved a signal triumph. They were victorious all along the line. Thus has been removed, it is to be hoped for ever, an unmerited reproach on Catholic education, in which certain Catholics themselves were only too ready to join.

The rent agitation of which I have already said so much continues to rage through the length and breadth of the country with unabated fury. A few days since it was marked by an incident of a startling and tragical character. On the eve of the 1st inst. an elderly gentleman named Mr. Smythe, who is agent of Lord Sligo, proceeded, accompanied by his son, to the ordinary place of business to collect the rents for the half-year on his lordship's estates in the neighbourhood of Westport, County Mayo. The tenants were there, but they either would not or could not pay the rent, and Mr. Smythe returned as empty-handed as he started. When they were about mid-way on their return journey, suddenly in the broad daylight four men with blackened faces leaped out on the high road and discharged four guns point blank at the occupants. Nobody was hit and the